

courses in September 2002. This was the time of maximum growth at the school with nearly 1200 pupils ranging from nursery to Year 10/11, receiving a broad and balanced education from staff who were both committed and fulfilled in their work.

Every expatriate in Saudi Arabia knew that 9/11 would have serious and far-reaching repercussions. Tensions in the Middle East heightened in the early years of the new millennium and this had an effect on the whole of the expatriate community. The school suffered no serious effects until the Iraqi War and subsequent bombings in Riyadh. These had a direct effect on the school – both staff and pupils - as many members of the expatriate community decided to leave. Since the school itself suffered some bomb damage and several teachers were injured, the decision was taken to close the school for the rest of the final term in the 2001/2002 academic year.

What would September 2003 bring? Amazingly, 850 pupils returned along with the vast majority of staff. Many saw this a tribute to the school and the education it provided. In those terms, the year was a success and it culminated in excellent IGCSE results for our first group of pupils who had begun with high hopes almost two years earlier. 26% of all examination results were at the A* level and a further 26% were at the A level. (Remember, the pupils had missed a full term of their education). These pupils were dedicated and hard working, coming into school at weekends and staying after school to try to catch up on work missed. (Teachers were also willing to give their time to help this special group of young people). They deserved their success. Morale was also boosted by a surprise visit from

Below:
 RGBB Chairman
 Luke Bowen with
 the school business
 manager Colin
 Den-McKay in front
 of the plaque
 recognising the
 RGBB's SR49000
 gift to cover the
 costs of installing
 an hygenic
 drainage system
 and tiling around
 the swimming pool.



Prince Charles who spent a significant amount of time talking to pupils and teachers.

Sadly, the final term of the 2003-2004 year saw another heightening of tensions with shootings and kidnappings. Expatriates were strongly advised to send dependents home and this again had an effect on all international schools in Riyadh. Again, we found ourselves speculating on what September would bring. And yet again, numbers are healthy and we look to expand throughout the year. We have lived through this financial uncertainty and are now slowly but steadily recovering. Several companies in the community have provided welcome assistance in this recovery. In spite of all these events, the school continued to maintain the high standards of education we have always been proud to provide and will continue to provide to the British Community in Riyadh.

The school provides far more than an educational service. It is a vibrant and reliable centre for many areas and interests of the expatriate communities. Other activities involving children are organised at the school, and many other groups have used its facilities. It is often a topic of conversation among parents, whether about aspects of education, visits and trips or sporting events. It is also important for businesses in Riyadh; one important question that always faces employers when recruiting staff with families is: "What are schools like for my children in Riyadh". They have always been able to reply with confidence that their children will receive an excellent education and be happy at the British International School.

On the following pages are four articles written/researched by a pupil in each respective school house about the explorer after whom their house is named, along with a few photographs including another Royal visitor who came to the school earlier in 2005.