

PROUD TO SUPPORT



Bahrain Society

Summer Edition – August 2016



The Society Visit to Bahrain



For almost a year before we went on our trip to Bahrain Lynn Collins was negotiating Hotel and Airline rates on our behalf. With some travelling under their own steam, some staying on longer, some arriving from different airports..... We didn't make it easy for her, but with her hard work and fantastic contacts it all came together perfectly. We all send you a big "thank you" to Lynn for making our trip so successful

Bahrain Diary

Tuesday 10th May

We were met at the Airport by Mahmood Nagem Mahmood Mohd Ali and his team. Mahmood works for the Protocol & Conferences Directorate. Mahmood was our mentor, guide and fountain of important information throughout our stay in Bahrain. Lynn and Mahmood worked together on our visits itinerary. Our Base was to be the Gulf Hotel

Wednesday 11th May

We started our day with an early visit to the Bahrain International Museum for a meeting with HE Shaikha Hala Bint Mohammed Al

Khalifa, Director of the Culture and Art Directorate. After refreshment's and a talk Shaikha Hala was delighted to show us The Super Marine Spitfire MK X1X which was to be part of the 200 years Celebration Exhibition. Many will know that Bahrain collected the money to finance several Spitfires for the RAF during World War 2.

By 10am we were off to the Foreign Ministry to meet with HE Dr Dhafer Ahmed Alumran Assistant Undersecretary for GCC and Western Countries Affairs. Dr Alumran was most welcoming and very interested in the Bahrain Society. Refreshments were served and Doctor Alumran was a most delightful and interesting host.

Bahrain traffic is very heavy but to ensure we arrived on time for all our official visits we were provided with police outriders, for which we were very grateful. This is how we managed to pack so many appointments in to our programme.

After a quick change back at our Hotel we were off to the Diplomat Hotel for lunch with the BBBF (Bahrain British Business Forum)

where we were the personal guests of its Chairman Mr Khalid Zayani who is a member of the Bahrain Society.

The Lunch was to celebrate 200 years of friendship between our two countries. Our members were spread out amongst the tables and soon made new acquaintances. Mr Zayani gave a very warm and welcoming speech to which our Chairman Brigadier Peter Sincock replied.

Many new friends were made that afternoon. Happily we had time to catch up with Ava Garbutt from the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program who gave us an update on her students' progress.

After a short rest at the hotel we were off to the British Embassy to a Reception in the garden, where we were guests of the Ambassador Simon Martin and his charming wife Sophie. During the evening we were reunited with many friends of the Bahrain Society, which included three former Ambassadors to the United Kingdom which Simon had managed to get together for us.

Thursday 12th May

This was a trip down memory lane for many of our group who had lived and worked in Awali. We took a tour of the town and Lynn Collins found her family home. We then went to the BAPCO Club where we were met by management and offered refreshments.

Our tour around the Club took in the swimming pool where many of us spent our summer holidays. We then moved across to Al Dar where we were greeted by Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa Chief Executive of the oil and gas holding company (NOGA) who gave us a very interesting talk after which refreshments were served.

We were then whisked off to Manama for our luncheon appointment at the Officers Club where we were the guests of HE Lt General Shaikh Rashid Bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Minister of the Interior. His Excellency was the guest

speaker at our annual dinner last November. The luncheon was Bahrain Hospitality at its very finest. Charming luncheon companions, delicious food, tasteful surroundings and the orchestra made for a very convivial afternoon.

Early evening and we were off to St Christopher's Cathedral to a concert given by the Community Big Band conducted by Paul Bagshaw, great music and vocals. We were delighted to meet up with Reverend Chris Butt who came to talk to us a few years ago in London.

After the Concert we were off to the British Club where we were given a welcome reception on the terrace by the Manager and the Committee of the Club, this was a very pleasant surprise, as we had booked supper in the Ascot Restaurant.

Friday 13 May

Our day started with a trip to the Bahrain International Circuit our guide Umair was excellent and happy to answer all our questions. First stop was the Sakhir tower with wonderful views of the circuit and surrounding countryside. We were then taken to the Press Centre and then on to the control room.

Our Luncheon appointment was at the Royal Golf Club where we were greeted by our host HE Dr Dhafer Ahmed Alumran.

The circular glass restaurant overlooks the 18th green. We were treated to an excellent buffet of Arabic and British dishes. After lunch there was time to look around and take some pictures.

