

Embassy

NETWORKING FOR DIPLOMATS

CRISPIN BLUNT SETS OUT HIS AIMS FOR THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Foreign affairs chair launches EU probe

An inquiry into the costs and benefits of

Britain's membership of European Union is a priority for the Foreign Affairs Committee, its newly-elected chair Crispin Blunt MP told *Embassy* magazine ahead of the launch of the investigation at the end of July.

The MP for Reigate said the detailed study would be aimed at informing public debate prior to the in-out referendum.

The inquiry will look into how EU collective action has helped or hindered UK foreign policy objectives and how influential the FCO has been at directing EU common action.

Also under scrutiny will be the impact of a Brexit on the UK's standing in multilateral organisations such as the UN and NATO as well as key partners, such as the transatlantic relationship, the Commonwealth, and relations with the BRIC countries.

The extent to which the UK could continue to participate in EU collective action on an ad-hoc basis if it left the EU will also be analysed.

The Former Justice Minister and his com-

mittee will look into the legal implications of a UK exit from the EU, including the scope and cost of renegotiating the international treaties and whether the UK would be likely to get a good deal in any re-negotiations.

The future of the Union will also be examined, should a vote to exit the EU trigger a second Scottish independence referendum and the break up of the United Kingdom.

Part of the study will look at the impact on other EU states and EU institutions were the UK to withdraw from the EU, which will be welcomed by EU missions in the UK.

The deadline for submissions is 2 October. EU heads of mission have discussed whether it would be appropriate to participate and have concluded that Britain's exit from the EU would have an impact on their countries and therefore they should make their views known.

FCO to be quizzed over Libya

The Committee also launched an inquiry into Libya and will question the Foreign Office on



Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Crispin Blunt

the analysis that underpinned the decision to intervene in Libya and whether the FCO had fully considered the consequences.

Ex-soldier, Blunt criticised the intervention *continued on p2*

POP STAR RITA ORA MADE HONORARY AMBASSADOR BY VISITING PRESIDENT

Kosovo Ambassador with X Factor

British pop icon and X Factor judge Rita

Ora was appointed an honorary ambassador of Kosovo by the country's President during her a recent official visit to the UK.

Conferring the honour, Kosovo's President Atifete Jahjaga described Ora as the young country's "most successful" artist.

The Pristina-born star promised to wear the title "with great honour," saying: "I didn't expect to be a role model, least of all being ambassador, but I'm not going to say no."

She added: "I've always had a special place in my heart for my home town and Kosovo."

Ora received the honour at a reception attended by former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and ex NATO Secretary George Robertson, both key players in the NATO-led Kosovo war, leading to the country's independence.

During the visit President Jahjaga met with the Queen and Prime Minister Cameron. She



Kosovo President Atifete Jahjaga and Rita Ora

also had talks with Foreign Office Minister Baroness Anelay who later visited Kosovo.

The Minister announced £80,000 of UK support for the Kosovo Centre for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and the establishment of a Special Court on War Crimes.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Nuclear deal speeds Iran Embassy opening

Iran and Britain aim to re-open their embassies towards the end of the year, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said following the historic signing of the nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers.

Twist to Wikileaks asylum saga

The plan of Swedish prosecutors to question Wikileaks founder Julian Assange at the Embassy of Ecuador – bringing to an end his three-year asylum at the mission – has stalled due to last-minute disagreements between Ecuador and Sweden over conditions for the meeting.

The whistleblower is wanted for questioning over allegations of sexual assault, which he denies. He has refused to travel to Sweden fearing he would be extradited to the US and put on trial over WikiLeaks' publication of classified documents.

Time is running out for the prosecutors as two of the alleged offences will reach their statute of limitation on 13 and 18 August.

Embassy slams FCO in visa row

The Russian Embassy has accused the Foreign Office of a “flagrant violation” of its international obligations by delaying the extension of visas for Russian Embassy staff, resulting in their “forced departure” from the UK after their visas expired.

The Foreign Office said it couldn't comment on the details of these cases but said the UK approach “reflected arrangements” of British diplomats in Moscow.

The Russian Embassy said it was not aware of British diplomats experiencing problems extending their visas and branded the British action as “petty minded”.

The Russian Embassy claimed its officials waited an average of six months for the UK to conduct “deep” background checks before approving visas, including the Embassy cook.

Reshuffle of top UK envoys

It's been a game of musical chairs at the FCO following the election with some heavyweight mandarins changing posts.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant has taken over as National Security Adviser, while former Chief Operating officer Matthew Rycroft has succeeded him in New York.

Departing security adviser Sir Kim Darroch is likely to succeed Sir Peter Westmacott in Washington. Sir Simon McDonald returns to HQ as PUS, while HMA to Beijing Sir Sebastian Wood has moved to Berlin.

NEW HEAD OF THE BRITISH DIPLOMATIC SERVICE TOLD TO DO MORE WITH LESS

Perfect pick for new FCO chief

The London Diplomatic Corps has welcomed the appointment of Sir Simon McDonald as Permanent Under-Secretary (PUS) at the FCO.

Sir Simon takes up his post as head of the British Diplomatic Service after a successful tour of duty in Berlin which ended in a flourish with the State Visit of The Queen last year.

In Germany he was known for his wicked wit and his predilection for Pimms (he caused a stir as a guest on a German chat show when he turned up with a bottle of Pimms, seizing the chance to promote Britain's summer drink).

But it's no longer 'Pimms o'clock' for McDonald whose substantial in-tray includes the EU renegotiation, Russia/Ukraine, countering extremism, boosting trade and investment and keeping British citizens safe overseas.

Considered by insiders as an “all-rounder”, the 54-year-old has the right credentials for the job. During his Berlin post McDonald helped conduct shuttle diplomacy between Germany and the UK in an attempt to bring Angela Merkel to Britain's way of thinking on EU reform.

The Middle East will also be at the top of the in-tray. McDonald, an Arabic speaker, understands the complexities of the region having earned his stripes, first as deputy head of mission in Riyadh (1998-2001), and then as Ambassador to Israel (2003-06).

He also served as principal private secretary to the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, in the run-up to the Iraq war and later became Director for Iraq at the Foreign Office from 2006-2007.

On the all-important trans-Atlantic rela-



Sir Simon McDonald

tionship McDonald gained useful insights with a stint in Washington (1995-1998).

From 2007 to 2010, he was chief foreign policy adviser to Prime Minister Gordon Brown and head of foreign and defence policy in the cabinet office.

The new PUS will have to convince allies that Britain is back on the world stage after a period of introspection. Prime Minister Cameron has already put his money where his mouth is, maintaining NATO's spending target of 2% of GDP and overseas aid at 0.7% of GDP.

But that means the FCO will undoubtedly bear the brunt of Chancellor George Osborne's swingeing cuts of up to 40% of its budget, leaving the PUS as little as £650m to run the FCO's prized network of embassies in 168 countries. If that is to remain unscathed, cuts will have to come from somewhere else.

First to be axed were expense accounts of mid-level British envoys. So next time diplomats meet with a Foreign Office colleague, be warned it may be over coffee instead of lunch...

continued from p1

UK strikes in Syria 'symbolic'

saying Libya's descent into a failed state had been “a catastrophe” for the people of Libya and is a growing threat to Britain due to IS establishing control in Europe's backyard.

He added that the breakdown of law and order in post-Gaddafi Libya had contributed to the migrant crisis facing Europe.

The inquiry will look at whether the intervention in Libya went beyond the mandate of UN security council resolution 1973, which angered the Russian government and has since hampered diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation in Ukraine or to involve Russia in action against Syria.

Blunt told **Embassy** future inquiries include Britain's relations with Russia; the UK's approach to Political Islam; and investigating the UK's policy towards IS.

Speaking to the *Huffington Post* Blunt was sceptical that British strikes in Syria, mooted

by Defence Secretary Michael Fallon, would be anything other than symbolic.

Instead, he said the UK should be putting “diplomatic heft” behind Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan to get more involved because IS defeat would require occupation and administration of areas it once controlled.

Rainbow warrior?

Blunt's position as chairman of the foreign affairs committee makes him one of the most influential gay politicians in Britain.

As homosexuality is still illegal in 80 countries, LGBT diplomats face discrimination in some posts. So he was disappointed with the Foreign Secretary's decision to reverse William Hague's policy of flying the Rainbow Flag during London Pride. Whether this translates into an inquiry has yet to be seen.

PILOT PROGRAMME TO TRIAL NEW FUEL CARD FOR DIPLOMATS

FCO in talks over tax-free fuel card

Waiting months for VAT refunds on petrol purchases could become a thing of the past for diplomats with the introduction of a duty-free diplomatic fuel card in the UK.

The Foreign Office has invited Fin-Tech company Diplomatic Card Services-UK to run a pilot programme, in partnership with fuel card business Allstar, which is a major supplier of fuel card solutions to UK government and a number of diplomatic missions.

Digital Card Services has a proven track record in Europe, working with embassies and international missions in the diplomatic hubs of Brussels and The Hague.

"We are a flexible, transparent and reliable partner of the diplomatic corps," said Marc Stockbroekx, CEO of Digital Card Services, the parent company of Diplomatic Card Services-UK. "Our ambition is to make the diplomat's stay in the UK as convenient as possible."

The current system is unsatisfactory, according to the consultation survey conducted by *Embassy Magazine* which revealed that diplomats typically wait three to six months for VAT refunds.

On-the-spot tax exemption

Under the new scheme, those qualifying for diplomatic privileges in the UK will be able to buy tax-free fuel on the spot and receive a single consolidated invoice, eliminating the administrative burden of submitting TX10 forms and lengthy delays to reclaim tax.

All paperwork will be handled by Diplomatic Card Services-UK, working directly with the Foreign Office and HMRC.



"There will be no more hassle with receipts, no more paperwork to be done. Tax-free privileges are digitalised and run automatically for the diplomat," said Stockbroekx. "The only worry diplomats will have in the future, is not to lose their Diplomatic Fuel Card, but even that will not be a problem as we can provide a replacement card within 48 hours," he added.

Wide network of fuel stations

Diplomats will also have access to Allstar's network of more than 7,800 fuel stations for

both diesel and petrol and will be able to shop around for the best pump price.

"The breadth of our network means that diplomats aren't restricted to a specific brand or location," said Peter Bridgen, MD of Fleetcor, the parent company of Allstar Business Solutions. "We are looking forward to providing a service that will allow diplomats to get on with their jobs with limited admin," he added.

