



John H. Freel O.B.E.

The RGBB News is pleased to announce that John H. Freel has been honoured in the Queen's New Years Honours List with the award of an O.B.E. (Officer of the British Empire). He was cited in the Diplomatic & Overseas List for his longstanding services to British business and community interests in Saudi Arabia.

John has recently received notification from the Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood (St. James's Palace), that the investiture ceremony will take place at Buckingham Palace, London during May this year, where he will receive his award of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

His award comes at a particularly special time, since 2002 is the Queen's Golden Jubilee year.

John believes his award is partly in recognition of his involvement with the Riyadh British Businessmen's Group for the past 12 years (including 9 years on the Executive Committee and 4 years as Chairman). He has also been a Warden of the British Embassy since the Gulf War and is the longest serving Governor on the Board of the British School in Riyadh, which has over 1000 pupils.

When we called to congratulate John on his award, he said that he would like to express his view that, by association, this prestigious honour may further contribute to the good reputation of the RGBB.

Although modestly, he won't say a lot about it, John is also believed to have been in a position over the years to have assisted in the placement of large amounts of business to UK exporters of goods and services.

The Order of the British Empire was created during the First World War in 1917 by George V. The King recognised the necessity for a new award of honour which could be more widely awarded, in recognition of the large numbers of people in the British Isles and other parts of the Empire who were helping the war effort both as combatants and as civilians on the home front. For the first time, women were included in an order of chivalry, and it was decided that the Order should also include foreigners who had helped the British war effort.

From 1918 onwards there were Military and Civil Divisions, as George V also intended that after the war the Order should be used to reward services to the State, defined in a much wider sense to acknowledge distinguished service to the arts and sciences, public services outside the Civil Service and work with charitable and welfare organisations of all kinds. The Order of the British Empire is the order of chivalry of the British democracy. Valuable service is the only criterion for the award, and the Order is now used to reward service in a wide range of useful activities. Citizens from other countries may also receive an honorary award, for services rendered to the United Kingdom and its people. There are more than 100,000 living members of the Order throughout the world.

The motto of the Order is 'For God and the Empire'

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