

MIRANDELA, PORTUGAL  
APRIL 26TH - 28TH, 2001

DEEP IN THE HEART OF PORTUGAL

We leave Gatwick in rain and arrive in Oporto, Portugal to warm air and sunshine. Portugal in April seems perfect. A two-hour journey into the heartland of Portugal on a freshly constructed, E U financed, motorway brings us to the once remote town of Mirandela. Here a group of sixty Rheologists gather for the 3rd "Encontro da Sociedade Portuguesa de Rheologia". A remote and fascinating setting. From the modern hotel situated by the side of a river we cross a beautiful and very old stone bridge to the older part of the town. Situated by a quite remarkable single-track rail line is a private University, which I would guess, caters for some four hundred students. The Piaget Institute serves the local community and also holds an "interdisciplinary" philosophy.

The place is full of surprises and one very big one is that the Institute has an active and young community of Rheologists! Anabela Raymundo was the local organiser of the meeting and she and her team work on charming topics such as "the effect of time and temperature on gelation of white Lupin protein isolates".

A team including Antonio Diogo masterminded the meeting. The programme was very varied in subject content and served as a fine example of how broad and interesting Rheology can be. Howard Barnes from Unilever, Port Sunlight UK, started the meeting in fine style discussing Food Rheology and its importance to microstructure and processing. There were excellent Portuguese presentations on cellulose, polyethylene processing, proteins, polysaccharides and many other topics. With no parallel sessions, the group got to know each other and for those such as me with no Portuguese language, it was good to find all the young Rheologists and most of the others from Portugal fluent in English.

The second invited lecture was from Gerrit Peters who spoke about Pom Pom modelling and application to flow induced crystallisation and moulding instabilities. The fact that we were high in the Portuguese mountains was no deterrent to him linking up via the Internet with base camp at Eindhoven and showing us various movies. The shape of things to come? Further high quality work including PTT modelling and

PE extrusion processing kept the audience active throughout the two days.

It is clear that Portugal has benefited greatly from inclusion in the E.U. The Portuguese Rheology Society has also strengthened because of this "bonding" and is showing great innovation; for example it now has its own "online" Rheology Journal. <http://www.dep.uminho.pt/e-rheo.pt>. It seems crucial that each country within the E U should foster its own Society but also the collaboration between different Rheology Societies and the European Society needs to be strong.

Mirandela is a fascinating place and as we ate a very special meal in a remote restaurant, in a quite beautiful setting, someone at the table commented that Rheologists, in particular seem to like good food, beautiful places and fine wine. I agree.

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