

Notes from the Eastern Chair



Geoff Fennah MBE
Chairman, British Business Association Eastern Province

I can't believe Andrew Mead is already chasing me for my EP notes again – 2008 is flying by reflecting the intense project activity and general business climate in the Middle East, and especially Eastern Province. I don't know how many of you were here in the 1980's for the last boom but to me the current level of activity seems to be much greater.

All sectors of the business community seem to be booming so let's hope that UK plc make some gains out of the current opportunities. It is certainly an interesting time for the major petrochemical projects with manpower and housing availability becoming an increasingly significant issue along with contractors declining to bid and equipment resources being stretched. Clearly a lot of challenges ahead if the startups scheduled in the 2011 / 2012 timeframe are going to come to fruition as planned. Time will tell.

BBA membership continues to grow monthly and hopefully we will see the 200 barrier broken during 2008. There has been some more turnover in the Committee ranks with the most recent addition being Malcolm Weaver (Al-Zamil) as the new Treasurer – welcome to Malcolm who brings a lot of financial expertise with him. It has been a quiet start to the year for BBA on the business front but we hope to continue our successful series of business dinners in March.

The Winter Ball was once again held jointly with the ABA at the Crowne Plaza, Bahrain on 6 December 07 and a great night was had by all who attended. The regular monthly quiz nights have continued in Khobar under the very capable management of Tony



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Mulrain – the number of attendees has increased so much we have had to move to a bigger room!! Jubail Group has also maintained an enjoyable social program including an excellent festive dinner evening, a Mexican evening and a night out at the Blue Strawberry.

We continued with our philosophy of going electronic with our communications in February 08 by issuing our first electronic quarterly newsletter. It is hoped that this move will greatly simplify our communications but we will wait for feedback from the membership before drawing too many conclusions. As indicated, in previous notes, our website has proved very successful and will continue to be enhanced as we move forward. If you need to contact us then contact me directly or send an email to our Secretary (Donna) at bbakhobar@atheer.net.sa or via the website www.bbaep.com

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