Pending a successful pilot, the plan is to open the programme to all missions by the end of 2015. For details on how to participate in the pilot programme, see information below.

The Diplomatic Fuel Card team will be at the Diplomatic Induction Seminar on 16 October. There will be regular updates on the pilot in *Embassy Magazine*.

Diplomatic Card Services UK welcomes your views. If you have suggestions on how the system could work, contact info@diplomaticcard.co.uk. For further information, visit www.diplomaticcard.co.uk

How to participate in the Fuel Card Pilot Programme

The parameters of the Diplomatic Fuel Card pilot programme are as follows:

- The fuel card pilot will run from October to November.
- Diplomatic Card Services UK are seeking two diplomats from **25 diplomatic missions** to volunteer for the pilot programme.
- One will be a private user, the second will be using an official vehicle.
- **Three transactions** during the two-month pilot period.
- Each participant will receive an average of **£140 free fuel** for the pilot.

If you would like to participate, email info@diplomaticcard.co.uk

DIPLOMATS ALLEGED CRIMES AND FINES INCREASE

Outstanding congestion charge bill nears £90m

London's embassies owe £84 million in

unpaid congestion charges Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond has told Parliament.

Topping the league of indebted missions with a bill of £9.4m was the US Embassy with more than 80,000 fines, followed by Japan (£6.4m) and Nigeria (£5.3m).

These embassies, along with more than half the resident diplomatic missions in the UK, refuse to pay because they consider the charge to be a tax and therefore in breach of the Vienna Conventions.

A total of 76 missions owe more than £100,000, up from 68 missions in 2014.

The FCO claims the charge is legal under international law because diplomats are paying for the benefit of reduced congestion.

Diplomatic missions also racked up 5,300 parking fines, totalling more than half a million pounds (£536,289). After consultations, the FCO recovered £214,154 of the debt, leaving £322,135 in unpaid fines, down 6.4% on last year's figure of £344,176. The Nigerian High Commission owes the most (£49,235), a third less than their bill of £74,557 in 2013.

Missions owe more in council tax

The Foreign Secretary also reported that in 2014 missions owed £726,076 in outstanding non-domestic rates, to pay for local services. This is up 7% from 2013, but £72,137 of this is owed by Iran, which is in the process of reopening its embassy in the UK, and Syria, which is not currently represented in the UK.

Criminal activity up

Fourteen serious offences were allegedly committed by diplomats in 2014. Twelve of these were driving related, one was for the possession of a firearm and a third was for cyber crime. The list excludes four offences of conspiracy to cheat HMRC out of £4.8m in VAT and excise duty between 2009 and 2012, for which four former Gambian diplomats were convicted in 2014.

For a community numbering 22,500, 14 alleged offences represent a small proportion. Apart from the fraud committed by staff at the Gambian and Ugandan missions, the alleged offences committed by the diplomatic corps is on a downward trend following the FCO's decision to 'name and shame' missions.

CONSULAR NEWS

New Visitor Victim Service

The newly-launched International Visitors Victim Service gave a talk to consular staff at an event hosted by the Canadian High Commission.

The IVVS provides free, confidential, emotional and practical support for international visitors who have been the victims of crime, from theft to violent offences or sexual assault.

The IVVS is funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and is delivered by Victim Support.

Two International Visitor Advocates (IVAs) are based in the West End Central Police Station. Launched in January, it has already assisted in over 130 cases.

The service will give practical support for visitors including a language line, liaising with hotels and travel agents, re-booking flights, and helping with money transfer agencies and banks. Food vouchers and financial assistance can also be provided to those in need.

The IVVS works with consuls to assist victims in obtaining travel documents and to contact the victim's family.

Deputy High Commissioner Alan Kessel said initiative was an "excellent complement" to the assistance consuls provide to citizens in difficulty.

International Visitor Advocates are based at West End Central Police Station, 27 Saville Row, tel 020 7321 8879

NEW ANTI MODERN SLAVERY COMMISSIONER ADDRESSES CONSULAR CORPS OF LONDON

Consuls key to combating slavery

Consuls are in the frontline of efforts to tackle modern slavery, Britain's first Anti-Modern Slavery Commissioner told the Consular Corps in the run-up to the Modern Slavery Act coming into force at the end of July.

"International collaboration is central to the new Modern Slavery Act," said Commissioner Kevin Hyland who pledged to work more closely with consulates in the UK.

"Consular staff are often the first contact between victims of human trafficking and the authorities in their own country and they have an important role to play, whether it be in prevention, identifying potential victims, advising citizens of safe migration paths and educating colleagues on how to recognise those at risk of slavery," he explained.

Consuls do valuable work in victim support which is a key feature of the new Act, said Hyland: "Consuls help by referring victims to relevant service providers and assisting victims with new documentation which may have been confiscated as a means of coercion."

Hyland encouraged consuls to share information with law enforcement agencies to assist in criminal proceedings and to alert them of any suspicious activity, such as an unusual surge in reports of lost passports which could be a sign of trafficking.

He also offered to provide training for consuls to help them identify potential victims of trafficking or suspicious activity.

Outlining the new Act, Hyland said it would target the criminals behind modern slavery



while giving more protection to the victims.

The maximum sentence available for the most serious modern slavery offences has been increased to life imprisonment. Perpetrators will also be subject to the Proceeds of Crime Act, meaning their assets will be seized and the proceeds passed on to victims as reparations.

Victims who had been compelled to commit crimes as a consequence of their enslavement will be given a statutory defence in all but the most serious cases. Special court procedures, such as screening victims from the accused, giving evidence in private, or video link are some of the options available to encourage victims to come forward.

The Act will also partner with British businesses to tackle exploitation in international supply chains. "All businesses above a certain threshold have a legal duty to disclose the steps they have taken to ensure that modern slavery does not take place in their supply chain anywhere in the world," explained Hyland.

ROWLAND BROTHERS INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON MISSING PEOPLE

Tracing missing foreign nationals in the UK

One person is recorded as missing every two minutes in the UK consuls learned at a Consular Corps Missing People seminar hosted at the Belgian Embassy in cooperation with Rowland Brothers International.

Joe Apps, Manager of the UK Missing People Bureau explained how his organisation works with consulates in London and British consulates and police authorities abroad to find the missing and identify the found.

Since the UK joined the Schengen Information System II in April this year, the Bureau is able to issue a Europe-wide alert on missing people and have access to vital data that can help trace a missing person.

The Bureau works closely with Missing People, a charity that raises public awareness when a person goes missing.

Lucy Holmes, the research manager at the charity, explained the resources available to



Belgian Ambassador Guy Trouwroy welcomes consuls to the Missing People seminar

consuls when a foreign national goes missing, from posters to social media.

For their 'Big Tweet For Children' the charity encourages the public, including celebrities with thousands of Twitter followers, to retweet missing person appeals.

Holmes also recommended consuls sign up to the Child Rescue Alert (CRA) system which issues alerts when a child goes miss-

ing in the UK and is in imminent danger.

Two-thirds of missing people (140,000) involve children and young people, including complex cases of parental child abduction.

Consuls were advised by Jacqueline Renton of the charity Parents and Children Together (PACT) on appropriate legal measures to take when assisting a citizen to prevent a potential child abduction case or steps to take when a child has been abducted.

UK Missing Persons Bureau: tel 01344 630556, <http://missingpersons.police.uk>

Missing People: helpline 116 000, email 116000@missingpeople.org.uk, visit www.missingpeople.org.uk

PACT: visit www.pact-online.org

Child Rescue Alert: <http://childrescuealert.org.uk/>

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APPEAL FOR BETTER ENGAGEMENT WITH CONSULATES IN CHILD PROTECTION CASES

Rise in forced adoption of migrant children alarms consuls

Consuls have urged child protection services in England to work with them as concerns grow over increasing numbers of migrant children being taken into foster care.

At a round table discussion hosted by the Slovak Embassy, Central European consuls reported that child protection cases involving their nationals had grown steadily in the decade since EU accession, from under 10 in 2004 to 140 Polish cases.

Calling for more transparency in child protection cases, Latvian Ambassador Andris Teikmanis said an atmosphere of “mutual mistrust” existed between consulates and social workers.

Britain’s adoption laws, which allow for non-consensual adoption, were of particular concern, leading to accusations by families that social workers were “stealing [their] children” and robbing them of their culture.

Sir James Munby, President of the Family Division of the Court of Appeal, called on social workers to comply with the Vienna Convention and notify consulates immediately if a child protection case involved a foreign child.

Munby added that judges should apply Article 15 of the Brussels II Regulation and decide at an early stage whether the case could be transferred to a foreign court.

Addressing the seminar, Slovak Ambassador Miroslav Wlachovský remarked that consuls did not want to interfere with the process but “simply wanted to help”.

The Polish and Slovak consulates have set up units that provide legal and psychological support to families and can assist child protection services in locating extended families or finding foster carers from the child’s own culture based in the UK.

Consuls also offered to put social workers in contact with the relevant central authorities in the child’s home country when conducting expert assessments.

However, instances of English social workers conducting independent investigations in other countries without notifying the central authorities had “caused resentment” said Sir Mathew Thorpe, the former Head of International Family Justice for England and Wales. He



appealed for a pan-European approach to child protection issues and a better understanding of family justice between EU countries.

Justice Jill Black proposed the creation of an EU-wide information resource and asked consuls to identify issues that crop up repeatedly in cases of cross-border child protection.

Vice President of the European Parliament Mairead McGuinness said ways needed to be found to promote better linkages between central authorities and look at cross-border care arrangements. “We can work and learn from each other to do things better,” she concluded.

CCL EXCLUSIVE TOUR OF DOWNING STREET

Behind the scenes at Number 10

For the select group of consuls visiting 10 Downing Street this summer it was like entering Dr Who’s Tardis – behind the famous black door, it was so much bigger.

The backstage tour of the Prime Minister’s Residence revealed a seldom told, yet touchingly human side of British political history.

In the entrance passage was an old leather chair that looked like it had been through the wars. In fact it had: the gnarled marks on the armrests were made by Winston Churchill’s signet rings as he clenched his fists during WWII.

The Cabinet Room has a boat (or coffin) shaped table so that all members have sight of the Prime Minister in the middle, with his most senior ministers at the centre. The additional clock opposite his seat was left behind by Harold Wilson, a stickler for punctuality.

An imposing portrait of Margaret Thatcher (commissioned by Gordon Brown) hangs in her former office where she would sometimes work until the small hours in her nightgown.

