

Aviation Group News



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Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) New Branch in Riyadh

The UK Aviation Industry has a proud history of trading with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, notable milestones being the Lightnings and Strikemasters, the Tornados and Hawks and more recently, the prestigious Eurofighter Typhoon project.

Way back in 1866, the Duke of Argyll and a group of aerial navigation enthusiasts formed The Royal Aeronautical Society. This unique group set about prompting heavier-than-air flight some 37 years before the Wright Brothers made the first successful powered flight.

From this early start, the Society has striven to maintain its position as a leader and provider of foresight, within the aerospace community. As a result, the Society and its members have, at many times during its history, been called upon to advise the government of the day and others on the best way forward.

During the Second World War for instance, the Society arranged meetings between aircraft industry leaders and the Services which allowed a free exchange of information, to the benefit of all concerned.

The Society also set up a technical committee in the UK, staffed by Society members, to advise the Minister of Aircraft Production on many technical matters and to avail the minister of any problems which they felt were impeding the war effort.

Throughout its history, the RAeS has clearly demonstrated to have stimulated the Aviation Industry and has been at the heart of advances in the state-of-the-art. Later the Society published Sir Frank Whittle's early gas turbine studies long before his "new" propulsion system received any official support.

Strong traditions and a distinguished history give The Royal Aeronautical Society a firm foundation on which to build for the future. The desire to emulate and improve on the success of the past is strong and the Society works hard to ensure that yesterday's achievements are the forerunners of many more to come.

World-wide, there are now some 70 branches and divisions of the RAeS, the newest has recently been set up in Riyadh.

During April 2006, Dr. David Surah, BAES conceived the innovation to seek out the possibility of setting up a branch of the RAeS, here in Riyadh. Over the

following few months, he lobbied the support of the British Defence Attaché and put the case for the new branch to Scott Philips, RAeS External Affairs, London, who indicated full support for the idea.

More brainstorming followed and in October 2006 a meeting was set up with HMA, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles to discuss the new idea. Sir Sherard was very enthusiastic and fully backed the idea.

During November, after some skillful marketing by Dr. David Surah and Scott Philips, the RAeS council of members voted in favour of the formation of the Riyadh Branch. This was a significant achievement, which was confirmed in writing during December.

After much canvassing by Dr David Surah and the British Defence Attaché, interested potential members were contacted during February 2007 and invited to the first ever meeting to discuss the formation of the new RAeS branch.

The meeting was attended by, Damian Turner (BAES), Mike Glover (BAES), Shahid Fareed (BMI), a senior British military representative Dr. David Surah (BAES).



June saw several brain storming sessions involving senior British military representatives.

In July, invitations were sent out to individuals who had previously registered a positive interest to join the new branch, to attend a formal meeting, during which, the

initial management committee structure was duly elected. HMA William Patey was elected as President.

During September, the first full committee meeting was held when a date was fixed for 09 December to hold the official launch reception of the new RAeS Riyadh Branch. Final arrangements were made at the November committee meeting.

The Official Launch Reception will be hosted at the Ambassadors residence with an impressive guest List comprising high profile Saudi officials, government entities and companies related and indirectly related to the aerospace industry.

The main guest speakers will be drawn from a team of representatives of the RAeS Headquarters in London.

There is a fair representation of RGBB members and we look forward to future cooperation with the newly formed RAeS Branch in Riyadh.