



Construction Group news

By Geoff Hopkins



The Construction Group meeting on 25th February was very well attended. The social atmosphere was conducive to lively discussions and exchanges of information. I understand that someone even got himself a new job offer during the evening. It was also a farewell to Ralph Pitfield who retires after many years of overseas service with Taylor Woodrow. The Chairman of the RGBB was on hand to present Ralph with a Spencer Tart print as a memento of his time in the Kingdom.

So what of local news? Nothing of major importance is evident: Faisaliah is coming out of the ground; Kingdom Trade Centre is still in the bidding process; the Murabba Project is progressing and the Diplomatic Quarter seems to be busy with new embassies or extensions to existing premises. Maybe all our predictions and budget forecasts this year will be purely academic if the price of oil doesn't improve. What do the gnomes of Riyadh have to say? Will there be major cut backs in government spending? How long will this take to filter through to the private sector? Will Kingdom Trade Centre finish up as a

bakala!!!! Architects and consultants always want to see samples of materials and original copies of catalogues, even if what is offered is exactly what is specified. So what happens to all these samples and catalogues? Are there vast warehouses in the Empty Quarter where they are stored for eternity? Perhaps if one of our consultant or architect members reads this, they might like to reply in the letters page of the next edition.

I was amused to see that a forthcoming meeting of the local branch of the Institute of Civil Engineers is to discuss "Stress in Saudi Arabia". On reading further, I saw that it related to concrete and not to the courtesy and consideration we experience on the roads every day! Finally, the Construction Group is under pressure to get rid of its donkey jacket and muddy wellies' image and have proper meetings with committees and such stuff. A straw poll of members at a recent reception indicated that this would be strongly resisted. One member was unable to reply, but his actions indicated this was best left to the bankers. At least we think that's what he meant!

Financial Services Sub-Group

The FSSG met on 17 March. After an informal exchange on economic and banking developments, the group discussed future meetings. It was agreed that the future programme would include informal exchanges of views, meetings with visiting speakers and discussion on themes of particular interest led..

by a member of the group The group appointed David Gibson-Moore of Al Rajhi Banking and Investment Corporation as their Chairman.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 12 May.