The White Room, with its two Turner landscapes, is the most photographed room where British Prime Ministers receive VIP guests.

The room has reinforced windows – scars of an IRA mortar fired from the back of a van in Whitehall, which only missed its target because overnight rain had washed away the



Consuls outside the famous 10 Downing Street door

chalk marking the correct launching spot.

The reception room, which is unnervingly draughty, is apparently haunted by a little girl.

Priceless treasures include Olympic medals and a torch gifted by boxing gold medallist Nicola Adams. Solid gold salad servers in the dining room were used on only one of two occasions when the Queen visited Downing Street to celebrate her Golden Jubilee with surviving Prime Ministers of her reign.

Striking silver candelabra on the table are from the Silver Trust which showcases the

work of British silversmiths, a cause still supported by Sir John Major.

Art works are from the Government Art Collection and reveal something about the tastes of prime ministers past and present. There are Henry Moore sculptures (Margaret Thatcher was an admirer) and a bright pink neon sign saying *More Passion*, one of David Cameron’s favourites, by the enfant terrible of the British art scene, Tracy Emin.

A huge globe sits at the bottom of the stairwell, a gift from French President Francois Mitterrand to Margaret Thatcher. It raised eyebrows when it was discovered that the Falklands are named Malvinas – an oversight by the President or a subtle diplomatic dig?

The stairwell is lined by portraits of past prime ministers dating right back to Downing Street’s first occupant, Sir Robert Walpole. It includes Spencer Perceval, the only British Prime Minister to be assassinated.

The story behind the murder even has a consular twist: the assassin was John Bellingham (an ancestor of former Africa Minister Henry Bellingham!), who bore a grudge against Perceval’s government and the British Embassy in Russia for refusing to assist him while he was in jail over there.

A salutary lesson for the consuls...

.....
MILESTONE FOR CONSULAR SERVICES PARTNER

VFS Global reaches 100 million visas

Outsourcing giant VFS Global reached a milestone at the end of May, processing 100 million visa applications – as many as the entire population of the Philippines.

Marking the achievement, CEO of VFS Global, Zubin Karkaria, said it was “a very proud moment” for the company, which currently works with 45 client governments in 120 countries.

Starting out in 2001, VFS provided outsourcing solutions to overloaded consulates by facilitating visas applications, but the company soon responded to evolving needs of client governments such as biometric enrolment for issuing secure travel documents or residence permits. Today these integrated identity management services support efficient and secure border management for client governments.

Over the years VFS Global has adapted their 1600 visa application centres to provide high-tech bespoke solutions for client governments, such as video interviewing hubs with the UK Home Office for student visa applications and their award-winning Location Independent Document Processing Solution with the Government of Finland, which enables the management of remote visa processing at multiple locations in Russia.



Consuls join Chris Dix of VFS to cut the ribbon opening VFS Global's joint visa application centre (JVAC)

These technologies were showcased in London when VFS opened a new state-of-the-art Joint Visa Application Centre for 17 diplomatic missions.

“We embrace technology and leverage it to develop innovative solutions which support the vision and requirements of our client governments,” said Karkaria. “This

milestone also reflects the trust and credibility we have built with governments across the world.”

For information on outsourcing your consulate's visa operations to VFS contact Ashwin Balse on ashwinb@vfsglobal.com

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SIR PETER HENDY ADDRESSES THE AERL

TFL chief calls for tax devolution

London's departing transport commissioner has called for more of the taxes raised in London to be retained by the city's authorities to finance infrastructure projects vital to keep the city moving during a period of historic expansion.

Speaking at an AERL meeting, Sir Peter Hendy said with a population of 8.6 million London was growing at its fastest rate in 150 years and further infrastructure investment was needed to keep the city competitive, relieve congestion, open up new areas for housing and improve air quality.

Hendy has worked with two London mayors and oversaw huge infrastructure projects in the run-up to the Olympics as well as Crossrail, Europe's largest engineering project. Improvements have meant that a record 4.73 million people can now travel on the Tube in one day.

Challenge for new London mayor

But the new Mayor will face the challenge of smaller government grants which by 2020 will only cover capital investment, said Hendy.

"Funding has been hard to find during the world recession," he said, adding that long-term planning and innovative financing of day-to-day operations and projects such as Crossrail 2 were critical to keep London moving.

Hendy estimated that 50% of the £22-25bn needed to build Crossrail 2 would have to be generated by the city itself.

But scope for further fare hikes and savings were limited, he said. TFL has already made



Sir Peter Hendy

£16bn in efficiencies, including the axing of 1400 jobs, which put Tube bosses on a collision course with the transport unions.

Hendy pointed to alternative funding methods such as building on TFL's prime real estate for housing to generate income.

Rising rates derived from new properties built as a result of improved transport links was another option. This part-financed the Northern Line extension to which will serve the new US Embassy.

Easing London's congested roads is a priority. More cycle paths are planned but retro-fitting London's ancient road network with segregated cycle lanes has been a challenge.

AERL members visited TFL's Surface Transport Control Centre which uses a sophisticated signalling system to manage traffic flow.

Digital and mobile technology had revolutionised the way TFL communicates with its customers. By making its live data publicly available more than 500 apps have been created to help Londoners get around the capital easily. "The best app for the Tube was designed by an Australian banker in Sydney!" he joked.

Smart technology has spurred the growth of businesses such as cab company Uber, which is challenging traditional London taxis and has led to a surge in the number of cabs for hire on the roads, raising questions about whether licensing regulations are fit for purpose.

"Not every technical development is under our control and we have to adapt," he said.

CLUB NEWS IN BRIEF

All Hands on Deck!

The YDL set sail for summer with a boat trip down the Thames. The weather was typically English but the Young Diplomats didn't let that dampen their spirits...



For more information on joining the YDL contact info@YDLondon.org.uk

Press club visits

London's association for press attachés (DPAAL) arranged a series of site visits in the run-up to summer including a tour of BBC's Broadcasting House and a visit to the foreign affairs magazine, *The Monocle*. More tours are expected in the autumn with a visit to Sky studios, meetings with press regulator IPSO and *The Spectator*.

For more information on joining DPAAL contact dpaal@dpaal.org.uk

ECONOMIC NEWS ROUND-UP

FCO Chief Economist at YDL

Shamik Dhar, who heads the FCO's economic unit, set out to YDL members the risks facing the global economy that are shaping UK foreign policy and setting export targets.

These include prolonged secular stagnation, particularly a lack of demand in Europe; a possible overreaction to future US interest rate rises; a Greek exit from the Eurozone; and a slowdown in the Chinese economy and other BRIC economies.

But he said the rise of new technologies may counterbalance the negative economic forces.

Foreign Policy of Geo-economics

The AERL hosted a talk at the Swiss Embassy by Mark Leonard, co-founder of the European Council on Foreign Relations, on the subject

of geo-economics and how economics was being used to "weaponise" the global system. "Weapons" included the use of sanctions; the failure of the Doha Round and the rise of rival economic blocs that "hollow out" weaker peripheral countries; the re-emergence of state capitalism; and the use of infrastructure as a tool of foreign policy.

International Festival of Business

The AERL, in cooperation with Council of British Chambers of Commerce was given a presentation by Chris Heyes, Head of International at IFB2016, on how trade missions can participate in the festival of business.

For information on joining AERL contact info@aerlondon.org.uk



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On the Fringes

with Elizabeth Stewart

Offering hospitality to migrants

Watching scenes of migrants camped out in Calais reminded me of an inspiring lecture given by Albanian Ambassador Mal Berisha at the US Embassy.

It was on the life of Hermann Bernstein, the Jewish Lithuanian-born US Ambassador to Tirana in the run-up to WWII, who persuaded Albania's King Zog to create a safe haven for Jews in the early 1930s as they faced persecution across Europe.

King Zog duly instructed all Albanian Consular Missions in Europe to grant visas to any Jews fleeing persecution.

As a consequence Albania, with its majority Muslim population, is the only country in Europe whose Jewish population increased during WWII.

Ambassador Berisha referred to the testimonies of exhausted Jewish refugees, who went from consulate to consulate all over Europe, finally to be granted a life-saving visa by Albanian consuls.

And because of the noble Albanian tradition of *Besa* – offering hospitality to a stranger in need – Albanians risked their lives to offer shelter to these refugees.

So when EU diplomats sit around the negotiating table to figure out how to solve the migrant crisis, remember Hermann Bernstein and the Albanians. We would do well to follow their example.

BELIZE FIRST LADY ADDRESSES WOMEN IN DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

Elect woman for Commonwealth SG

The wife of the Prime Minister of Belize

has called on Commonwealth heads of government to elect a woman Secretary General ahead of the CHOGM in Malta.

Speaking at the AGM of the Women in Diplomatic Service at the Jamaican High Commission, Mrs Kim Simplis Barrow said that an organisation that claims to promote gender equality should elect a woman to lead it.

Unofficially it is the turn of the Caribbean to put forward a candidate but leaders have been unable to come to a consensus over which candidate should represent the region.

Of the three in the running, only one, former UK Attorney General, Dominican-born Baroness Patricia Scotland, is a woman.

Meanwhile the African states have put forward a candidate, Ms Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba from Botswana, a former deputy secretary general of the Commonwealth.

Ms Simplis Barrow said more should be done to promote women in leadership positions. She has been commended for her work as special envoy for women and children in Belize and she is involved in creating a forum for first ladies so that they can use their influence to effect positive change in their countries.

In her address to the AGM she said diplomacy was still a “man’s world” quoting an **Embassy** survey that only 15% of heads of mission globally are female. She praised efforts of the WDS to promote young women diplomats through its scholarship programme.



First Lady Kim Simplis Barrow and WDS Chair Seychelles High Commissioner Marie Pierre Lloyd

WDS scholarship programme

At the AGM it was announced that scholars will be given a place at the Academy of Diplomacy and International Governance of Loughborough University. Professor Nabil Ayad of the academy, an early promoter of a diplomatic network for women in London, said women were “under-represented” in the profession. CEO Rosalie Rivett thanked him for making the place available and said the Academy’s students would be welcome at WDS events.

New WDS Committee

The WDS Chair is the Seychelles High Commissioner, Marie Pierre Lloyd; Rosalie Rivett stays on as CEO as does the Treasurer Althea Vanderpoole Banahene, Acting High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda; the Secretary is Sheena Chan (Singapore) and the Lesotho High Commissioner Mrs Felleng ‘Mamakeka Makeka heads up the events committee. **Embassy** Editor Elizabeth Stewart will assist with publicity of the WDS.

