



# Opportunity Arabia 3



Above: Ann Thompson gathers the team at the end of the latest MEA Seminar in Saudi Arabia.

Over 250 delegates attended the Institute of Civil Engineers in London to listen to a packed programme of speakers including RGBB Chairman Luke Bowen and previous RGBB Chairman, Paul Dugan. Another previous RGBB Chairman, Mick Brown was in attendance as one of the sponsors of the event. Indeed the British Business Community in Saudi Arabia was well presented with Colin Clarke, John White and John Lawton giving presentations on their own areas of interest and several other past and present members including, Owain Raw-Rees, David Budge and Sharon Wardle being available in the margins for one-to-one discussions.

doing well, and frankly, if the competition didn't bother to get out there, there would be more for him!

Other speakers spoke about the massive increases in government spending with Saudi officials mentioning figures of more than \$600billion on a range of projects.

UK exports, the previous year were valued at about \$3billion, which might indicate the scale of the opportunities now available.

Boom times in the construction sector are matched by the opportunities in Water and Power and with a population now nudging 28 million; Education and Training are key elements with about 25% of the 2006 budget allocated to this sector.

Despite the obvious concerns over security, both Michael Thomas, DG of the MEA and Sir Alan Munro who chaired the event spoke of the positive reception UK companies would get from Saudi companies only too willing to do business.



David Lloyd from the MEA will be leading a Trade Mission to the Kingdom from 4-14 December of this year. Interested parties should call +44 20 7839 6121 or email: david@the-mea.co.uk



Sir Sherard delivered his presentation in his usual inimitable style after Baroness Symons had opened the programme with her views as Chair of the Saudi-British Joint Business Council and former Minister for International Trade & Investment.

The seminar could not have come at a more important time. With the Saudi economy in excellent shape and oil revenues continuing to mount well over the budgeted levels the opportunities for British companies are huge across a broad market spectrum.

John Lawton told the audience that he wasn't sure quite why he was telling more UK companies to go to Saudi. His business was

