

## British Council News: From skills for employment to women's football!



Adrian Chadwick

I am very pleased to have the chance to write a few words for the Riyadh Group for British Business. In part, because I have good memories of being part of the British Business Association in the Eastern Province where I was our Director 10 years ago. Also, because it seems to me clear after only two months back in Saudi Arabia, that the cultural relations activities the British Council are busily involved in today are of interest and value to the business community.

Our work teaching English is one obvious example. We teach more than 7,000 men and women a year, and are currently expanding our capacity to add 6 new classrooms in the Riyadh men's centre, 2 new classrooms in the Riyadh women's centre, and extra classrooms in Al-Khobar to enable us to re-start teaching men in the Eastern Province in April next year. We run a wide range of English language, professional (eg accounting, business, marketing), and UK university and college examinations for over 23,000 candidates a year. We support a large number of ministries through joint projects to develop Saudi Arabia's school, technical and higher education. Another major activity is working to increase the number of Saudi students going to study in the UK – an invaluable way to build lasting ties between the



two countries, and there are currently over 15,000 Saudis studying in the UK. The value of all student recruitment from around the world is of enormous value to the UK economy at an estimated £27 billion per year.

This directly supports Saudi Arabia's drive to diversify and grow its economy, by enabling wider segments of men and women to access the skills and training needed to move into productive employment.

This month amongst other activities, we also opened a major cultural heritage photograph exhibition at the National Museum in Riyadh, and in Jeddah organised a female football game between the first Saudi female football team, 'Kings United', and the British community (the British team won 5-4!).

**Adrian Chadwick**  
Director British Council



Donald Wilkinson

and Chief Executive of Jerudong International School in Brunei. We returned to England in 2004 and I was, successively, Head of St Christopher School, Letchworth, and Director of Studies at Haileybury, a large boarding school which offers both the IB and A levels, until I came out to Riyadh.

Sport has always been one of my main interests. At Oxford, I played some first class cricket in Oxford University's 1<sup>st</sup> XI – in the same team as Imran Khan, Vic Marks and Chris Tavare, having earlier captained the Lancashire Under 19 XI in which Graeme Fowler played. (All these names will have meaning to followers of cricket!). I was an enthusiastic, if not quick enough, footballer and so played at no higher level than Keble College's 1<sup>st</sup> XI, (once against Tony Blair who was playing for St Johns). I still run, albeit depressingly slowly now, to try to keep fit.

History, politics and literature, particularly modern novels and poetry, are passions. I have eclectic if not terribly well-informed tastes in music, and no musical talent whatsoever. My interest in education

remains undiminished, despite or perhaps because of my thirty years in the independent school world. I read a lot about educational theory and practice.

I am married to Rhiannon, who has recently taken up the post of Headmistress of Harrogate Ladies' College. Together, we have four children. Rachael, the eldest, is a doctor married to another doctor. Ian, who read Geography at university, is currently contemplating becoming a teacher. William will take his GCSE examinations later this year, and Edward, who is autistic, has just started secondary school. All three boys, having been well brought up, are passionate Manchester United supporters.

It goes without saying that I am delighted to have taken up my new post at the British International School, Riyadh. It has great potential and my colleagues and I see our task in the years ahead to translate that aspiration into reality.

**Donald Wilkinson**  
Principal BIS