



FROM THE CHAIR

Full Speed Ahead

Riyadh commercial life in May and June promises to be hugely busy, building up to a crescendo of activity before abating somewhat during the mid summer heat.

Since our last edition we have held three in our series of "Special Briefings" - a winning formula. In December we commenced with a fascinating presentation from Mohammed Al Tuwaijri, Treasurer of SABB on "Finance & Oil - Middle East Market Trends" outlining some of the opportunities and challenges facing Saudi in the future. His colourful presentation was interspersed with just the right blend of humour, even identifying a possible link between market trends and the success of the Saudi National football team! This was followed in February by Mohammed Al Agil, CEO of Jarir Investment and Chairman of Jarir Group entitled "The Jarir Story - Going Public" - see page 27 and in April journalist & broadcaster Lubna Hussain presented "Lifting The Veil - Women & The Media in 21st Century Saudi Arabia" see page 25. Further Special Briefings in 2006 will include among others Khalid Al Molhem on the telecoms industry in June, Abdullatif Al Ashaikh on development plans for Riyadh in September, and HH Prince Abdullah Bin Faisal Bin Turki in December on the evolving investment climate.

The AGM was held on 29th April and we are pleased to welcome Nick Oakes of Electro Stores to the Board following a closely run election. Many thanks for the sterling work put in by Jim Milne who stood down. Board responsibilities for the coming year will be agreed at the next Board meeting on the 14th May. As the writer and Ian Crawford stood un-opposed as Chairman & Deputy Chairman, you will have to put up with us both for another year! I would like to thank Sir Sherard for his insightful expose of "UK / Saudi relations - 2006 and beyond" at the AGM, including news on a number of major contracts which will ensure some excellent UK/Saudi trade figures over the next few years. At

the AGM the RGBB took the opportunity to express our thanks to a stalwart of the British Embassy who is retiring after 24 years of service to the community - William you will be sorely missed - see page 40.

I have to inform you of the sad news that our Secretary Denise Douglas will be leaving us in the summer, as she will be returning to reside in Scotland. The good news is that she has promised to return to Saudi during the school Holidays! Denise, your indefatigable sense of humour in spite of the many provocations from us, has been remarkable and Board meetings will never be the same again!

It is encouraging to see that some of the Special Interest Groups are showing signs of life, although it is a bit like the curate's egg, good in parts! As a result of the survey conducted by Chris Maybury at the AGM, we will be looking at the views expressed by the membership, to see whether we need to adjust the focus of existing groups to reflect an evolving Business environment.

On the social front, a Valentines Ball was held in association with the Corona Society, many thanks to Philippa Kirkpatrick and her team for organising what we hope will become an annual event in the social calendar. At the time of writing the ICING Fundraising dinner is almost upon us, at which we hope to raise the necessary funds to complete the restoration of the Gail Bawazir School in Yemen, and to contribute towards ICING funds for other projects in the region.

The RGBB Summer ball will take place in June and we have confirmed 7th December as the date for our festive thrash. A number of other events are in the planning stage for the second half of the year.

Hope to see you at one or all of the above!



Luke Bowen
Chairman



Ian Crawford
Deputy Chairman



Bill Nicolson



Nick Oakes



Owain Raw-Rees



Graeme Douglas



Nigel Astbury



Chris Maybury



Sharon Wardle