

It seems so long since I was last asked to write for the RGBB News; the Spring edition I believe. A lot has happened over these last six months in Jeddah and the Western Province BBG so let me try and give you a brief synopsis of events and happenings in the "Jewel of the Red Sea".

Well we won. Anyone in the Jeddah BBG knows what I am referring to! The annual BBG-ABJ Sports challenge. Quite frankly, none of us in the Jeddah BBG can remember the last time we lost! It was the turn of the ABJ this year to host the "Survivors Ball", the traditional end of season dinner party. This was held at "Hero's Hall" at the US Consulate in Jeddah. This new facility was dedicated to those staff members who were tragically lost during the terrorist attack on the consulate the year before. The new US Consul General, Tatiana Gfoeller, kindly hosted this event.

BMI hosted a luncheon for the BBG membership to launch their new service from Jeddah to London Heathrow. Nigel Turner, CEO of BMI, attended this event along with his local Saudi team, as well as other members of the BMI UK based management. This was followed by a "Welcome to Jeddah for BMI" event hosted by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, our Ambassador to the Kingdom and Carma Elliot, Consul General in Jeddah, at the British Consulate Entertainment Suite. Both events were very enjoyable and informative for all those attending.

During this same period, a senior member of the Civil Aviation Authority in Jeddah was invited to be a guest speaker at our regular monthly luncheon. Those of you who travel to Jeddah have I am sure experienced the rather low level of standards at Jeddah airport and its facilities. Both Riyadh and Dammam have exceptional airport facilities and we wait for the day when Jeddah can match or exceed both. It seems, from the excellent presentation that we are at least five years away from such a situation.

We also hosted Clara Semple and the launch of her book "The Silver Legend" a remarkable presentation undertaken by an even more remarkable woman.

The BBG-Jeddah undertook to support a charity, the "Al Marikh Village Project", a cause close to the heart of Lady Cowper-Coles, with a donation of SR10,000 from its members.

The summer saw, as usual in the Kingdom, somewhat of a slow down in the events calendar, but we still managed to hold our regular monthly functions. July saw our usual monthly lunch, very well attended, in no short measure due to the fact that Carma Elliot, agreed to give a presentation to the BBG members on the role of the Consulate General in Jeddah. This was her final formal presentation to the BBG.

August saw a quiz night, again well attended, but not by myself I'm afraid, since I was sweltering in the

summer heat of London enjoying a wonderful 'Arab Weekend' at the John Madjeski Garden of the Victoria Albert Museum with some of our local Jeddah charities, ably supported by some of our most prominent Jeddah family ladies, giving this event a very Saudi flavour.

Back in Jeddah there were a number of farewell events for Carma as she prepared for her departure and return to China. The BBG hosted a wonderful event at the Movenpick Restaurant on the Red Sea with a very moving speech by Carma when the BBG once again donated both from the BBG coffers and personal contributions on the night towards a charity close to Carma's heart, The Fuling Orphanage. She was presented with a book, "Six Months in the Hejaz", signed by the committee on behalf of the BBG members.

On behalf of the BBG committee, my wife and I hosted a more private farewell dinner for Carma at our house.

The Jeddah community held a splendid dinner and review for Carma at Arabian Homes. I believe the Americans call this a "Roast"!

This month saw the traditional BBG Iftar held on the shores of the Red Sea at "Kanz Obhor". A wonderful evening, albeit a little humid sitting out side. We were very privileged to again have the honour of welcoming Sir Sherard and Lady Cowper-Coles to this event.

The final event in this period was the traditional Iftar hosted by Sir Sherard, Carma and our new Consul General to Jeddah, Gerard Russell, MBE at the British Consulate. This was a last opportunity to say farewell to Carma who left later that evening, and one of our first opportunities to welcome Gerard to Jeddah. His speech, in Arabic, was remarked on by all the Saudi and other Arabs present, as being remarkably good Arabic.

I would end by saying a last fond farewell to Carma, wishing her all the best in her new posting and a warm welcome to Gerard from the BBG community in Jeddah.

## Notes from the BBG Jeddah



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### BBG Secretary & Office Location

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The office will be open at the following times:

Saturday 17:00 - 19:30  
Sunday 17:00 - 19:30  
Monday 10:00 - 12:00  
Tuesday 17:00 - 19:30