

EMBASSY NEWS



The terrible events of 11 September hang over us all. As our Prime Minister has said, it was a tragedy, an act of evil. Our prayers go out to the victims and our deepest sympathies to the tens of thousands of people affected by the atrocities.

While the world waits and watches, everyone is being urged to try to return to normal life. In the British Embassy we are carrying on with business as usual. The explosion in al-Khobar on 6 October, in which two people died and four were injured, is a stark reminder of the need for vigilance. The Embassy continues to keep the British community informed of its latest advice through the Wardens' network and the Embassy website: www.ukm.org.sa Essentially, our advice remains that people should remain alert, take sensible security precautions and keep a low profile. We continue to monitor the situation closely and to review our advice.

Baroness Symons visited Riyadh on 30 September. She met Crown Prince Abdullah and Prince Saud al-Faisal. By the time this goes to print, we hope Abdullah Juma'a, President and Chief Executive Officer of Saudi Aramco, will have had a successful visit to the UK (15-18 Oct). Another Middle East Association Trade Mission is due in Riyadh from 22 October, with Scottish Trade International planning an Oil & Gas mission to Eastern Province in late October. In early October, we took an inward mission

Mike Nithavrianakis
7 October 2001

of five private sector Saudi companies to Leisure Industry Week in Birmingham. We hope to organise a large mission of leading public sector officials and companies in the water sector to visit the UK for the International Water and Effluent Exhibition (IWEX), also in Birmingham from 28 Oct-1 Nov. We are arranging a separate programme for the senior officials on this mission, to include calls on HMG, water organisations and companies.

The Saudi-British Joint Business Council will meet in Riyadh on 20 October, following its productive meeting in London in May. The Council is jointly chaired by Andrew Buxton (ex-chairman of Barclays) and Sheikh Abdul Rahman al-Jeraisy.

Robert Hudson, Trade Partners UK's recently-appointed Export Promoter for Saudi Arabia, made a familiarisation visit to the Kingdom in the first week of October. Based in London, he is on secondment from Hyder for at least one year and will be supporting our efforts to encourage greater numbers of UK companies, particularly SMEs, to look at the opportunities in the Saudi market. Robert has worked for Hyder in the Gulf for several years. As part of a varied programme in Riyadh, the RGBB organised a successful round table breakfast discussion, which Robert found extremely useful. We hope his work with us will include regular contact with the RGBB.

On the staffing front, Dominic Asquith arrived on 1 October as the new Deputy Head of Mission, Tareq al-Sharafa has joined us as a commercial officer from the Portuguese Embassy and Louise Blackwood has taken up her duties as the new RGBB Secretary, working from the Embassy every Saturday. We extend a warm welcome to them all.

Extract of a letter to John Goldfinch from Odile Hopkins

La Suppline 16th Aug 2001

Dear John

Please convey my thanks to all concerned at the RGBB who sent the beautiful tribute of flowers for Geoff.

I took a photo of it. It looked like a flower bed on the lawn. It was so big, simply gorgeous! It was very much appreciated by all our family.

I have just come back from England where another memorial service with his ashes was conducted in Bath where Geoff will rest with his parents.

Please give my love to all

Odile

