

Notes from the BBG Jeddah



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With so much happening between the various editions of the RGBB News, it's often difficult for me to know where to start. But let me begin by backtracking to the end of Ramadan when we held our traditional annual Iftar supper at the Hilton Hotel. As I am sure most of you recognize that the local weather is no longer conducive to an outside event which limits our choice of venue somewhat. Regardless, by all accounts, a great evening was had by all, including the children. I say 'by all accounts' as this was the first Iftar I have missed since we conceived this event some years ago. My thoughts were with you all as I took a white-knuckle drive from Dammam to Riyadh, immediately after a company Iftar on the same evening. Yes I caught my flight to Jeddah. No, I would not like to do that again!

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome to Jeddah our new Consul-General, Kate Rudd and her husband Mark. Kate was very kind to "jump in at the deep end" and be our guest speaker at the BBG event held at the Italian Club shortly after her arrival in Jeddah. Although immediately endearing herself to all present, this was considerably enhanced by her very prompt response to a number of questions posed to her by those present, the answers to which, were then circulated to all BBG members. Kate was able to confirm that both the standard 32 page and the Jumbo 48 page passport can now be issued in Saudi Arabia, however with the changes in Consular management across the Kingdom applications are actually processed in Riyadh. The normal service allows for a ten day turn around. Emergency arrangements are in place, however, this would mean a personal appearance at the Embassy in Riyadh.

Last week saw a visit of the RAF Red Arrows team to Jeddah. Although work prevented me from seeing the formal show in the afternoon, the fly past at noon was very impressive indeed. Those that did manage to see the display were also very impressed.

I must also include a reminder to all BBG members that we are coming to the end of the year, so new annual membership subscriptions are due and will be collected at all future BBG events including the State of the Nation Ball (SOTN). On the membership front it is also pleasing to note that we have reached the 200 mark for the first time in a number of years (actually 199 at the last committee meeting!). As

many of you are aware, the recent security situation and downturn in economic activity severely dented the BBG membership numbers in recent past years. With both of these issues behind us, Inshallah, it is good to see the BBG membership numbers creeping up and hopefully this is sign of better things to come for the Jeddah region.

On a sad note I have to advise you that Shirley Sedge, our BBG Committee Honourary Secretary has had to resign. The good news for her and her husband Keith though, is that they are both moving to Riyadh where Keith is starting a new job. The Kingdom has therefore not lost them! Shirley, Keith, we wish you the very best in your new home in Riyadh and are thankful for the opportunity to say a more personal farewell when you attend the SOTN.

Our next event will be the SOTN and arrangements are underway to make this as good as past years. We are already sold out and there is a long waiting list for tickets, but for those of you on the waiting list, please remember that things do change, often at the last minute. Our guest of honour will be our Ambassador to the Kingdom, William Patey and his good wife Vanessa,

On a personal note, I am quite proud and privileged to have been invited by HM Treasury to make a presentation in London in early December on Islamic Insurance. The Treasury is looking to adopt regulations to allow products coming under this banner to enter the UK market, not unlike their past work which saw Islamic mortgages, banking and sukuk's (Islamic bonds) allowed into the UK market over the past five years.

For those of you who remember him, Wayne Evans, who was head of our Consulate-General Commercial section in Jeddah some years ago, sends his regards to all that may remember him. Wayne is on secondment with IFSL (International Financial Services London) and as well as making a presentation in London during my visit, Wayne plans to be in Jeddah with the Lord Mayor of London at the Jeddah Economic Forum in 2008 so I am sure there will be an opportunity for him to meet up with old friends.

The BBG-ABJ Sports Challenge is now underway. Steve Taylor, our new committee member, is undertaking the Sports-Coordinator's role and all of the sports captains have been appointed. E-mails are on the way to you asking for participants in the various sports we will play this year, so please support your local BBG Sport's Captain!

My four year tenure as BBG chairman-Jeddah, has come to an end and my thanks go to the BBG committee and all of the BBG members for making it a memorable four years on my part. I am looking forward to seeing all who have booked a ticket at the upcoming SOTN.

The BBG office is situated in the
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The office will be open at the following times:

Saturday 17:30 - 19:30 Monday 9:00 - 12.00
Tuesday 17:30 - 19:30 Wednesday 9.00 - 12.00