HEAD OF UKVI SPONSORSHIP ADDRESSES THE LONDON EDUCATION AND RESEARCH NETWORK

UKVI briefs education attachés on student visa policy

International students enrolling at British universities this summer face a raft of new student visa rules, education attachés heard at a talk given by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Head of Sponsorship Bernard Evans.

Addressing members of the London Education and Research Network (LEARN) at the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, Evans said UKVI was “reaching out” to attachés to explain the reasoning behind the new policy and how this would be implemented.

Evans said Britain welcomed the “brightest and best” students while clamping down on bogus colleges or “immigration factories” who had used their ‘Highly Trusted’ status as a marketing tool to exploit naive students.

Protecting students

Thus the ‘Highly trusted’ status has been replaced by ‘Tier 4 sponsor’ for which institutions have to pass a range of compliance tests.

In cases where sponsors lost their licenses, consuls appealed to UKVI to put measures in place to compensate students or fast-track them in enrolling at a different institution.

Evans urged education attaches to “partner with UKVI” to inform students of the risks of bogus schools and to do proper research into the schools to which they enrol.

New rules regarding English language tests for visa applications were in response to widespread fraud uncovered in 2014, said Evans. The Home Office only accepts ‘Secure’ English Language Tests (SELTs) from two providers (IELTS-SELT and Trinity College). Worries over capacity issues due to a shortage of test centres had been resolved, he added.

Also being rolled out is the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), which students have to collect at a Visa4UK Post Office branch within 10 days of their arrival. Attachés were sceptical whether selected branches could cope with

the predicted high demand in September.

All students staying for more than six months now have to pay a health surcharge as part of the student visa application process. The levy is refundable if the visa is declined.

More visa restrictions planned

At the **Embassy** Education Conference, the Head of Home Office Student Migration Rebecca Bradford updated diplomats on new measures planned in the coming months.

From August, students at publicly funded colleges will no longer be entitled to work. From November, the time limit for Further Education study will be reduced from three to two years. Students will have to demonstrate academic progression and Tier 4 visas for college study will not be extended in the UK.

Landlord checks for students would be rolled out nationwide but student halls of residence would be exempted, Bradford said.

Science Club gets a reboot

The London Diplomatic Science Club is back with a bang. A Big Bang. Elizabeth Stewart spoke to its new chairperson Aniko Dobi-Rozsa to find out what plans lie ahead for the association



"The London Diplomatic Science Club is in 'active mode' again," smiles Aniko Dobi-Rozsa, science and technology attaché at the Hungarian Embassy and the new chair of the LDSC.

The Club is a veteran diplomatic association which can trace its origins to the Commonwealth Scientific Liaison Office, set up after the British Commonwealth Scientific Conference back in 1946.

When the Americans, Europeans and Asian missions started appointing science attachés in the 1960s, the club got going in its current incarnation in the early 1970s, with members drawn from the science attaché community as well as associate members from British government and institutions such as the Royal Society, Research Councils and universities.

But with the club having been in 'sleep mode' for a couple of years, Dobi-Rozsa felt it was time to press the reset button. "Everyone is looking to science to help solve the global problems we face and science diplomacy is needed more than ever," she explains.

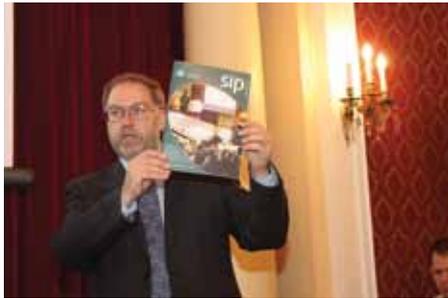
With strong backing from the science attaché community, academia and the FCO's Chief Scientific Advisor, Professor Robin Grimes, the club was relaunched at the end of last year. A networking event was held at the Hungarian Embassy where science attachés were able to meet with the international officers of the four main National Academies (Royal Society, Royal Engineering Academy, British Academy and Academy of Medical Sciences).

"The aim of the LDSC is to raise awareness of the importance of science and evidence-based policy making," explains Dobi-Rozsa. "The UK has a very good system of appointing scientific advisers for each government department and as science diplomats we all want to learn more about this."

As environmental scientist and World Bank economist specialising in development finance, Dobi-Rozsa knows the value of using science to shape policy. Her groundbreaking energy efficiency programmes for the World Bank have won several international awards.

Now she wants the LDSC to help with "energy-efficient" science diplomacy.

"The idea is for the LDSC to be a central point of contact between the diplomatic missions in London and the UK academia and the



Chief Scientific Officer Professor Robin Grimes



Full house of science attachés gather to listen to the FCO's Chief Scientific Officer Professor Robin Grimes



Italian Science Attaché Roberto di Lauro participates in a lively Q&A at a LDSC meeting



Danish Ambassador Claus Grube asks Professor Grimes about the role of the Chief Scientific Officer at the FCO and how science shapes foreign policy

"Everyone is looking to science to help solve the global problems we face and science diplomacy is needed more than ever"

government," Dobi-Rozsa explains.

The club has around 60 active members but Dobi-Rozsa is determined to expand the membership beyond its traditional base (mainly OECD missions) and will include activities that will be relevant to both industrialized and developing countries.

The LDSC is planning to engage more with the Foreign Office's Science and Innovation Network (the so-called 'SINners', based in British missions in 30 countries). The club will also host a quarterly lecture programme where attachés can meet key contacts and share best practice on a variety of hot topics from climate change to research finance.

Kicking off this year's lecture series was the Chief Scientific Advisor for the Foreign Office, Professor Robin Grimes who gave a mind-expanding talk on the rise of computer simulation whose powerful data-crunching

can help predict trends and test models that can inform better policy making.

Field trips to scientific places of interest are in the pipeline too. A visit to the European Medicines Agency to find out more about the regulation of medicines is on the cards as well as out-of-London trips to the Research Councils in Swindon or some of the Catapult centres, such as the High Value Manufacturing Catapult in Sheffield.

And towards the end of the year, a festive party is planned to gather attachés, the Science Innovation Network as well as officials from the academic world and government for informal networking.

"London is an important strategic post for science diplomats," concludes Dobi-Rozsa. "The job of the LDSC is simply to help our members make the most of the opportunities on offer while in the UK."

To find out more about the LDSC or to join contact LDSC Chairperson Aniko Dobi-Rozsa on ADobiRozsa@mfa.gov.hu and look out for our Diplomatic Diary Dates e-alerts for future events



Staying safe over the summer holidays

Don't let opportunist criminals cast a shadow over your summer fun. **David Varney** of the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP) gives you tips on how to burglar-proof your house if you go away during the holidays

The chance to enjoy a bit of warmth in the summer sun is very welcome. As our summers are quite often short lived, we tend embrace the new climate by cleaning down the barbecue, finding our fans and open up our doors and windows to let that much needed fresh breeze through the house.

Don't make it easy for opportunists

As wonderful as it is to be able to enjoy the summer weather, it does unfortunately bring opportunities for criminals to commit crime and target our homes that are left vulnerable.

The vast majority of burglaries that occur are what we call 'opportunist'. By this, we mean there are always criminals travelling around the streets looking for opportunities to commit crime, so when they see open doors and windows, they see it as an invitation for them to enter.

Along with open doors and windows, properties that look insecure or indeed unoccupied will also be targeted, because part of the burglars' rationale for targeting a premises is the ability to be able to gain entry undetected, not arouse suspicion by doing so and be able to get in and out in quickly.

Good security doesn't necessarily need to cost a lot of money, particularly for domestic properties. Some measures don't actually need to cost anything at all, but having good security in place is not only a good investment, it can reduce insurance costs as well as giving you peace of mind.

Where to start?

Quite often when I'm attending a site and carrying out a security survey, one of the first things I'm asked about is CCTV. Over recent years, the cost of CCTV systems has reduced considerably and with the development of wireless systems and systems that can link in with mobile devices; we're seeing an increase in people purchasing CCTV for home use.

However, it has to be said that these systems still require some investment and I would always advocate that you're better off prioritising spending on ways to prevent someone gaining entry rather than just spending money on something that will just show you that they have got in!

It's a matter of standards

Having good quality doors, windows and locks fitted will go a long way to stopping you being targeted or if you are targeted, prevent someone getting in or at the very least, create such a delay that they will either give up or be apprehended.

If you are renting a property, as most diplomats do, do not hesitate to ask your landlord or management agency to instal secure fittings.

What people fail to realise is that there are different standards of products and having a security rated product will provide you with a guarantee that it will perform as required, so looking out for the various British and European standards is essential when choosing your security measures.

For more information visit <http://www.secured-bydesign.com/aware/index.aspx>

No entry!

By preventing easy access to the back and sides of your home by using the correct boundary defences will go a long way to stop you being targeted. If you install the correct lighting and fit security to out-buildings, you're already making things more difficult for the burglar.

The front of your premises should be 'open' for people to see. You don't want high walls or shrubs to the front as this can ensure the burglar is unseen by neighbours and passers-by.

Is anyone home?

Don't advertise to would-be burglars that you are on holiday. With minimal cost, you can buy light timers and other products that will work while you are away.

Whether it's for an hour or for weeks, preventing your home looking like it's unoccupied will go a long way towards it not being targeted.

If you are away for longer periods, there are other things you can do that won't cost you any money such as cancelling papers and milk deliveries or re-directing your mail.

Unsocial Media

Part of modern living involves social media and we all like to share our lives with others, which includes telling people where we're going holiday.

Whether you use Facebook, Twitter or any other platform, just consider that as soon as you tell people you're going to be away on holiday for two weeks, you might be inadvertently telling criminals that your home is empty and ready to be burgled. Just be careful with what you share and don't make you and your home a target.

Want more tips on securing your home?

If you would like more advice on burglar-proofing your property, visit the Secured by Design 'Home Security Advice Centre' at the Homebuilding & Renovating Show for guidance to on the right products to specify.

The exhibition takes place on 25-27 September at the Excel exhibition centre in London. For details visit www.homebuildingshow.co.uk.

CCTV is a deterrent against opportunist burglars





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In the swim of things

Iceland Thordur Oskarsson



Given Iceland's dependence on its fishing industry it comes as little surprise that the country's ambassador to the UK would turn to an aquatic analogy to describe his term in London.

