The ancient tunafish village of Barril, Algarve.

Awareness for maritime heritage

A little bit of history

Since Antiquity, people that settled all over the Algarvean coast have left us with traces of their maritime experiences. These people allowed us to realize the importance of fishing in the diet of people like the Tunesians, Phoenicians, Romans, Islamic and Christians.

Ever since, the Christian reconquest, several kings understood the importance of granting permission to launch trappings initially to Italians and Genoese. Only at the beginning of the sixteenth century did the exploitation of tuna fishing activity become exclusive to Portuguese.

At the end of the 18th century, the Marquis of Pombal created the Royal Fisheries Company in the aftermath of the 1755 earthquake in an attempt to revalorize the tuna fishery on the Algarve coast.

In 1841, the first tuna fishing company was founded on the coast of Tavira, and the company in 1875 had 4 frame traps: Livramento, Barril, Medo das Cacras e Abobora.

Due to its proximity to the Algarvean coast, steamer up to Cape Santa Maria, Tavira's traps used to catch the tuna running and coming from the Mediterranean. The "Algar de chilão" consists of the first basin coming from the East Atlantic: Bourbon, Iceland, and northern Russia heading to the Gulf of Cadiz and the Mediterranean to spawn. And the fishing village 'meaning the lean tuna returning that only passed by the eastern Algarve.'

Between 1841 and 1849, "Arreipas dos Teis Infias" or "Arreipas do Barril" were settled on the beach of Barril. Between April and September for the preparation of the traps, the fishing season: the first, and the rudiments of the fishing gear for the next season took place. In this fishing village, there were fishermen's houses, offices, warehouses, grocery shops, bakeries, shops, washing tanks, oven, among other structures, all of them still recognized in place.

Heritage awareness

The fishing village of Santa Luzia, currently dedicated exclusively to the octopus, has in its population a significant community of fishermen and of families who lived and worked in Barril, keeping a family tradition. With the target of showing the history of these people and their daily life in Barril, in 2014 a series of activities began with the old fishing community and their families, namely, walks and social gatherings that allowed the exchange of experiences, as well as the visit to the old areas of their daily life.

There is an urgent need for joint intervention of the entities that protect the area in the sense of preserving, safeguarding and evaluate this unique historical sample of tuna fishing in the Algarve. This is undoubtedly a unique area, a true living museum, still full of material and immaterial heritage, accessible to all who visit Barril beach.

Lais de Guia

Maritime Cultural Heritage Association

The Lais de Guia - Maritime Cultural Heritage Association was founded in Santa Luzia, developing a series of initiatives with the former community of fishermen and their families who experienced the Barril with the objective of revalorizing the maritime heritage back together with the intangible heritage. We want to work on the preservation, safeguarding, promotion and enhancement of maritime cultural heritage.

To define us, we chose the name of a fish: Lais de Guia. This is one of the first lines we learn in the art of seamanship. Simple, fast, useful and very safe. The colour, blue and green are representative of the two aquatic environments that surround us, respectively, the Sea and the Natural Park of Ria Formosa.

Glossary:
Arreipa: Small village where houses and warehouses were located, among others.
Arreipa: Fishing device placed in the sea to lift the basins.