

At the request of the newly-formed Royal Over-Seas League Committee in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, His Excellency the British Ambassador, Sir William Patey, kindly hosted a Commonwealth Day lunch in March.

The guests were twenty ambassadors, representing other Commonwealth countries, plus the ROSL Founder Committee members. The British and Australian Ambassadors had recently become Patrons of ROSL Riyadh.

The Royal Over-Seas League (www.rosl.org.uk) is a non-profit, pan-Commonwealth club, founded almost a century ago. It has active branches in many parts of the World, and offers clubhouse facilities to members in London and Edinburgh.

After gathering in His Excellency's Residence for refreshments, on a glorious sunny day, the guests sat down to a meal which consisted of items from a range of Commonwealth countries.

The British Ambassador read out the Commonwealth Day message from the Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty the Queen – who is also ROSL's Patron. There followed a toast to the Commonwealth.

Sir William then introduced Paul Surtees, the Founder of ROSL Riyadh – who also had a hand, over recent years, in founding ROSL Branches in Hong Kong and Thailand. Mr. Surtees spoke of the importance of arranging gatherings at which the citizens from various Commonwealth countries could meet each other, leading to greater

Commonwealth Day in Riyadh and launch of ROSL in Saudi Arabia



international understanding and co-operation. The League plans such gatherings in Riyadh, with the kind support of the Commonwealth Ambassadors.

Later, Sir William proposed a toast to H.M. The Queen, and the Maltese Ambassador gave a speech of thanks to Sir William and Lady Patey, on behalf of all of the guests.

Mr. Surtees then made a presentation to Sir William, on behalf of the ROSL. This gathering, the first to mark Commonwealth Day in Saudi Arabia (where many Commonwealth citizens work) was also the launch party for the ROSL's Riyadh Committee.

Readers interested to join the ROSL should in first instance contact Mark Dennis, ROSL Representative in Saudi Arabia on rosliyah@hotmail.com

Pictured alongside is an obviously happy punter Chris Evans, who having paid SR8000 for a signed England Rugby shirt at the recent RGBB/ICING fundraiser, got a little bit more than he bargained for.



bmi Country Manager Robert Lickley was so impressed with Chris's determination to have the shirt that he surprised Chris with a ticket for the Calcutta Cup at Twickenham... and a return ticket from Riyadh to London to be able to attend the match.

bmi is the official airline of the England Rugby Team and is supporting the England Senior squad, the England Saxons and the Youth teams.

RFU Business Operations Director Paul Vaughan said, "It's great to have bmi on board as one of our official partners. Their strong UK network gives us the flexibility we need to effectively manage the travel needs of England players from across the country whilst their international network and Star Alliance partnership gives us excellent access to over 900 destinations in 159 countries across the world."

The shirt, signed by Lawrence Dallaglio and Jason Leonard had been donated by Graham Deane, President of freight forwarding company Forward Logistics who has now been set a challenge by the Ambassador to find a signed Scotland shirt for the next ICING fundraiser in May.

Wayne Curtis, winner of the ICING One Prize draw pulled at the RGBB Festive Ball will also be attending the match, once again courtesy of a tie up between Forward Logistics and bmi. Over 400 tickets were sold for the raffle which raised over SR40,000.

AND FINALLY