Our day ended with a visit to Amwage Island and the new areas surrounding it.

Saturday 14th May

Saturday was a beach and chill out day. The group visited the Sofitel Hotel at Zallaq for a swim and Lunch and on the way back visited Princess Sabeka gardens. Before managing a little souk shopping in Manama.

Sunday 15th May

Our last full day in Bahrain and early morning visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be reunited with the very charming Ms Alice Samaan who was the former Ambassador to the UK and a very good friend to the Society. She was looking very well and took time to come and chat to all of us.

Our final engagement took us to the Majlis of HRH Shaikh Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa in Rifa'a His Highness was very pleased to see so many of us in the party and talked about the 200th anniversary, he was keen to know how long we had lived in Bahrain.

It was soon time to say our good byes and His Highness said a special goodbye to his former Christopher's School teacher Helen Machlachlan.

Last minute packing and souk shopping took up our last afternoon, a few of our members were interviewed by the Gulf Daily news. Lynn Collins arranged a wonderful Farewell Buffet for us and then it was time to go to the Airport.

Due to an overrun of one of our engagements the whole group was unable to visit the proposed site for the new HMS Juffair as originally planned. The Chairman and a few members dashed over to the site before sundown to meet with Cdr Neil Benstead RN, the Project Manager who gave us a very quick trip round the site.

He was very keen to meet people who had been connected with the former HMS Juffair. Rodney Preece who had served at HMS Juffair was able to give him some information and contacts. We are delighted that Neil has agreed to come and talk to the Society when he returns from Bahrain in the autumn. Photographs from our visit to Bahrain can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Bahrain Art across Borders Opening at the V&A Museum

Society members were invited by HE Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa to the opening of the Bahrain Art across Borders at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London on the 25th May .

BAAB fosters excellence in visual arts through exhibitions and educational programmes and through a series of annual exhibitions and events to be held in different international cities each year.

The stunning display of art included paintings on wood and canvas, sculptures and glass were all beautifully staged in the magnificent surroundings of the Victoria and Albert museum.

HE the Ambassador made a welcoming speech followed by Mr John Whittingdale Culture Secretary and Kanika Subberwal.

While guests admired the wonderful displays they feasted on delicious oriental hot snacks and exotic fruit drinks.

A truly memorable evening.

Obituary

David Charlton Humphreys - 16th February 1922 - 21st December 2015

Many of you will remember David he was a great supporter of our talks and events.

David arrived in Bahrain with his family in the late 1950's as Judicial Advisor to the Ruler and stayed till 1962 when he returned to practice Law in England.

Shortly before his death David was presented with the Legion D'Honneur at the French

Embassy Residence. David is the gentleman on the right of this photograph.



New Members and membership count

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Society

Mr. David Biggin
Mr. Ian Brodie
Mr. R J Grey
Mrs. Sharryn Hill
Mr. S F Kemball
Ms. Dana Abdulkarim
Mr. Ahmed Alsuliman

The membership number stands at 348. Forty-two members receive their newsletters and correspondence by Royal Mail whilst the remaining members receive their copies by email. This makes a difference to the postage costs. If you have any queries about membership please contact the membership secretary Bob Cowell by telephone on 01483 770 896 or by emailing membership@bahrainsociety.uk

Visit to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

On the 9th March 19 members visited the Foreign and Commonwealth having fought their way through monsoon type rain, taxi drivers protest march and the striking Doctors march.

The Foreign and Commonwealth office was designed by George Gilbert Scott in partnership with Matthew Digby Wyatt in 1861 and finished in 1868. The building originally housed four separate government departments The India Office, The Foreign Office, The Home office and the Colonial office. It became a Grade 1 Listed Building in 1970 and underwent a 17 year £100million restoration which finished in 1997.

We were very lucky to have two tour guides with us and despite it being working office building we were treated to some beautiful sculptures and ceilings and very magnificent steel and glass structure by Wyatt (who also designed Crystal Palace) the Coffered ceilings of the Locarno Suite and the dome over the grand staircase by Clayton and Bell with the Frieze of Britannia "Mistress of the Seas she sends her sons to distant lands" each a great joy.

