

# Notes from the Eastern Chair



Geoff Fennah MBE  
Chairman, British  
Business Association  
Eastern Province

In March, we said farewell to Terry Evans, Head of BTO and we wish her well in her new UK based assignment. We have also had the opportunity to welcome replacement David Harries OBE and wife Carol and we look forward to providing our usual support to both he and his office.

At our April AGM, we welcomed some new committee members - Terri Nicol as our Events Secretary, our new Newsletter Editor duo – Kirsty McMahon and Geraint Isitt – who have offered to put their professional editorial skills to work and generate a regular and interesting quarterly Newsletter and finally, Ewen Baxter as our Membership Secretary.

On the business front, EP is continuing to be busy with established projects moving steadily towards completion with a number scheduled to come on line in the 2010–12 timeframe. However, there is evidence that some of the newer projects, in the early stages of development, are showing signs of slowing down – economic problems catching up with us or just a timely opportunity to do some re-costing now materials, such as steel, have seen a fall in price. There also seems to be small signs of recovery in the world economy with the optimists expecting growth to return in 2010 – time will tell!

In June, we were pleased to host HMA Sir William Patey as guest speaker at our monthly business dinner. He delivered an interesting “State of the Union” talk providing an update on the strengthening relationship between both Kingdoms. It was good to hear that relations are stronger than ever both politically and with trade.

Don't forget RGBB members are welcome to attend any of our functions if you happen to be in Al-Khobar on business. If you need to contact us then feel free to call me directly, send an e-mail to our Secretary (Pamela) at [bbakhobar@atheer.net.sa](mailto:bbakhobar@atheer.net.sa) or via the website [www.bbaep.com](http://www.bbaep.com)

Below: David & Carol Harries greeting guests at the QBP



## Local News Round-Up

Several companies now offer regular email up-dates carrying news items from the region. Herewith a selection of items recieved by the RGBB News Editor in the two weeks before publishing.

### Camel Renamed

In case you missed it, the Arab News reported that the June 4 speech at Cairo University by US President Barack Obama was widely watched in the Arab world, including in the desert of Hail province where traffic virtually vanished during the address.

Resident's of one village gathered around a TV screen owned by Awad Khudair Al Shammari to catch Obama's words. Al Shammari, who owns and breeds camels said in honour of what he considered Obama's promise to solve the Palestinian issue he would do what any camel enthusiast would do as a gesture of goodwill: he named one of his prize camels "Barack Obama".

### Smoking Compensation Sought

Menafn.com has reported that a Saudi citizen has filed a lawsuit against two tobacco companies asking for SR37.5m in compensation for the health damages he suffered from smoking.

The victim had throat cancer and has been through major surgery losing part of his vocal chords leaving him unable to talk without a special device.

The plaintiff has told the Smoking and Drugs Awareness Association that he hope to build a hospital for treating tobacco addicts free of charge with the money that he hope to win.

### Earthquake

During May many of the local newspapers reported on the earthquake in the Al Ais region north of Madinah which had caused a total of 2289 people to be evacuated. 30 tremors of varying magnitudes measuring between 3 and 5.4 on the Richter scale were registered in one 24 hour period. Both Civil Defence and the Red Crescent have confirmed that there were no deaths or serious injuries.

### Time Off for Heat

Al Watan reported on 16 June that building contractors in Riyadh were giving workers a three hour break in the afternoons when the heat is at its highest. Fahd Al Hammadi, head of the contracting division at the RCCI acknowledged that there were parts of Riyadh where the temperature had reached 50 degrees and more.

One owner of several contracting companies was also reported to have said that the break would only be given on the understanding that workers would work harder during the mornings and evenings to compensate for the missing hours and ensure projects were not delayed.