

Illustrations are copies of the RGBB covers from 1989-1994. Anyone have any others?

and find them friendly, up to a point, but exhibiting certain characteristics which may hinder his replacement. Religion embarrasses him, especially in its public manifestations. He is not equipped to understand moral systems. He is not paid to do it. At three o'clock he goes home to a dip in the compound pool, to a piece of Dutch veal and a censored video; he goes to bed early, the air-conditioners rattling, and dreams of "Men Only" and "forbidden meat" sausages.

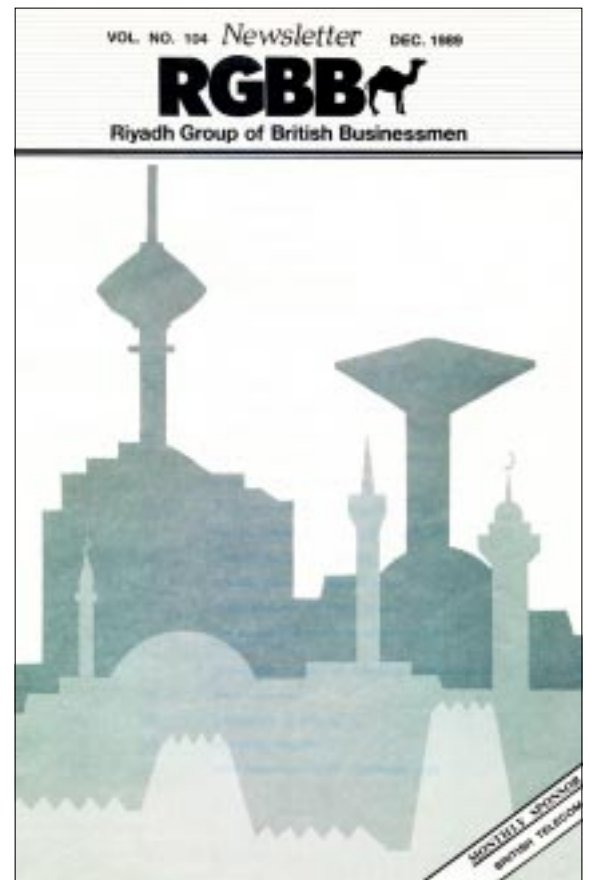
Quick in-and-out is the idea now; a couple of years max, he will say. But soon Gulfman is securely bound by his golden handcuffs. He always needs to do another year ... just for more security, then for a bit more. He may be paying off the mortgage and putting his children through a private school, or his parents through their hip replacement. He may be paying alimony, or saving up to have his tattoos removed. He might go to Australia, when he makes the break; for the UK is so cramped and cold and Mrs Thatcher is a leftist.

In daily life, he has everything he needs. The shops are well stocked. Shopping keeps the family together; because of the laws that segregate the sexes, few other joint and public activities are on offer. Nothing is cheap but petrol and flat Arab bread, but when he is in the Kingdom he lives frugally.

He lives on his expectations; he likes to plan his holidays. His outlook, though, has narrowed over the years. His family look forward to going to Hong Kong, and other places where they have heard the shopping is very good.

Gulfman seldom sees his Saudi colleagues outside work. Unlike the classic expat, Gulfman has no club; social life is conducted almost entirely in private houses, and is lubricated by uninspiring liquids. This double-think no longer bothers Gulfman. Daily life requires him to live by ill-defined rules, which he does not understand, and which are always changing. In the Saudi system, which has to reconcile a mediaeval theology with the pleasures and horrors of the 20th century, all inconvenient features of the world fall into a black hole. The Saudi newspapers do not report crimes, only punishments.

Current Ed's note: One of my first memories of Saudi, was being taken out to the Christian bypass near Makkah and being shown the result of driving too fast in the desert at night. These were two of the first photos I ever took in the Kingdom (1980) and the scene has stayed in my mind for over twenty years. If you have any shots of the 'Good Ol Days' let's take a look and see if we can publish in the next issue.



The English language press excoriates the Americans as corrupt, effete imperialists, yet for years something commonly called "the American missile base" has stood in the middle of Jeddah, proud behind its ostentatious golden gates. It has anti-aircraft missiles, people assume; they do not speculate about what else. It does not hide itself; everyone, obeying the custom of the country, simply pretends it isn't there.

(The then) EDITOR'S NOTE:

In spite of the Kingdom currently going through an unprecedented freeness of the media, the original article as published has been edited to avoid any possible offence to sensitive readers. Copies of the unedited version are available from the Editor on request. There are no prizes for guessing the missing letters in the title of this article!

(Sorry - Don't have it now - AM)

