

FROM THE CHAIR



Luke Bowen
Chairman

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board & all those members who have given so generously of their time and experience to steer the group through the last few months – this is reflected in the growing membership numbers we are now seeing. With continued support I am confident that we can continue this trend and surpass our previous membership record. The steadfastness of the British community in Riyadh has not gone unnoticed by our Saudi hosts and I believe that we can build on this to the benefit of UK Plc.

Commercial Activities

The new year started off with news of Mick Brown's very well deserved M.B.E. for services to British Exports. (There's a picture of Mick getting-his-gong on the last page)

In mid January we welcomed two new faces at the Embassy - Sharon Wardle Deputy Director of Trade & Investment, and her husband Peter Millman as First Secretary and Head of the Trade and Investment Section in Riyadh. They have both already shown their commitment to the Group, Sharon hosting Board meetings as the ex-officio Embassy representative on the Board, and Peter by hosting SIG gatherings and taking over as the embassy liason contact for events. (Peter has kindly penned a few words for this edition about their arrival - see page 32)

Below Lto R:
Luke Bowen & Colin Den-McKay check out the new tiles.

HRH with new arrival Peter Millman.

Sir Sherard & Lawrie Walker at the MEA reception.



HRH Prince Andrews visit was an encouraging signal that it was "Business as usual", re-enforced by a delegation of MP's who visited Riyadh at the same time. As well as his "business" appointments with the British Council, GOTEVOT and the Saudi British Bank, he also found time to visit the British School which gave the kids quite a thrill.

Over 30 companies participated in the very successful MEA/Water & Environment Trade Mission, culminating in a series of seminars at the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce which attracted a large audience.

Difficult to think of the Middle East Association without Lawrie Walker, however Lawrie, a great friend of Saudi Arabia, has announced his retirement from the MEA. His visit during February is 'probably' the last mission we'll see him leading. On behalf of all members of the RGBB both past & present, I'd like to thank Lawrie for his contribution to Saudi/ British business over too many years to mention. Good Luck & "Fee aman ellah" wherever retirement takes you.

Fundraising & Social Events

We were pleased to be able to fund a project at the British School to refurbish the entire pool area by installing hygienic drainage and non-slip tiles. The funds to finance this have cleared the total amount outstanding in the "Charity Fund" in our accounts which had arisen from fundraising events prior to 2004.

Our themed dinner evenings are now up and running again following the successful Curry Night – the next one is a Boules Barbeque on 5th May.

On the 19th of May we have organised a fundraising extravaganza in aid of ICING (International Children in Need Group), patron Lady Cowper-Coles, which promises to be a night to remember! Our Charity evenings are open to non-members as well as members so if you haven't already done so, get your names down now before it's too late

The RGBB Summer Ball will be held on June 23rd so ensure that you put this one in your diaries.

We look forward to seeing a big turnout of members for the AGM on 7th May and some new faces on the Board.