Evening with the Ambassadors

On 12th April 70 members of the Society together with our friends from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain enjoyed "An evening with the Ambassadors". The Panel of Ambassadors Sir Harold Walker (1979 to 1981), Sir John Shepherd (1988 to 1992) Ian Lewty (1996 to 1999) and Robin Lamb (2003 to 2006) each took the floor for a round 20 minutes talking about their time in Bahrain.

This was followed by questions from the floor, whilst everyone was kept in line by our Chairman Brigadier Peter Sincock. A Gourmet sandwich buffet and liquid refreshments followed the talk which was enjoyed by all.



Ambassador's Reception

On 11th July 80 Members of the society attended a reception given by Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Reception was held in the beautiful surroundings of the Members Dining Room in the Palace of Westminster. We mixed with the Ambassadors charming team and MP's from all parties who were happy to answer all our questions and keep us up to date with the day's happenings while we enjoyed afternoon tea with delicious sandwiches and pastries.

We were lucky to be present as our New Prime Minister arrived and a new chapter in our country's political history was being written. We thank HE the Ambassador for such a unique and memorable occasion.

Tea Party aboard HQS Wellington

The Honourable Company of Master Mariners floating Livery Hall HQS Wellington moored on the Thames since 1948, having first served in the Pacific during the Second World War protecting convoy routes was the venue on Monday 25th July for the Bahrain Society afternoon reception. The event celebrated 45 years since the formation of the Bahrain Society in 1971. This coincided with the 200 year celebrations of friendship between the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Bahrain.



L-R: Enid Billington, Mary-Sutton-Coulson, Maha Shahita (Ambassador's Personal Secretary) and Margaret Colley.

82 Members and Guests were welcomed on board by members of the committee. His Excellency Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khalifa together with members of Embassy staff were in attendance, as guests of the Society.



Margaret Colley enjoying the celebrations.

The afternoon commenced with drinks on the quarterdeck where members and guests mingled freely with friends old and new, whilst also enjoying the summer sunshine. A traditional English afternoon tea with Bahrain sweetmeats was served in elegance of the Court Room.

Brigadier Peter Sincock welcomed HE the Ambassador and talked of the continued friendship between Britain and Bahrain, before thanking Margaret Colley for her years of service as Assistant Secretary to the Society. Margaret who retired at the AGM was presented with a gift from the Society of a silver chain and palm tree.

HE The Ambassador followed by also acknowledging the positive relationship between the two countries, and the value of the Society in London. He then presented a gift to Margaret Colley and thanked her for her dedication to the work of the Society.



L-R: Ian Grimshaw, The Ambassador,
Sheila Millard, Tony Williams, Brian Millard

The afternoon concluded at 6pm, when some members took advantage of visiting the upper deck to view the continuous activity on the Thames and view the surrounding landmarks of the London Eye, St Paul's Cathedral, and Westminster. A thank you must go to committee members Laurel Winter and Ian Grimshaw for making this well organised event possible.

By Enid Billington.

Thank you

I would like to thank all of the Society members and the Ambassador for my beautiful gifts. I will miss meeting you all at our little gatherings, particular the pie and pint lunches with the boys!!! I will miss you all but we have had some great outings, all of which I will remember fondly.

With love, Margaret xx

Contributions

Contributions for the newsletter and suggestions for events, speakers etc. would be welcomed by your committee

Please contact Laurel Winter on telephone number: 01223 844471 or email: laurel.winter@ntlworld.com.

Committee Members

Brig Peter Sincock, MBE, Chairman
Sir John Shepherd, Vice Chairman
Mrs Laurel Winter, Hon Secretary
Mr Robert Jarman, Hon Treasurer
Mr Bob Cowell, Hon Membership Secretary
Miss Enid Billington
Mrs Wendy Brigden
Mrs Lynn Collins
Mr Ian Grimshaw
Mr Hasan Monfaridi
Mr Stuart Read

Forthcoming Events

• • •

Annual Dinner – Date and venue are yet to be decided. Notifications will be sent by Laurel when these details are finalised.

Photographs from the Society Visit to Bahrain

(diary available on pg 1,2 and 3 in this newsletter)



Mr Khalid Zayani, our luncheon host.



Lynn Collins with Mahmood, our Mentor and Guide for the visit.



Chairman Brigadier Peter Sincock and Secretary Laurel Winter welcome guests aboard the HQS Wellington

Further photographs from our trip to Bahrain can be found on the website in a specific gallery. The link to this gallery is <http://bahraingsociety.uk/gallery/>