

Notes from the BBG in Jeddah



Edward Ogilvie
BBG Jeddah
Chairman

Since our previous Chairman, Brian Hawley, stepped down at the BBG AGM earlier this year to focus on new challenges up the coast in Yanbu, I am honoured to be able to introduce myself as the new Chairman of the British Business Group in Jeddah.

As a bit of background, I have lived and worked out of the UK for the past 20 years taking up my first job abroad in Dubai in 1990 before moving to Saudi Arabia in 1993. Soon after my arrival in Jeddah, I joined the BBG primarily to facilitate networking contacts as well as to better understand the essentials of doing business in a country like Saudi Arabia. In 2006 I was elected to the Committee where I served as Membership Secretary for two successive years before becoming Deputy Chairman in 2008.

A key objective I have set for my tenure this year as Chairman, working together with the BBG Committee and in partnership with our colleagues at the British Consulate-General, is to focus on business development opportunities within the membership as part of the group's remit to promote the growth of British goods and services with Saudi Arabia. In this regard, we now have a new role on the Committee of Business Liaison Secretary. In addition, we have initiated the concept of co-opting members to actively assist the Committee, for example, by creating working groups which provide a networking forum for BBG members with interests in selected key business sectors in the Saudi market. The first such Special Interest Group (SIG) focuses on the Finance sector. A further SIG for Engineering & Construction is scheduled to meet early in July and we have plans to set up a Retail/fmcg/ Marketing Services SIG after the summer. Watch this space for further details or, if you want to get in touch with us directly regarding any aspect of business liaison activities, please contact Angela Brazier at bbg.business@bbg-jed.org

Below: Pictures from
the QBP in Jeddah



Given the relatively buoyant nature of the Saudi economy, and in particular in the Western Region, it is perhaps not surprising that we have seen a steady growth in membership numbers which currently stand in excess of 250. While the majority of our members are British nationals, we continue to generate interest and applications from non-British nationals (for Associate membership) and from Saudi nationals (for Saudi Affiliate membership). For further details regarding membership of the BBG, contact Sam Thanvi, Membership Secretary, at bbg.membership@bbg-jed.org

Finding the right balance of business and social activities for our members within an essentially business-focused group like the BBG is not easy. However, with the organising ability and experience of our Events Secretary, John Lockhart, and with the able support of our Committee members, the BBG usually gets it pretty right. Recent events have included the Survivors' Ball (celebrating the annual sports challenge between the BBG and our American counterpart, the ABJ. This year's challenge, by the way, ended with a win:win or, more accurately, a draw.) We also regularly arrange speaker meetings (the most recent being a presentation on the implications of the UK Bribery Act 2010. A complex and highly engaging topic!). On a lighter note, a Summer Quiz is planned for July – always a popular event for those members who are in Jeddah at this time of year. If you think you might be passing through Jeddah and want to check out any available BBG functions, please drop a line to john.lockhart@synovate.com

In conclusion, I wish a safe, happy and relaxing summer to all those and their families who are travelling at this time.

If you want to reach me regarding the British Business Group in Jeddah, please do not hesitate to contact me at bbg.chairman@bbg-jed.org or via the BBG website at www.bbg-jed.org