"It's a big pond over here with a lot of fish," smiles Thordur Oskarsson. "It's a tough environment and there are so many embassies competing for attention. I just have to swim harder than everyone else and get myself noticed."

At least Oskarsson won't be swimming upstream in his efforts to make a splash. He finds himself in the capital at a time when the relationship between the UK and Iceland continues to improve after some tumultuous years.

Certainly The Cod Wars over fishing rights in the 1950s and 1970s are long forgotten while tensions brought on by Iceland's banking collapse in 2008 have been eased by the fact that British savers who lost money are being reimbursed.

Exporting out of a crisis

"We have had our testing times but I think past conflicts between the UK and Iceland have reinforced the good relationship between the countries," Oskarsson points out.

"When it comes to the financial crisis the wounds have healed very well. There are some outstanding issues with debts here in the UK but the assets that were in these bad banks have been creating funds for repayment.

"We have managed to pay a lot of the primary creditors here in the UK and many of these were British communities who suffered a lot. We really needed to dig ourselves out of this big financial hole and we seem to be well on our way."

Iceland's economic recovery has been nothing short of remarkable with the country's GDP exceeding pre-crisis levels for the first time last year, unemployment down to 4% and inflation below 2,5%. Crucial to the recovery has been Iceland's ability to control its own currency.

"We were able to devalue our currency easily and weren't stuck within a monetary system like in the eurozone," says Oskarsson. "It gave the opportunity to the exporters to really focus and in essence we exported ourselves out of this mess. We are a resource-based society where fish is of critical importance so we could increase fishing and focus on better marketing. It is difficult for us to comprehend how quickly the recovery has happened."

Staying out of the EU club

Iceland's success outside the eurozone, and the fact that the country has been asked to be taken off the European Union accession list, has inevitably raised eyebrows in the UK, where the in/out EU debate rages on.

"What happens with the UK and the EU is interesting for us because we've had this debate in Iceland for quite a while," says the ambassador. "We are not burning the

midnight oil at the embassy out of concern but we care what happens because, in trade, UK is the single most important market, mostly fish but tourism as well."

During his term in London, Oskarsson will also try and forge closer high tech links with the UK.

High-tech links

"Both Iceland and Britain are looking for more links in hi-tech and start-up companies," he says. "It's something that has been flourishing in Iceland. We have a very good start-up community and hopefully we can increase our trade in hi-tech machinery, especially for the food industry.

There are also opportunities to bring renewable energy from Iceland to the UK, he adds, which will be useful in the upcoming Climate Change talks. "We have some valuable information to pass on especially when it comes to geothermal energy. We have 100 years of experience."

Oskarsson's road to London has been an interesting one. He has been Iceland's Ambassador in Japan, Austria and Canada, while also spending a year in Afghanistan working as a director for international and political affairs for NATO.

"You can ask whether we took the right steps going into Afghanistan. It is difficult issue," he says. "You arrive thinking you want to do something positive but you leave frustrated. These things take time and sometime we don't realise that."

Testing times for NATO

Despite the many challenges facing NATO, Oskarsson is positive about the future of the organization:

"The challenges are coming from everywhere. I think NATO has survived very well and it has been facing an existential question since the [Berlin] Wall fell. International relations have become so fluid. It has really tested the foundations of the alliance. I do believe it is strong enough to cope."

When Oskarsson has a moment to himself you'll find him in London's many used record shops hunting for old vinyl albums.

"I don't play an instrument so I try and make up for it by going to music events and collecting old vinyl records. I like old rock and psychedelic music."

The prog-rock ambassador is hitting his stride after a few months in London.

"I'm nine months old now so I should be born," he laughs. "The bureaucratic culture and dynamics of society is always different where you go. I'm getting the hang of it now."

He might have been a fish out if water when he first arrived but the industrious Oskarsson is certainly swimming in the right direction now.

“Iceland was able to devalue its currency easily and we weren't stuck within a monetary system like in the eurozone... In essence we exported ourselves out of this mess...It is difficult for us to comprehend how quickly the recovery has happened”

Pierre de Villiers, deputy editor of Embassy Magazine, interviewed the Ambassador of Iceland on 29 May

Thinking big

Togo Yackoley Johnson



Togo may be a small country but it has big ambitions, says the country's Ambassador Yackoley Johnson, who recently arrived in London to reopen the first Togolese Embassy in almost a quarter of a century.

"The vision of President Faure Gnassingbe is for Togo to be outward looking and open to all countries – especially those that are key to its development notably Britain," explains the Ambassador.

Entrepot for West Africa

Togo has ambitions to be the 'Singapore' of the Gulf of Guinea. Situated at the world's crossroads – literally (the Equator and Greenwich meridian intersect in the Gulf of Guinea) – Togo aspires to be an efficiently-run logistics hub and a gateway to the markets of West Africa.

"Togo can use its small size as a competitive asset," says Johnson, pointing out that targeted reforms in a small state can have a big impact. A raft of investor-friendly legislation has earned Togo the title of one of 10 "most improved" places to do business by the World Bank. The country now boasts healthy economic growth of around 5% with the aim of reaching 7% by 2017.

The new regulatory framework protects investments and Togo's membership of the CFA monetary Zone reduces transaction costs and contributes to a stable currency.

Added to Togo's improved business climate is the political stability, with the President's return to office this May in peaceful elections. "The time is ripe to attract foreign investors and London, as an international financial and investment hub, is one of the best places for it", says Johnson.

The attractive areas for investors include mining and offshore oil. "If you look at our neighbours Nigeria, Benin and Ghana, then there is a strong chance that Togo also has oil reserves," says the Ambassador.

Agriculture remains the largest economic sector in Togo so in order to improve productivity and food security, the government initiated an agriculture investment and food security programme called PNIASA.

Another exciting prospect is infrastructure development, notably transnational routes including railways and Togo's deep-water port, the only one in the sub-region that can accommodate supercargo container ships.

Maritime strategy

"Togo wants to use the sea as a tool for development," says Johnson, adding that the Government has established a High Council for the Sea to protect and develop this strategic asset. Togo is also working closely with the IMO to meet its requirements and is now one of 18 African countries on the organisation's so-called 'White List'.

But being at a crossroads has its challenges, such as piracy and illicit trafficking. These are issues Johnson focused on when he served as a member of the Togolese delegation to

the Security Council of United Nations in 2012-13.

Togo has worked hard to build its reputation for secure territorial waters but a continent-wide management approach is needed for success, remarks Johnson.

Lomé – once synonymous with trade and aid conferences during the 1970s and 1980s – will again be using its convening powers to host the African Union Conference on the Sea in November, bringing together more than 5000 participants from Africa and international organisations. The Conference's goal is to adopt a binding legal instrument, an African charter on safety and maritime security.

Migration and poverty

Another trans-national crime Togo is determined to tackle is human trafficking. While cracking down on people smugglers is critical, addressing the root causes like poverty – a driving force behind migration – is also key to solving the problem, says Johnson.

Having served as Secretary General at the Ministry of Social Action, National Solidarity and Promotion of Women and Child Welfare, he has witnessed the positive impact of effective grassroots development programmes.

For instance a youth volunteering programme created more than 4000 jobs for unemployed youngsters, while the National Fund for Inclusive Finance, which provides loans – particularly to women – has been transforming their lives. Investing the proceeds of the economic growth into healthcare, free primary education and helping young people to start their businesses are also delivering results.

Nevertheless, Togo still ranks near the bottom of the UNDP's Human Development Index. So the Ambassador is committed to work closely with DfID and other partners, like the Commonwealth, which Togo hopes to join.

Commonwealth aspirations

"This is part of Togolese Government strategy to look outwards," he says. Joining the Commonwealth, an organisation who champions small states, will help Togo to move forward, politically, economically and developmentally."

Diversity is one of the strengths of the Commonwealth and is something Togo, as a multicultural society, sees as a benefit too: "Diversity has made us more tolerant," explains Johnson. "This contributes to our stability."

It also makes Togo a vibrant cultural destination – "Just about every week in summer time there is a different festival in our various regions," smiles the Ambassador who hopes to entice more Brits to Togo's unspoilt shores.

It's an ambitious agenda, on top of re-launching an embassy in an overcrowded diplomatic capital. But the football-loving Ambassador can count on the Togolese diaspora, notably football legend Emmanuel Adebajor, to help fly the flag. And like his compatriot, Ambassador Johnson will be working hard to help Togo achieve many goals.

“The vision of President Faure Gnassingbe is for Togo to be outward looking and open to all countries – especially those that are key to its development, notably Britain”

Elizabeth Stewart, editor of Embassy Magazine, interviewed the Ambassador of Togo on 2 June

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Africa Day

Ambassadors, parliamentarians and captains of industry joined the President of Botswana Lt Gen Seretse Khama Ian Khama to celebrate Africa Day, the 52nd anniversary of the OAU, the precursor to the African Union.

Speaking on the occasion, President Khama spoke plainly about the challenges the continent was facing, from the migration of African young people to endemic poverty, conflict and terrorism.

The President noted that Africa's partners in Europe were suffering similar afflictions of economic crisis, conflict and extremism and he called on the institutions of both continents – the EU and the AU – to unite and to face these challenges together to create a better future for the young generations.



African Heads of Mission with the President of Botswana Lt Gen Seretse Khama Ian Khama and the Ambassador of Kuwait and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Mr Khaled Al Duwaisan. Inset: Africa's creative industry was on display



President Khama and the Ambassador of Tunisia Mr Nabil Ammar



President Khama greets South African High Commissioner Mr Obed Mlaba



President Khama welcomes Zambian High Commissioner Mr Paul Lumbi

Director General and Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Business Council Dr Mohan Kaul and the High Commissioner for Mozambique Mr Carlos dos Santos



A series of performances entertained guests



Namibian High Commissioner Mr Steve Katjuango in an Owambo suit and his wife Christophene in the iconic Herero dress



President Khama addresses the African heads of mission



North Africa: Egyptian Ambassador Nasser Kamel, Algerian Ambassador Mr Amar Abba and the Libyan Ambassador Mr Mahmud Nacua



East meets West: The Ambassador of Senegal Mr Abdou Sourang, the High Commissioner for Kenya Mr Lazarus Amayo, the Ambassador of Liberia Mr Ruldolf von Ballmoos and the Ambassador of South Sudan Mr Sabit Abbe Alley



The President of Botswana Ian Khama meets the High Commissioner for Lesotho and Africa Day coordinator Mrs Felleng/Mamakeka Makeka



President Khama greets the new Ambassador of Togo Mr Yackoley Johnson

High energy Azerbaijan

Ambassador Tahir Taghizadeh's inaugural celebration of Azerbaijan's Republic Day in London was full of energy – much like his country. But there's more to Azerbaijan than just oil and gas, he said, speaking on the eve of the inaugural European Games. Azerbaijan will also host the Islamic Solidarity Games, the Chess Olympics and Euro 2020, demonstrating that Azerbaijan is "a country of diversity and great cultural traditions," said the Ambassador.

