

Chairman's AGM Speech

The following is the text of the speech given to the RGBB AGM by Chairman John Freel on 2nd May 1998

“ Good Evening Gentlemen -

It's good to see such a large attendance tonight and your presence is most encouraging to the committee. I'm sure that many of you here this evening, are well aware that 1997 was a very active year for the RGBB and the combined efforts of many of you here tonight have been highly productive, enabling me to report extremely good progress in many areas. Moreover, the extent of this progress becomes clearly evident when we measure our achievements against the objectives I set for the Executive Committee this time last year.

Just to recap, these objectives were focused on five key areas I felt we needed to develop; information, interests, involvement, initiatives and last but not least, image.

Keeping you well informed, we focused on 2 areas of our organisation; membership support and the 'Newsletter'. Firstly, I'm sure you'll appreciate the time that Doug Read has dedicated to the membership information system, which now provides comprehensive reports on most aspects of membership, especially the sector targeting facility and the new members' welcome process.

Secondly, you will have seen the excellent results that Kevin Storey and his team have achieved in producing a first class 'Newsletter'. The improvements in the

'Newsletter' have not only kept us better informed, but also encouraged your involvement. Furthermore, the "new look" 'Newsletter' has also helped to improve our image. Another example of how we promoted the flow of information, is the assistance we provided in the publication of various trade directories, copies of which were supplied free of charge to all members, and I know they've been a valuable tool to many of you.

An important initiative taken last year, was the reintroduction of the Embassy Briefings, to keep you better informed on diplomatic and business affairs. They have proved immensely popular and I would like to thank Richard Northern for making them such a success.

We have also made great strides in stimulating members' interest and involvement and here I must point to the excellent progress made by the BDSC under John Jackson's Chairmanship, especially in the formation of "Special Interest Groups". We now have 6 active SIG's - covering Aviation, Business Services, Construction, Communications & I.T., Financial and F.M.C.G. Sectors. As I mentioned in my annual address in December, the S.I.G.'s are becoming the nucleus of our group, since they focus on specific business interests and provide opportunities for involvement. I estimate that collectively the SIG's now involve more than one hundred members - representing around 60% of the group.

Last year, together with the Embassy Commercial Section, the BDSC initiated a 'Product Assessment Service' - where new U.K. products and services are reviewed to assess their

potential in this market and to identify match-making opportunities. This process has proved extremely helpful to many UK companies and the BDSC will continue with this exercise.

A particularly important new initiative we undertook during this past year, was the development of 2 web-sites to help U.K. Companies who are looking to export to the Kingdom and to identify business opportunities for our members. One web-site is planned for the three Saudi BBG's jointly and will be part of the D.T.I. web-site, the second is the RGBB's own web-site. The task force we set-up for this development, ably led by Ian Maddison and Noel O'Donnell, will give you a demonstration later this evening.

Another initiative was the introduction of 'Inter-Regional Meetings' between the Saudi BBG's. As a result we have agreed reciprocal arrangements for our members, such as the facility to transfer membership between ourselves and the BBG's in both Jeddah & Eastern Province. We are also continuing to explore other matters of mutual interest, for example the joint DTI/BBG web-site.

Moving on from business to social involvement; last year Paul Dugan organised seven social events and business meetings which included some notable guest speakers. These events were thoroughly enjoyable and well supported.

You will note from our Treasurer's Report' (which Kevin O'Brien will present to you later), there has been a marked improvement in our financial position. Consequently, the committee is

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