



FERRIERE DI DONGO (Dongo Ironworks)

You can find this point of interest in Dongo - Path 1 - Stage 2

DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

The first document to mention the presence of iron ore mines in the area dates back to 1412. In 1792 Pietro Rubini, former estates manager of Count Cesare Giulini, purchased the mines, the furnace and the forges which the nobleman had in Dongo and employed almost 90 people.

In 1833, Georges Henri Falck, an engineer and ironworks expert from Alsace, was called by the Rubini family to work as a consultant; in 1839 the new company "Rubini, Falck, Scalini e Comp." was established. It was thanks to Falck's competence that important technical innovations in ironworking methods were introduced to Dongo, such as the use of rolling mills in lieu of power hammers, piston blowers, and, above all, the English version of the blast furnace, which until then had never been used in Lombardy. Among the many public recognitions, in 1841 the company was awarded the Gold Medal. The political events of 1848-1849 led to changes in company policies, and decisions which might lead to immediate remuneration replaced the search for technological innovations. The contribution of Giorgio Enrico Falck was no longer necessary and in 1850 the new "Rubini e Scalini" company was established, with a business based mainly on iron smelting, and the processing and trade of iron. In 1863 the technical management of the Ferriere di Dongo was entrusted to Enrico Falck, the son of Giorgio Enrico, who had married Irene, daughter of Giuseppe Rubini, in the same year. In 1880, at the death of Giuseppe Rubini, the management of the Company was taken over by his son Giulio, who definitively abandoned the extraction of iron from local mines and shut down the blast furnace, inaugurating a new industrial phase mainly focussed on manufacture and trade. He thus dissolved the existing company and founded the new "Ditta Rubini e C."

Rita Pellegrini in her book "*Dongo. Oltre il conosciuto. Mille anni di storia*" writes: «*The Ferriere di Dongo, however, thanks to the insight and initiative of Giorgio Enrico Falck [jr., the son of Enrico Falck and Irene Rubini], would later become part of a far more ambitious project, which materialized on 26 January 1906 with the foundation in Milan of the "Società Anonima Acciaierie e Ferriere Lombarde"*», which included the plants in Vobarno and the area of land in Sesto San Giovanni, later to become the site of an imposing complex of factories, which, among other things, was to result in the intensification of production in Dongo, bringing the number of workers from 400 to 1800.

In his book "*Dongo 1892-2003*" Giancarlo Della Fonte writes: «*It was here in the Ironworks that most of the Dongo working people were to sweat out their weary existence, and where an entire community were to deliberately link their destiny to the work of those people*».

The Dongo factory was transferred on 26th February 1990 from "Acciaierie e Ferriere Lombarde Falck" to the Cagiva Group. There have been various failed attempts at reviving the activity, but the present situation (2014) would seem to indicate that this industry, which had such an influence on the area, is destined to cease forever.