

### A note from the Eastern Chair



Colin Clarke  
Chairman,  
BBA (EP)

Is that another summer we have just bade farewell? Well I am pleased to report that generally our membership numbers at the half-year are holding up fairly well. Perhaps with the exception of Jubail, where Saudisation of the SABIC industries is minimising the necessity for Western Expatriate expertise.

Our Business Development Forum is planning a seminar on Construction for the autumn, which in spite of the delays to the much talked about and long awaited "Gas Initiative", should prove to be a topic of great interest.

As the growing population of the Kingdom continues to exert pressure on the present power and water infrastructure it surely cannot be too long before some significant programmes are announced. The funding of these very necessary capacity-building projects is another issue of great interest and importance, and the comfort that potential investors would gain from seeing the oil majors pouring their petro dollars into the Kingdom cannot be over emphasised, which makes very clear the importance of the ongoing negotiations.

We eagerly await the arrival of the next wave of incoming trade missions and hope to see some new exporters putting their toes into the balmy waters of our collective Kingdomwide market.

I mention the Kingdomwide market and wonder, is it the Arabic road signs in Riyadh, or the belief that we are only interested in Oil and Gas products that prevent so many "missioners" venturing further east? It will also be interesting to see if recruitment for these missions has been affected by the current regional difficulties. Would it also be prudent for our TPUK colleagues to consider a re-branding exercise? (Not another one - Ed.) Is there any possibility for confusion in being a target market?

Hoping for a successful H2/02.

With best wishes to the City Slickers, from the boys (and girls) from the black stuff.

With kind Regards  
Colin Clarke  
Chairman (yes again!) - BBA(EP)

### Eastern Province News

#### Business

We continue to support visiting British trade missions as they pass through the Eastern Province. The British Trade Office in Al Khobar is the central point of contact and they keep everyone advised of dates, the details of the companies visiting and they arrange appointments with individual organisations, as well as hosting receptions for the missions, giving them the opportunity to meet local businessmen in an informal atmosphere. The missions are briefed by the BTO on arrival in the Eastern Province, with the BBA putting in its two-pennyworth as well.

#### Social and Fund Raising

On the social side, we had a very successful Jubilee Ball in early June to celebrate HMQ's 50<sup>th</sup> year on the throne. Everyone looked the part (all posh frocks and black ties). There was much flag waving and singing (Land of Hope and Glory, Rule Britannia, etc.) and our Chairman made a moving and patriotic speech to the assembled throng. A much needed boost to morale after our disappointing performance in the football World Cup.

We continued to raise money through our regular quiz nights, with our usual practice of one local and one UK charity benefiting equally from our efforts. Last year we supported The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association by purchasing a dog. The cost was £2,500.00 which covers the first eighteen months of his life; i.e. until he goes, fully trained, to his new owner. He was born on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2001 and weighed in at 13 lbs, and is now well into his training programme. His name? Sid, of course!



Sidney at three months old (Feb 2002)

The summer saw the usual hiatus in the social calendar with many members away on holiday. The new season will be getting under way as you read this.

Other BGGs' members (in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere) are always welcome to attend any of our functions, be it our regular monthly lunch meetings or the evening functions that are advertised as and when they happen. If you are in the area, contact our Events Secretary, Mike Nugent, for details.