



# FROM THE CHAIR

## Momentum Builds

Saudi joining the WTO, the Kingdoms Budget for 2006, the goodies keep on coming!

There are encouraging signs that British companies are at last waking up to the huge opportunities that are available in the Kingdom, the powerhouse of the region. The Middle East Association in London underlined this at the "Opportunity Arabia" seminar organised on 15<sup>th</sup> September, which attracted 200 delegates from UK companies (see page 17) and was followed up by a very well supported Trade Mission to Saudi in November. Feedback from the missioners was extremely positive.

We are pleased to be able to report that our membership drive continues to yield dividends and I anticipate that we will break our previous record membership number (achieved in 2003) in the forthcoming year. In support of this objective, action has already been taken to sharpen up the presentation of all our communications, the results of which will be seen in 2006. Some new work has also been done on our website to include the "Newsletter Archives".

In September we held the first of a series of "Special Briefings" for members and their guests, featuring an address from Mutlaq Al Morished, Vice President Finance of SABIC (see page 8), who presented some truly staggering statistics on petrochemical spending plans in the Middle East and particularly in Saudi, which was very well attended. This will be followed on 17<sup>th</sup> December by a presentation by the Treasurer of the Saudi British Bank entitled "Finance & Oil - Middle East Market Trends". We have already put together a provisional programme of speakers from key market sectors that have agreed to address the group in 2006. Watch this space!

On the charity fundraising front, the Quiz night in September raised SR 12,000 for ICING thanks to your generosity (see page 10).

In November thanks to Sheik Abdullah Bugshan, the writer accompanied by Owain Raw Rees and Andrew Mead were able to hitch a lift aboard the Bugshan Business jet from Riyadh to Mukalla to attend the inauguration of the refurbished classrooms at the Gail Bawazir School. What has been achieved with the RGBB donation of SR 50,000 by the Friends of Hadramout was remarkable and the reception we received from the children and the teachers was tremendous, (see page 22).

As the year draws to a close, I would like to thank all of the committee for their unstinting support & for all the hard work that has gone into the RGBB in 2005 and we look forward to even better things in 2006.

For those who were unable to attend our Festive Dinner on 8<sup>th</sup> December (see page 18) may I convey to you season's greetings and best wishes for a happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year. Luke



Luke Bowen  
Chairman



Ian Crawford  
Deputy Chairman &  
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Bill Nicolson  
Treasurer



Public Relations  
Jim Milne



Owain Raw-Rees  
Events



Graeme Douglas  
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