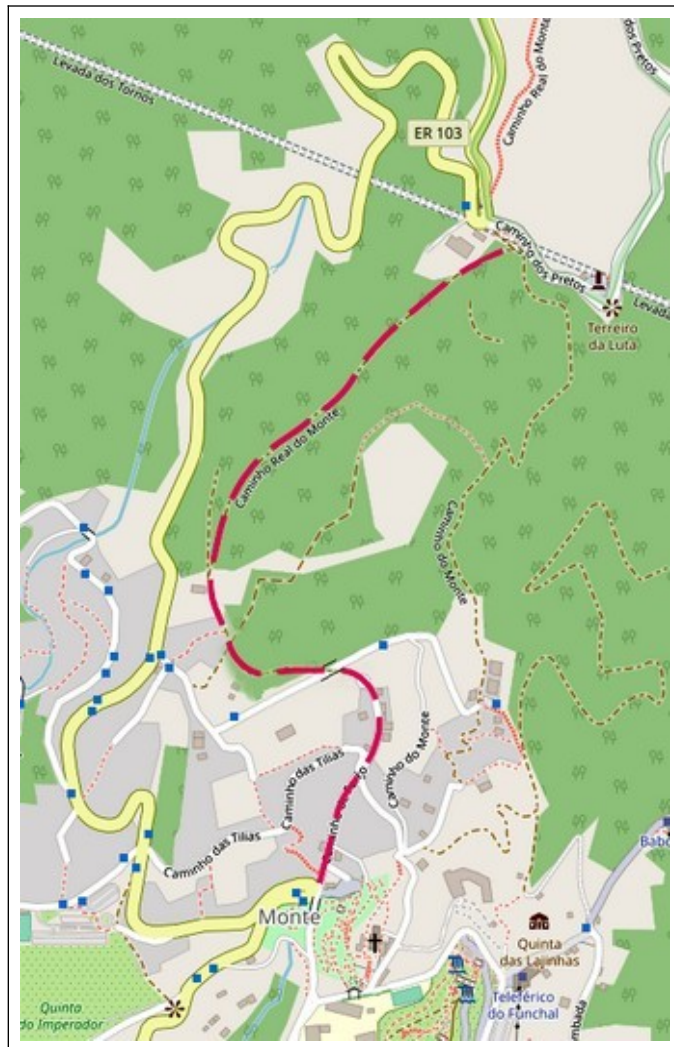


5. Terminus (Terreiro da Luta).



The following text is taken from the website of the Quinta do Terreiro da Luta being the new name of the original station.

On July 12, 1910, the Monte Railway Company, at a general meeting, decided to extend the train to Terreiro da Luta. On July 24, 1912 the train finally arrived at Terreiro da Luta, at an altitude of 850 metres.

On the same date, the Chalet Restaurant-Esplanade is inaugurated at Terreiro da Luta station, a panoramic restaurant that was operated by the Monte Railway Company itself, with capacity for 400 customers and considered on par with the best international level.

Quinta do Terreiro da Luta is located in the parish of Monte, city of Funchal (Madeira island), above 850 metres of altitude and offers a superb panoramic view over the entire bay of Funchal.

The red line on the map marks the rail route.