Speaking on behalf of the British Government, the FCO's Director of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Department Michael Tatham pointed to the breadth of the UK's relationship with Azerbaijan as its largest foreign direct investor and top destination for Azerbaijani students.

He said being in the world's spotlight could be "a catalyst" for further reform in Azerbaijan, adding that its continued engagement in the Eastern Partnership was important at a time of instability on Europe's borders.



Ambassador Taghizadeh and Michael Tatham, FCO Director of Eastern Europe and Central Asia Department toast the close partnership between the UK and Azerbaijan



Lord David Evans addresses the audience



Baroness Manzoor and Polad Mammadov (Azerbaijan)



Baroness O' Cathain has a laugh with Ambassador Taghizadeh



Ambassador Taghizadeh greets Baroness Scotland



Ambassador Taghizadeh greets the Ambassador of Turkey Mr Abdurrahman Bilgiç



The Ambassador of Estonia Mr Lauri Bambus, the Ambassador of Iceland Mr Thórhur Óskarsson and the Ambassador of Latvia Mr Andris Teikmanis



Michael Tatham, FCO Director of Eastern Europe and Central Asia Department, Sir William Makepeace and the Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps Mr Alistair Harrison



Albanian Ambassador Mr Mal Berisha congratulates Ambassador Mr Tahir Taghizadeh



Doyen of the Naval Attaché Association Cdre Mushtaq Ahmed (Pakistan) is welcomed by Lt Col Vugar Ahmadov



Georgian Ambassador Dr Revaz Gachechiladze, Ambassador Taghizadeh and Mrs Ulviyya Taghizadeh



The Ambassador of Russia Mr Alexander Yakovenko, the Ambassador of Belarus Mr Sergei F Aleinik and the Ambassador of Mongolia Mr Narkhuu Tuigu



High Commissioner Bethel bids guests a sunny Bahamian welcome



The Minister of Transport and Aviation
The Hon Glenys Hanna Martin



The High Commissioner for Mozambique Mr
Carlos dos Santos and the High Commissioner
for Singapore Ms Chi Hsia Foo

Feeling hot, hot, hot

The High Commissioner for The Bahamas Bethel Eldred bid guests to the island nation's 42nd birthday bash "a sunny Bahamian welcome" as London experienced the hottest July day on record.

Joining the High Commissioner as guest of honour was the Minister of Transport and Aviation, The Hon Glenys Hanna-Martin, who spoke of the achievements of The Bahamas in its relatively short history, from Olympic gold medals to Nobel prizes for literature.

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the Nassau Accord spearheaded by The Bahamas, calling for Commonwealth nations to impose sanctions on apartheid South Africa. "We aspire to be good world citizens...Our relatively small size has never been an inhibitor to our resolve to do what we believe is right," she said.



Bernard Silver and the High Commissioner
for Namibia Mr Steve Katjuanjjo



The High Commissioner for Tanzania Mr
Peter Kallaghe and his wife Joyce



The High Commissioner for Nigeria Dr Dalhatu
Tafida congratulates High Commissioner Bethel



The Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps Mr Alistair
Harrison proposes a toast to The Bahamas



The Ambassador of Peru Mr Julio Muñoz-Deacon and the
Ambassador of Guatemala Mr Acisclo Valladares Molina



The Ambassador of Panama Mr Daniel Fabrega, the Ambassador
of El Salvador Mr Werner Romero and Roger Atwood



Franz Hepburn gives a rousing rendition of the National
Anthem



Embassy Editor Elizabeth Stewart with Joey Zegerius
(left) and Matthew Boyles (right) of BMW Park Lane



The Ambassador of Estonia Mr Lauri Bambus
with the Ambassador of Kuwait and Dean of
the Diplomatic Corps Mr Khaled Al Duwaisan

CARICOM Day

Diplomats from the Caribbean region gathered in the sunshine at the Richmond Residence of the High Commissioner for Barbados Guy Hewitt for a convivial garden party to celebrate CARICOM day.

Colleagues networked informally discussing topics focusing minds in the region, while the High Commissioner made sure that the taste of home was served – including flying fish, which was flown in especially for the occasion.



Heads of Mission from Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominican Republic, Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago and Montserrat



The Chargé d'Affaires of Haiti Mr Jean Pillard, Deputy High Commissioner for Jamaica Diedre Mills, the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic Dr Federico Cuello Camillo and High Commissioner Hewitt



The High Commissioner for Jamaica Mrs Aloun Ndombet-Assamba and the host, the High Commissioner for Barbados Mr Guy Hewitt



Tracy Bradshaw (BVI), Mike Guy (Bahamas), and Janice Panton (Montserrat)

The meaning of LAIF

Latin American ambassadors mixed with big business at a reception at the Brazilian Embassy to mark the close of the Latin American Investment Forum (LAIF), an annual event held at Guildhall to encourage more investment in the region.

This year the main theme was infrastructure finance so that more ports, roads and canals – such as the Nicaraguan Canal – can be built to unlock Latin American growth.



Heads of Mission from Uruguay, Honduras, El Salvador and Bolivia join Jacques Arnold to try some Agwa (Bolivian tippie made from the coca leaf)



The Ambassador of the Dominican Republic Mr Federico Alberto Cuello Camilo and the Ambassador of Costa Rica Enrique Castillo



The Ambassador of Venezuela Ms Rocío Maniero and Dr Paul Oquist, Private Secretary for National Policy in the Nicaraguan Government



The departing Ambassador of Brazil Mr Roberto Jaguaribe and Fernando Ferreira, the Executive Secretary of OLADE, the Latin America Energy Organisation



A convivial BBQ dinner on the river



CL President Christiana Sys and his wife Samantha win an off-road Driving Experience, courtesy of Sue King of Land Rover, the CCL's new sponsor



Preparing the BBQ on deck



CCL Sponsor Ashwin Balse of VFS Global presents raffle winner Sergiusz Wolski (Poland) with a bottle of bubbly



Agnes Fenyvesy (Hungary) thanks the CCL for generously donating the raffle proceeds to the Diplomatic Spouse Club of London

Consular Cruise

The Consular Corps of London launched into the sizzling summer with a sunset cruise on the Thames. Sipping sundowners while taking in London's iconic sites, consuls then sat down to a BBQ while participating in the **Embassy Magazine** Consular Quiz.

Competition was fierce and ended in a three-way tie but the brainy Nordic Dream team held their nerve to win the quick-fire round, despite the outstanding efforts of 'human Google' Hayk Khemchyan of the Armenian Embassy and the Anything Goes team.

After a raffle, which raised funds for the new Diplomatic Spouse Club of London, the DJ fired up the music for the traditional Consular Conga as the boat headed towards Big Ben and its final stop.



Caribbean Consular colleagues soak up the Caribbean-style sun

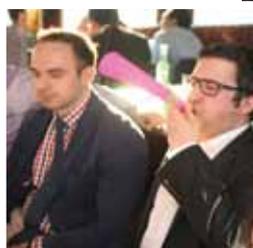


Mauricio (Philippines), pictured right, wins a prize from CCL Sponsor Helen Gardner (Chacalli De Decker)



Joana Gaspar (Portugal) and Claudio Rojo (Argentina), pictured left

Pictured right: departing CCL committee members Donyelle Ward (Bahamas) presents Fahdel Al Sunaider (Yemen) with his raffle prize



Human Google Hayk Khemchyan (Armenia), left, from the Anything Goes team toots his horn to signal yet another correct answer



CCL Sponsors Rowland Brothers International under the London Eye



ASEAN consuls enjoying the sites on deck



CCL President Christiana Sys (Belgium) thanks departing former president George Georgiou (Cyprus) for his many years of service to the association



Embassy Editor and quiz master Elizabeth Stewart



Consular Quiz winners Nordic Dream don their winners medals and novelty shades

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*Based on a 36 month term and 10,000 miles per annum. All rentals include VAT. Personal Contract Hire is a rental agreement. At the end of the contract the vehicle is returned to the leasing company. A Documentation Fee of £198 (inc VAT) payable within 14 days of order.

Classic Croatia

In the Nereid Room of the British Museum, surrounded by the statues and monuments of Ancient Greece and Rome, the Ambassador of Croatia joined with friends and diplomats to toast his country's Independence.

Guests were given the rare opportunity of viewing the Croatian Apoxyomenos – a life-sized bronze sculpture of a young athlete, recovered from the depths of the Adriatic Sea, encrusted in shells and now restored to startling perfection. The statue was on display for the first time in the UK in the *Defining Beauty* exhibition as part of its world tour before returning to its permanent home on the island of Mali Losinj.

For Croatia, the youngest member of the EU, it is a potent symbol of how deeply rooted the country is in European culture.



Head of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County Zlatko Komadina and Ambassador Grdesic. Inset: A display of the attractions of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County



Bronze beauty: the Croatian Apoxyomenos



Guests sip Croatian wine surrounded by the sculptures of Ancient Greece and Rome



Ms Mzia Marsagishvli, Mrs Elena Grdesic, Ambassador Grdesic and the Ambassador of Georgia Dr Revaz Gachechiladze



The head of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, Zlatko Komadina, gives the Ambassador a small replica of the Croatian Apoxyomenos



Ambassador Grdesic reflected on the difficult journey Croatia made from independence to EU membership



Ambassador Grdesic and Serbian Ambassador Dr Ognjen Pribicevic



Ambassador Grdesic welcomes the Ambassador of Albania Mr Mal Berisha



The High Commissioner for Cyprus Mr Euripides Evriviades, Ambassador Grdesic and Mrs Elena Grdesic



The Ambassador of Jordan Mr Mazen Homoud and the Deputy Ambassador of Kuwait Faisal Al Houli

Diplomatic Club Party

Three of London's dynamic diplomatic associations – EUNIC, DPAAL and the YDL – joined forces to stage a big diplomatic bash to celebrate the start of the British summer and to bid farewell to those nearing the end of their posting.

