

HER MAJESTY'S CONSUL MR KEITH ALLEN



The new Her Majesty's Consul, Keith Allen, arrived in Riyadh in December 2008 with his wife, Linda, and two young children. Keith is not a newcomer to the Middle East after having been in Iran for the last 2 years as the Senior Management Officer responsible for running the Embassy workforce and budget in Tehran. A challenging time in Tehran included being part of the British Embassy team working on securing the release of the 15 British Navy sailors that were detained in 2007.

In previous posts Keith has done a wide range of Foreign Office work including Vice Consul/Entry Clearance Officer in New Delhi early in his career, dealing with the 800 visa applicants per day. This was followed by Deputy Head of Mission in our Embassy in, San Salvador, El Salvador during the time there were two serious earthquakes which killed over 1000 people and caused extensive damage, including to Keith's own house.

Keith has spent time working on Iraq policy first in the Foreign Office in London on Security Sector Reform and then in December 2003 he was attached to Coalition Provisional Authority in Al Muthanna Province as the Deputy Governorate Coordinator. During his time in Iraq Keith helped organised the first Province wide elections and Al Muthanna was the first province to be handed back to Iraqi control.

On return from Iraq Keith then took up the post of Head of Conferences and Events Team in London during the

term that the UK held the EU and G8 Presidencies. Whilst a challenging job there were highlights such as being responsible for the successful EU Hampton Court Summit and a member of the management team at the Gleneagles G8 Summit.

Keith and his family will be in Riyadh for the next 3 years and are looking forward to the interesting challenges that Saudi Arabia will offer. One of the main areas that Keith wishes to focus on is increasing the number of British Nationals that have registered on the new FCO world-wide registration system called LOCATE. The system is designed to allow the individual to register on line their location anywhere in the world. This allows the Foreign Office to have accurate numbers of British Nationals in any location in case there is a need to contact them.

HM Consul, whilst based in Riyadh, has responsibility for consular affairs for the whole of Saudi Arabia. Having already been to Al-Khobar and Jeddah Keith hopes to travel to distant parts of the Kingdom and meet some of the British Nationals working in the more remote areas.

As well as a busy job, career and family Keith aims to complete his MBA during his time in Riyadh.

NEW HEAD OF BRITISH TRADE OFFICE

In early April this year Terry Evans left the Kingdom and handed over responsibility of the British Trade Office (BTO) in Al Khobar to David Harries. This is David's first posting to the Kingdom.

David, a member of HM Diplomatic Service since 1980, has previously served in Australia, Pakistan, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, USA, Gibraltar and lately Lagos, Nigeria where he was Consul for Nigeria, Benin & Equatorial Guinea. David is accompanied by his wife, Carol, and their two young children.

"This is an exciting time to be posted to Saudi Arabia and, in particular, Eastern Province. I come at a great time as Saudi is now our leading market in the Middle East for British goods & services. This is excellent news, but our challenge now - and one which we are relishing - is to ensure that the Kingdom remains the UK's top market in the region. In 2008 UK visible exports reached £2.3 billion, an increase of 21% over 2007. We hope to better this in 2009. We are also the second largest investor in the Kingdom with over 200 UK/Saudi joint ventures totalling around US\$10.5 billion. It goes without saying, therefore, that Saudi Arabia is a hugely important market for us"

"British business interest and confidence in the Kingdom has been rising because it sees Saudi Arabia, with its prudent economic management, as an excellent trading and investment partner. Having