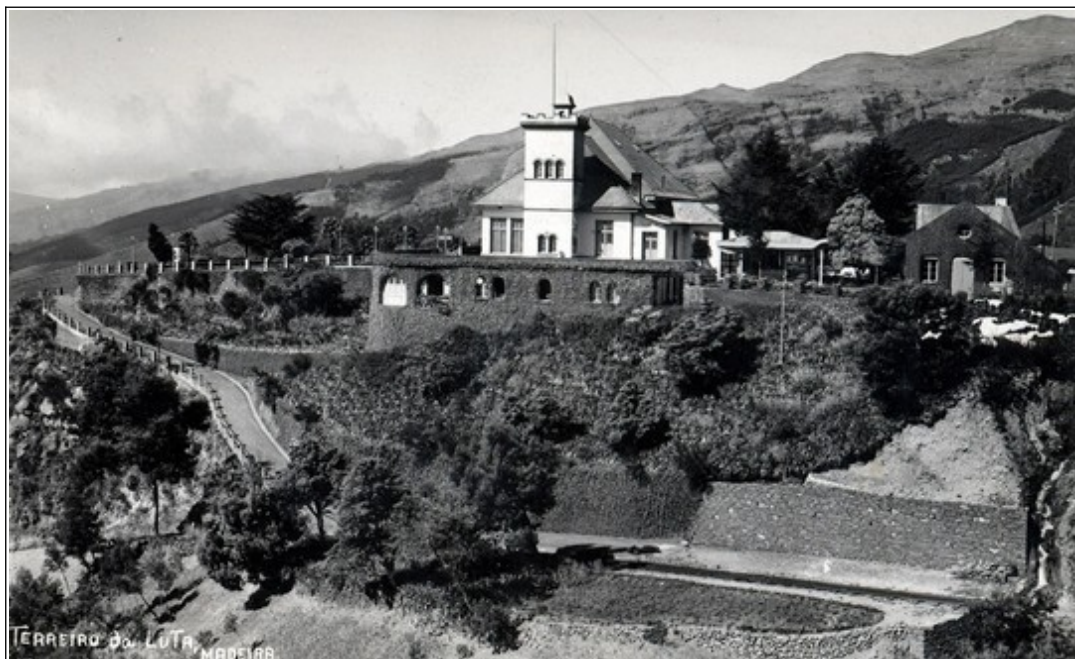
On the day we climbed the route the restaurant was closed but I was able to get this picture through the locked gates.





A few pictures found on various websites showing the train arriving at the station.

The bottom picture clearly shows the ramp connecting the station “platform” to the restaurant above.





Passengers leaving the train to climb the curving ramp up to the Restaurant.



The site of the old station as it is in 2020. The ramp has clearly been maintained to provide access but on the day we arrived the gate was locked so no way into the restaurant through the back door.

Could the concrete box-like structure on the right be a water storage tank for supplying the water cranes?



This is one of two water cranes still standing at the station in a position opposite to the access ramp to the restaurant.

The statue of Nossa Senhora da Paz (Our Lady of Peace) was erected in 1927 to commemorate the end of the World War 1. It incorporates the anchor chains from the sunken ships from Madeira on December 3, 1916 and is over 5 metres tall.

The statue looks down over Funchal and illuminated by floodlights can be seen at night from the city centre.



This old derelict building looked very much as though it was in some way connected with the railway, but I've never found any reference to it on the Internet or in documents.

Follow the route to Terreiro da Luta on foot

There are at least two ways to walk up to Terreiro da Luta, but for those interested in the railway there is only one way, the rail-way! This route is probably not the obvious tourist route to the viewpoint at Terreiro da Luta but we are not average tourists.

From the Largo da Fonte station follow the Caminho de Ferro to where the road ends and the track passes under a road bridge. The tree lined route curves slightly to the right as it climbs upward.



After walking for about 150 metres there's an old building on the left and here the route offers several choices. Don't be tempted to deviate, walk straight ahead keeping several other small farm buildings close on the left. The route here is quite uneven probably due to farming activities but soon the way becomes more obvious and offers a steady and pleasant walk.



On the way there were occasional signs of where the track may have been with stones laid in straight rows.



A possible relic from the past, a rusty hexagon nut probably from the track or even the engine? Two engines were known to be in poor condition.

Arrival at the station location with the entrance ramp to the restaurant immediately on the left just off the picture.



So why would tourists visit Terreiro da Luta?

Tourists would probably arrive for several reasons, a scenic ride on the railway, the view at the top (miradouro), to look at the statue and chapel followed by a cream-tea in the restaurant.



Whatever the purpose I'm sure the real highlight of the visit had a lot to do with the trip back down. A trip that would take them back not just to Monte, but all the way to the city.

On the road just below the statue is a small cafe called Casa Regional da Luta. It was while we were buying refreshments I noticed a very interesting framed photograph hanging high-up on a wall. It was of several basket sledges with people riding down from this very place.



This was something I didn't expect. Everybody knows about the world famous sledges from Monte, but before this I'd never seen or read anything about sledges from Terreiro da Luta. There can be no doubt regarding the location as the statue is clearly visible at the top of the picture.



The use of sledges as a means of “public transport” for travelling downhill dates back to the early 19th century but I wonder if this particular track was used in the first instance to transport firewood or other goods down to the city?



As the track is on a south facing slope it could well have been used to transport grape juice from the vineyard for wine production.

