

# Notes from the BBG Jeddah

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Despite the recent high-profile meeting of oil producers and consumers at Jeddah Hilton, this month one topic seems to have dominated BBG conversation above all others: We are saying goodbye to a very remarkable lady, Cecille El-Beleidi.

Following an earlier posting in Riyadh, Cecille has been Deputy Consul General and Head of UKTI at the Consulate-General in Jeddah for over half a decade; an unusually long posting for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

During her time in the Kingdom, Cecille has won the admiration of Britains and Saudis alike. She is one of those rare people for whom no one, no matter how curmudgeonly, has anything but praise. In particular, those of us who were here during the security crisis will remember how, to our horror, we were suddenly left without a Consul-General. Cecille took control, held the panicking community together, kept the Consulate-General running effectively and UKTI on an even keel. Schools and compounds stayed open and even the BBG carried on as normal, bar a few safety-precautions. It was a very considerable achievement by Cecille and her small team under very trying circumstances. It should be noted the FCO gave them permission to evacuate dependents and non-essential personnel, but not a single person left. Despite

the very real danger, they all stayed here with us and our own families, supporting the British community as never before. Let us not forget that.

Cecille has always been extremely supportive of the BBG, indeed of all community organizations. Even as she was starting to pack, she was organizing the repainting of the British Library! She is also a very accomplished jazz singer. Once might expect such a paragon of accomplishment to be a little vain. In fact she is extremely modest, always ready to credit others for her achievements, and will no doubt be embarrassed by this fulsome praise. Tough. She deserves it.

We wish Cecille well in her next posting, wherever that may be. The old cliché is absolutely accurate in this case: She will, very truly, be sadly missed.

We also bid welcome this month to Greg Gibson and his wife Janice. Greg will be taking over Cecille's former role and will be guest speaker at our next BBG event. Do come along to say 'hello', and let's make Greg and Janice feel at home.

Finally, I will say goodbye to those of you who are off for the summer. Stay safe and we will see you in September. Those of you who are here, don't forget the BBG summer quiz in August!



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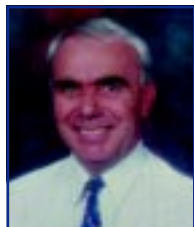
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