Aviation SIG

by
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Nicola Quick as the RGBB Board Member for SIGs including Aviation has produced a unique relationship between the RGBB Aviation SIG and the prestigious Royal Aeronautical Engineering Society based in the United Kingdom. Looking for initiatives to expand aviation interest, Nicola recognised the momentum for furthering aviation interest both commercially and recreationally could be enhanced by focusing the two groups and moving towards delivering activities with a common interest.

Our thanks go to Nicola and Dr David Surah of the RAEs Riyadh Branch for the interest and co-operation in the joint venture and in the past few months several key activities have taken place. These included a well attended presentation on Parasailing activities operated at the weekends at Thama Park which is located close to Janadiriya.

The presentation at the Arizona Compound included demonstrations and fitting of equipment with member's being "cinched" into the harness and flight briefings by Martin O'Carroll. Our thanks go to Martin and Alan Hunt for organising and making the equipment available and Martin for the extremely interesting presentation. We look forward to the next stage and maybe some "airtime" for those brave RGBB members.

Another extremely interesting event was the visit by our members to the Royal Saudi Air Force Museum or Saqr Al-Jazira is located on the East Ring Road of Riyadh between exits 8 and 9. The Museum is easily recognisable by the Saudia Lockheed L-1011 Tri-Star that achieved an extremely short landing to serve as a Museum gate guard. Our hosts for the day were extremely hospitable and well informed and the visit was enjoyed by all. The Museum tells the story of the RSAF's development and the display halls contain exhibits on the history of the RSAF, aircraft engines and weaponry, uniforms, insignia and decorations and contains personal items from the 1985 space mission undertaken by H.R.H. Prince Sultan bin Salman, the first Saudi in space who rode as a payload specialist on the Space Shuttle Discovery on mission STS-51-G. Also located on the ground floor are four 'pods', which contain video presentations. Throughout the Museum there are interactive video screens to allow visitors to explore the history for themselves. Future

phases will contain a Mosque, Conference Room; Cultural Centre; three-dimensional monitors; Library and an Educational Complex.

Aircraft on display include:

- BAC Lightning F53
- Bell UH-1
- Bell OH-58
- De Havilland Chipmunk Mk 10
- De Havilland Vampire FB Mk 52
- Douglas DC-3

The DC-3 has been outfitted to match the aircraft given by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to King Ibn Saud in 1945

- Hawker Hunter F Mk60
- North American F-86 Sabre F model
- Northrop F-5E Tiger II
- T-6 Texan
- Temco T-35 Buckaroo A model
- Opening hours are 4pm-8pm Saturday-Thursday and is open to all

Our special thanks to the Museum Director and the Commander of the RSAF for allowing this very special visit for all to witness and for some relive aviation history. A further visit to the RSAF Museum will be planned during 2010.

Our "Group" mission is to assemble high profile speakers, companies and activities to embrace both groups and further the overall interests of British Aviation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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