The person, called a *borracheiro*, would carry the juice in a goatskin over his shoulders using only strong legs and a stout pole for support. They would work in groups walking in single file and often singing or chanting to help keep up a slow deliberate walking step. It is said they would sometimes walk for up to 20km from more remote parts of the island.

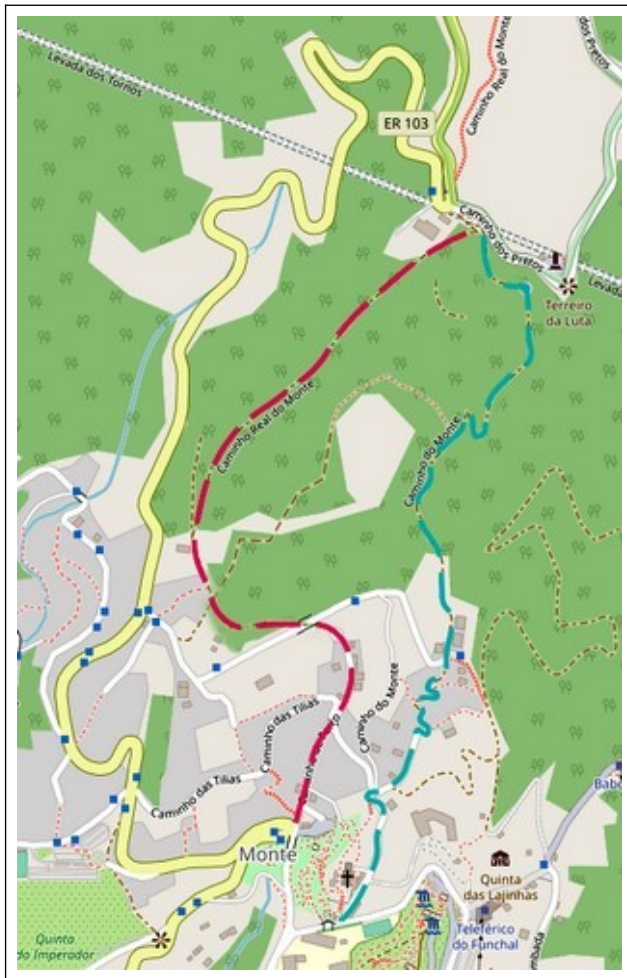
The well known tourist hiking route between Pico do Areeiro and Pico Ruivo is just part of an ancient track carved out of the mountains for people to travel from the north of the island to the capital.



As is common all over Madeira the cobbled slopes are arranged in transverse ridges to make a safer walking surface while sledges slide easily on the ridge tops. One can imagine the speed of a sledge on this slope and then having to turn sharply at this corner.



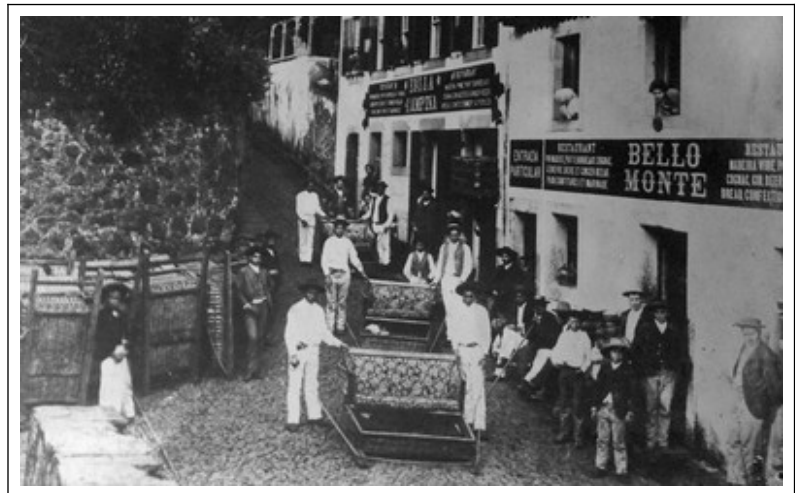
The road eventually zig-zags down with several sharp and very steep bends through a small residential community before finally arriving by the church in Monte.



The blue line on the map shows the sledge route down to the Bello Monte restaurant by the ramp up to the church steps in Monte.

I believe there is little doubt that the sledges shown in the photograph below would have been the ones that run down from Terreiro da Luta.

It is interesting that this restaurant is still open today, although the name spelling is slightly different “Belomonte”.



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