Hosted by the popular departing Slovak Ambassador Miroslav Wlachovský, the Embassy's big garden was the perfect backdrop for sundowners. As the sun set, guests drifted inside to enjoy an exhibition of Slovak art and a music and light show staged by DJs Nick Luscombe and Steve Hellier.

The raffle draw followed where the lucky few bagged some great prizes, but with so many new friends made, everyone left the party a winner.



Club Party organisers Tereza Porybna of EUNIC, departing Slovak Ambassador Miroslav Wlachovský, YDL General Secretary Barbora Posluch (Slovakia) and DPAAL President Maria Monteiro (Portugal)



Alena Longauerová (Slovakia) and YDL General Secretary Barbora Posluch (Slovakia)



Igor Sergeev (Russia) and Nadeem Qadir (Bangladesh)



EUNIC President Tereza Porybna (Czech Republic) welcomes colleagues to the Club Summer Party



Producer and DJ Nick Luscombe and Steve Hellier provided a sound and light show



Diplomatic Spouse Club of London Chair Agnes Fenyvesy, Zoltán Varga (Hungary) and LEARN General Secretary Dorina Orzac (Romania)



Christina Mengual (Red Cross), Adam Owen, Marija Stjepcevic (Montenegro), Nebojsa Radojicic (Serbia), Lester Ortega (Guatemala) and Egle Vysniauskaitė (Lithuania)



Diplomatic club members gather for the prize draw



Yangazu Mgweya (Zambia) and Joyce Mutebe (Zambia)



Bozena Fraczek, Estelle Detrembleur, YDL President Bartosz Tymkowski and Ilona Suchacka



DPAAL President Maria Monteiro (Portugal), Konrad Jagodziński (Poland), Ana Elizabeth Gonzalez (Panama) and DPAAL Vice Chair Oksana Kyzyma (Ukraine)



Paul Kaye (European Commission Office UK) centre receives a raffle prize of Slovak Crystal from DPAAL President Maria Monteiro (Portugal) and YDL General Secretary Barbora Posluch (Slovakia)



Huda Buhmaid of Etihad Airways (Centre) and Mohamed El Ansari (UAE) present the winning tickets to Sarah Young of De Montfort University, whose student Natalie Azodo won the LEARN Logo Competition



Panelists Simon Read (Uni-Pay), Tania Lima (International Unit) and Embassy Editor Elizabeth Stewart listen as Dr John Kirkland (Association of Commonwealth Universities) outlines the Chevening scholarships



David Loro (South Sudan) meets Simi Solasmith (King's College London)

PHOTOS: WWW.PIERREDEVILLIERS.COM



Julianna Bertazzo (Brazil) introduces delegates to the London Education And Research Network (LEARN)



Emma Sarne (Philippines) talks to Tanya Luff of Manchester University

Education Conference

Record numbers attended this year's **Embassy** Education conference at King's College London to discuss the education and science policy of the incoming Conservative government.

Keynote speakers included Universities UK CEO Nicola Dandridge, the Chair of the Lords Committee on Science and Technology, the Earl of Selborne and Dominic Scott of UKCISA.

There were a number of thematic workshops and regional discussion groups and an introduction to the London Education And Research Network (LEARN) for education attachés. The day ended with a reception and the unveiling of the new LEARN logo, designed by an architecture student from De Montfort University, Natalie Azodo.



Raegan Hiles (International Unit) gives a talk on Trans-National Education



Brig Gen Sithabiso Mahlobo (South Africa) with Emilie Maddison and Mamie Barden of Westminster University



A packed audience listens to Rebecca Bradford of the Home Office on student visa policy



Ronit Yedida and Matt Keston (Israel) find out more about INTO University Partnerships



Panelists Dominic Scott (UKCISA) and Nicola Dandridge (Universities UK)



The Earl of Selborne, Chair of the Lords Science & Technology Committee



LEARN Committee Member Angela Cleary (Thailand) welcomes delegates to the Asia Regional Discussion Group



Claudia Cupid (Trinidad & Tobago) in the Q&A



Professor Matt Uttley of the Defence Studies Department at King's College addresses defence attachés on professional military education



LEARN Committee Member Mohamed El Ansari (UAE) at the Middle East Discussion Group



Diplomats and education institutions unwind after an intense day of networking



The shortlisted LEARN logos



Shabnam Ahmed (Hartley Bain Solicitors) offers legal advice on student visas to Francois Schollaert Paz (Bolivia)

Georgian harmony

On the occasion of Georgia's Independence, guests raised a glass of Georgian wine, first produced in the region 8000 years ago. For his first National Day in London, Georgian Ambassador, Dr Revaz Gachechiladze made sure his guests got a taste of legendary Georgian hospitality and a performance of polyphonic folk singing for which the country is famous.

Culture is one of Georgia's main assets and at its heart it is European, said the Ambassador. "Georgians choose European integration unambiguously and vigorously because our ultimate goal is to be in the European Union."

The Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps Alistair Harrison echoed those sentiments, saying: "The UK welcomes Georgia's aspirations to be part of Europe. This is a difficult and challenging time but Georgia continues to make a huge contribution to the life of Europe."

The two countries share the same patron saint, and a love of rugby, said the Ambassador, who is looking forward to the Rugby World Cup this autumn.



Ambassador Gachechiladze and the Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps Mr Alistair Harrison propose a toast to the heads of state of Georgia and the United Kingdom. Inset: Georgian wine, part of an 8000-year-old tradition



Ambassador Gachechiladze awards Prof Donald Rayfield with the Order of Honour



The Ambassador of Slovenia Mr Tadej Rupel and his wife Valentina with Ambassador Gachechiladze, his wife Mzia Marsagishvli and Tamara Kapanadze (Georgia)



Ambassador Gachechiladze welcomes the Ambassador of Azerbaijan Mr Tahir Taghizadeh



Ambassador Gachechiladze and Jonathan Djanogly MP



Young Georgians model traditional costume



Borjghali, a choir based in Bristol, entertained guests with traditional polyphonic folk songs including Mravaljhamier



The outgoing Ambassador of Romania Dr Ion Jinga and the Ambassador of Moldova Iulian Fruntasu



The Ambassador of Uruguay Mr Fernando López-Fabregat, his wife Maria, the Ambassador of Honduras Mr Ivan Romero-Martinez and the Japanese Ambassador Keiichi Hayashi and his wife Hiroko Hayashi



Austrian Ambassador Dr Martin Eichinger meets the Ambassador of the UAE Mr Abdul Rahman Ghanim Al Mutaiwae



The Mongolian Ambassador Mr Narkhuu Tulgu, Ambassador Gachechiladze and Mrs Marsagishvli



The Lithuanian Ambassador Mrs Asta Skaisgirytė Liauškienė congratulates Ambassador Gachechiladze and Mrs Mzia Marsagishvli

Mozambique turns 40

Mozambique marked four decades of Independence with a week-long series of jubilation and cultural events around the UK.

In his Independence Day message, High Commissioner Carlos Dos Santos reflected on how his country had united after years of violent conflict to become one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. The new stable government under President Nyusi will provide the platform for further development, he added.

Britain has been Mozambique's partner in the success story, he remarked, saying the two nations had elevated relations to a High Level Prosperity Partnership. Guest of honour Baroness Chalker spoke of the "special friendship" between the two countries.

The foreign policy motto of Mozambique is 'To Make More Friends, Promote More Partnerships' – judging by the many high-level guests at the reception, Mozambique has many friends.



High Commissioner Dos Santos toasts Mozambique's independence



The Ambassador of Timor Leste Mr Joaquim da Fonseca, the Ambassador of Guinea Mr Paul Goa Zoumanigui and the Ambassador of Togo Mr Jackoley Johnson



The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps joins the High Commissioner for Mozambique and fellow Lusophonic heads of mission from Brazil, Portugal and Timor Leste



African sisters unite!



The Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea Mrs Maricruz Evuna Andeme, High Commissioner Dos Santos and Mrs Dos Santos



Commonwealth Deputy Secretaries-General Dr Josephine Ojiambo and Deodat Maharaj, Joyce Kallaghe and the High Commissioner for Tanzania Mr Peter Kallaghe



The High Commissioner for Singapore Ms Chi Hsia Foo, the High Commissioner for Ghana Mr Victor Smith and Mrs Dawn Bethel



Mozambican sax appeal: Otis Sax and Moreira Chonguica



Mrs Hilda Lumbi, High Commissioner Dos Santos, Mrs Dos Santos and Mrs Paul Lumbi



Broadcaster Zineb Badawi, High Commissioner Dos Santos and Baroness Chalker



Rwandan High Commissioner Mr Williams Nkurunziza, High Commissioner Dos Santos, Mrs Dos Santos and Mrs Leonia Nkuruh



Baroness Lynda Chalker offers her reflections Mozambique's 40th birthday



Ambassador Rupel gives his Independence Day address



The Head of the EU Commission Office Jacqueline Minor introduces Ambassador Rupel



Ambassador Rupel and Mrs Valentina Rupel with the Ambassador of Croatia Dr Ivan Grdesic and Mrs Elena Grdesic



Mini masterchefs



Ambassador Rupel and his wife Valentina with the Ambassador of Moldova Iulian Frunatsu and his daughter



The High Commissioner for Cyprus Mr Euripides Evriavidis and the Ambassador of Bulgaria Mr Konstantin Dimitrov



Ambassador Rupel and Mrs Rupel with the Ambassador of Lebanon Ms Inaam Osseiran



Slovenian soprano Nika Gorič sings the National Anthem



Fine Slovene wine



Ambassador Rupel and the Ambassador of Jordan Mr Mazen Homoud



The Ambassador of Iceland Mr Þórhður Óskarsson congratulates Ambassador Rupel and Mrs Rupel



Re-invented Zasavje cuisine and potica cake



Ambassador Rupel welcomes the Ambassador of Lithuania Mrs Asta Skaisgirytė Liauškienė

A taste of Slovenia

Guests got the true flavour of Slovenia at their National Day reception at Europe House. Ambassador Tadej Rupel and his wife Valentina came up with the inspired idea to invite the winners of Slovenia's popular Cooking Kids competition to do the catering, showcasing the country's growing reputation as a foodie destination.

Youngsters from all over Slovenia compete against each other, preparing traditional cuisine using local ingredients. This year's mini-masterchefs hailed from the central Zasavje region, so scrumptious bite-size sausages were on the menu, and their potica or 'roll cake' had everyone coming back for seconds.

