

BRAZIL 2002

It really is like the picture postcard. Arriving in Rio, the flight skirts around the Sugar Loaf and Christ. The magical spread of Copacabana and Ipenema are swarming with sunbathers and swimmers. Here I am. The first time the ABE has travelled to Brazil.

Looking at a map in a European atlas, you will not appreciate the size and strength of this country. Brazil is a federal state, the size of the USA. The whole of Europe, including the UK can fit inside with space to spare. It is one of only three countries which combine the factors of over 3 million km² of territory; over 100 million inhabitants and over \$500 billion GDP (the other two are USA and China). It is the world's 11th largest economy and ranks 3rd in global investment interest and confidence, behind only USA, China, ahead of the UK.

So why am I here? And what has it got to do with you, the Building Engineers working in the UK?

The EU has seen the potential of the Latin American market. The investors in Brazil are led by EU Countries, particularly Spain, Portugal, France and the UK totalling 30.9%, compared with the next largest, the USA, at 22.3%. The EU and Mercosul (the Latin American Common Market) combined to organise America Latina - Partenariat under the EU's AL-Invest Programme. This Partenariat was a vehicle to provide a forum for the meeting of European and Latin American companies and organisations in the Energy, Environment and Agri-Business fields. The ABE, as a prime professional body in the Built Environment, was invited to attend and present a paper on Energy and Sustainability, drawing from our successful Cardiff Conference in 2001.

The ABE is the leading professional body in the Built Environment and the only body which pulls together all professionals under the title of Building Engineers to provide a truly holistic view of the Built Environment. The presentation was in English with contemporaneous translation into Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian. The PowerPoint presentation in Portuguese and English is available from the website.

The ABE was one of only three invited to present at the opening of the AL-Partenariat. The others addressed the issue of climate change from a perspective of industry and the current state of Brazil's Agri-business.

The presentation dealt with sustainability as an issue for all professionals in the built environment.

Whilst in Rio, the opportunity was taken to meet with Edison Musa, a leading Brazilian and international architect. Edison Musa worked for one year in 1958 with Candilis-Josic-Woods, in Paris, where he arrived to be a team project chief. At this time the French office was at the height of its production and conceptual prestige, just fresh from the urban debate. Returning to Brazil, Musa established his personal office in 1963, developing projects for real estate and interior design. In 1970, the firm expanded with the real estate boom and general development of the 70s, the so-called 'economic miracle'; his brother became an associate, just back from one year with Freidin, Studley & Associates, New York.



Pat Reddin presenting an ABE plaque to Paul Yaghmourian, Consul-General in Rio

The developments in São Paulo resulted in the opening of a branch under the direction of Jaci Hargreaves. In this period, Musa started to have foreign clients with expanded briefs for architects, seeking not only architecture but also Project Management, Interior Design and Construction management, requiring the firm to take responsibility for costs, time schedules and final quality. This level of intervention and the spread of projects all over the country, created a methodology for working, with local groups managed from the Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo offices, and the establishment of an infra-structure of management for projects and construction making the firm capable of dealing with works of any scale, size or complexity. As Edison Musa said, the office developed a working philosophy based on 'five points':

1. flexibility assured by an insertion of a modulated grid which assures the co-ordination of the various systems.
2. observation of local conditions
3. technical systems adequate to complement local conditions (air conditioning, lighting, acoustics, etc.)
4. third generation of offices: psychological comfort, central supervision, energy saving systems, etc.)



5. specification centred on easy maintenance and durability.

Edison Musa has agreed to facilitate links between the ABE and Brazilian professional organisations.

I also met with the Consul-General in Rio, Paul Yaghmourian, to whom I presented an ABE plaque.



The Consulate-General in Rio provides able support to the ABE in Brazil, helping to arrange meetings and facilitating the presentation at Partenariat.
One of the meetings arranged for me was with the Secretariat of

housing of Rio City. A meeting was held with Eliana Emmerick, Tania Braga and Ing.Sonia Martins. This team deals with infrastructure works in the favelas (slums) of Rio There are 120 favelas. In one of these alone there are 60,000 people, in another 28,000, and in another 45,000. There is still immigration from other states drawn to Rio by the prospect of work. The Municipality has six programmes which aim to work with the favella to transform them into communities, extending sewerage services and refuse disposal and providing communal facilities such as play areas, crèches, etc.

Other programmes include 'Legal living' – to assist those who have bought land without registration and 'New alternatives' – which is for the restoration of old areas by repair and conversion of buildings bought from private owners. There is no compulsory purchase available which makes such projects more difficult. When the occupants move back they use the buildings at a lower level of occupancy and the shortfall are re-housed in new buildings. If they are re-housed then the occupants buy the new dwelling, paying for 15 years. This way the favella dwellers are brought into the formal economy.