Clearly once you get a taste for Slovenia, you just want more!

PHOTOS: WWW.PIERREDEVILLIERS.COM

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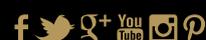


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Haute couture by Rohmir



Shabby chic



Guests enjoy the styles on the Swiss Residence catwalk

Love is everything

It was a very 'Swish' affair – ambassadors, peers and mayors mingled with models, artists and designers at the Swiss Residence for this year's instalment of the Swiss Cultural Fund's Friendship and Summer Concert series organised by Hayam Furgler, the energetic Chairperson of the SCF and wife of the Swiss Ambassador Dominik Furgler.

This year the theme was Friendship and Love and high fashion and haute cuisine were brought together in a celebration of peace and tolerance.



Rohmir designer Dr Olga Roh



The Ambassador of Thailand Mr Kittiphong Na Ranong and his partner



Lord Dykes, Hayam Furgler and Ambassador Furgler



Ambassador Furgler, the Lord Mayor of Westminster Councillor The Lady Christabel Flight, Hayam Furgler and the Lord Flight



Mrs Nathalie Fontainas, Belgian Ambassador Guy Trouveroy and Dr Rita Gadrab



Paola Napoli and the Ambassador of Argentina Ms Alicia Castro swap style tips



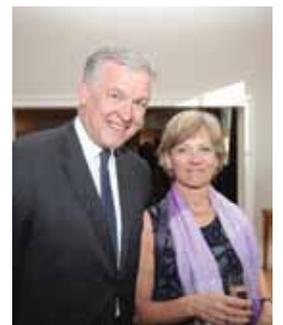
Haute cuisine



Lord Paul and the High Commissioner for Bangladesh Mr Abdul Hannan



Cyprus High Commissioner Euripides Evriviades, Karen Lawrence and the Ambassador of Kuwait and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Mr Khaled Al Duwaisan



The Ambassador of Austria Dr Martin Eichtinger and Mrs Kathrin Eichtinger

PHOTOS: US EMBASSY/WWW.PIERREDEVILLERS.COM



Dianna Agron sang the Star Spangled Banner while Winfield Wild Boys Duran rocked the party with their greatest hits



Star-spangled party

The stage was set for an all-American July 4th party: the sun was out; the classic Winfield Diner was serving burgers and bottled Bud; vintage Cadillacs and Airstream chrome trailers glistened in the expansive Regent's Park grounds; and Hollywood stars mingled with politicians, diplomats and journalists.

As Ambassador Barzun took to the stage with his wife Brooke to welcome guests there was puffed-chest patriotism as the Marines presented Colors and stars Catherine Jenkins and Dianna Agron gave two stunning renditions the National Anthems.

But with the rising moon the Brits took over the party. The stage lit up, the Bond theme View to a Kill struck up and iconic British pop band Duran Duran leapt on to the stage. As the beat kicked in everyone was transported back to the neon 80s and suddenly the sea of grey lounge suits turned into the Winfield Wild Boys.



Star-spangled outfits (left) and *Private Eye* editor Ian Hyslop (below)



New York born London Mayor Boris Johnson MP



Opera Director Sophie Hunter and actor Dominic Cumberbatch



Ambassador Barzun welcomes guests to the July 4th party



Mrs Brooke Barzun and Deputy Ambassador Liz Dibble greet guests



Opera star Catherine Jenkins chats to Ambassador Barzun



The Embassy had a twitter wall with posts from appreciative guests



From left to right: Winfield Diner and Cadillacs, Classic American fare, Marines presenting the Colors



CLEMENTS WORLDWIDE OFFER HOT TICKETS TO EMIRATES CUP

Football fever

To get in the mood for this season's Premiership Football, ambassadors who love the Beautiful Game got the chance to watch the Emirates Cup at the home to Arsenal Football Club, as guests of diplomatic insurers Clements Worldwide.

The lucky few heads of mission who snapped up the dozen or so tickets watched a stunning game of football, as Arsenal trounced their rivals Lyon in a 6-0 defeat.

"What I saw confirms my admiration of English football with its open and spectacular play, within a beautiful Stadium like Arsenal where people feel like they are part of a family," said the Ambassador of Togo Yacokley Johnson.

Dan Edmonds of Clements Worldwide said: "It was such a pleasure to offer our friends in the diplomatic community the chance to experience first-hand the excitement of English football."



View of Emirates Stadium from the Clements Worldwide Corporate Box

Ethiopian Ambassador Bernahu Kebede and family, the High Commissioner for Bangladesh Abdul Hannan and the Ambassador of Togo settle in to watch the Emirates Cup

BMW Golf Cup

On a perfect summer's day in June BMW hosted their annual Diplomatic Cup at Stoke Park Golf Club, in association with the Military Attaché and Advisers Golf Society (MAAGS).

Defending champion Cdr Alan Brechbill of the US Embassy retained his title as this year's winner of the individual Stableford. Mrs Hu Pinghua, wife of the Chinese Ambassador, was in top form again, beating the golf pro in the closest-to-the-pin competition.

Diplomats and attachés were given special access to a spectacular course, lunch and prizes.

"The BMW Diplomatic Cup is a highlight of the MAAGS calendar," said MAAGS Secretary and Treasurer Wg Cdr Peter Woods.



Wg Cdr Peter Woods (MAAGS Secretary and Treasurer), Colombian Ambassador Nestor Osorio, Matthew Boyles (BMW Park Lane) and Col József Gulyás (Hungary)



Capt Dave Stracener (USA), Mrs Hu Pinghua (China), Mrs Claudia Ruetten and Col Joerg Ruetten (Germany)

MAAGS welcomes applications from Embassy staff and their families. For information, email the MAAGS Secretary on peter.a.woods@talk21.com.

New Embassy Group partners

The Embassy Group is proud to announce two new partnerships with companies offering services tailored to diplomats.

Hartley Bain Solicitors

Hartley Bain is a solicitors firm specialising in legal services relevant to diplomatic missions and consulates. Their expertise in immigration law can assist consuls dealing with complex immigration cases. They also are specialists in family law, valued by consulates dealing with sensitive child abduction and international adoption cases. For Embassy HR managers Hartley Bain are able to offer the latest advice on UK employment law.

Diplomatic Card Services UK

Diplomatic Card Services UK is a Fin-Tech company that will be launching the UK's first-ever tax-free diplomatic fuel card service in partnership with Allstar Business Solutions, pending a successful pilot programme conducted under the supervision of the Foreign Office. To take part in the pilot programme email info@diplomaticcard.co.uk.



EMBASSY EXCHANGE



FOR SALE
BMW 318i
The Embassy of Ukraine is selling their official vehicle, a black BMW 318i (2006 model). Petrol engine (1995 cc), manual, right-hand drive, MOT valid until 15 April 2016, 59,000 on the clock. In good condition. Available immediately.

Price: £5000
Contact: Volodymyr Pavlichenko
Email: v.pavlichenko@ukremb.org.uk



FOR SALE
BMW 320i
A diplomat from the Embassy of Egypt has a metallic black BMW 320i (registered in 2008) for sale. Petrol engine (2.0 SE), automatic transmission, ABS brakes, multiple airbags, climate control/aircon, 45,550 miles on the clock. Loads of extra specifications. MOT valid until April 2016.

Available immediately
Price: £ 6000
Contact: Khaled Azmi
Email: khaled.azmi@gmail.com



FOR SALE
Peugeot 206
A diplomatic spouse from the Embassy of Egypt has a red Peugeot 206 (2006 model) for sale. Petrol engine (1600cc), automatic transmission, five doors, 36,639 miles on the clock. MOT validity: September 2015. Available immediately

Price: £2800 (negotiable) VAT free for diplomats
Contact: Maher Abu Okada
Email: mabuokada@gmail.com

* All prices quoted are available VAT free for diplomats

NATIONAL DAYS

August

- 1 Benin, Switzerland
- 2 Macedonia
- 6 Bolivia, Jamaica
- 7 Côte d'Ivoire
- 9 Singapore
- 10 Ecuador
- 11 Chad
- 15 Republic of Congo, Korea, Liechtenstein
- 17 Gabon, Indonesia
- 19 Afghanistan
- 20 Hungary
- 24 Ukraine
- 25 Uruguay
- 27 Moldova
- 31 Trinidad & Tobago, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia

September

- 1 Slovak Republic, Uzbekistan
- 2 Vietnam
- 3 San Marino
- 6 Swaziland
- 7 Brazil
- 8 Andorra, Macedonia
- 9 DPRK, Tajikistan
- 15 Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua
- 16 Mexico, Papua New Guinea,
- 18 Chile
- 19 St Christopher & Nevis
- 21 Malta, Armenia, Belize
- 22 Mali
- 23 Saudi Arabia
- 24 Guinea-Bissau
- 30 Botswana

DIPLOMATIC RECEPTIONS

9 September

Macedonia

The Ambassador of Macedonia will host a reception on the occasion of Macedonia's Independence

Venue: St James Court - A Taj Hotel, 54 Buckingham Gate, SW1E 6AF

Time: 18.30-20.30

10 September

Slovakia

The new Ambassador of Slovakia will host a reception to celebrate Slovakia's National Day.

Venue: Embassy of Slovakia, 25 Kensington Palace Gardens W8 4QY

Time: 12.30-14.30

15 September

Central America

Join the Ambassadors of Central America for a joint celebration of their countries' independence.

Time: Midday (TBC)

Venue: TBC

15 September

Mexico

The Ambassador of Mexico will host a reception to celebrate the CCV Anniversary of Independence

Venue: The Victoria & Albert Museum, Cromwell Rd, SW7 2RL

Time: 19.00-23.00

18 September

Chile

The Ambassador of Chile will host a concert to celebrate Chile's Anniversary of Independence

Venue: St John's Smith Square, London SW1P 3HA

Time: 18.00

CONSULAR

17 September May

Consular Corps of London

First luncheon of the new diplomatic season. Speaker to be confirmed.

Venue: The Hyatt Recency Churchill, 30 Portman Square, London W1H 7BH

Time: 12.30 for 13.00-14.30

Booking details via eventbrite will be circulated closer to the time

ECONOMICS

10 September

AERL talk on innovation and growth

Breakfast Presentation by Darren Shirlaw, CEO & Founder of Shirlaws Group

Time: 08.30-10.00

Venue: Athenaeum Hotel, 116 Piccadilly, Mayfair, London W1J 7BJ

POLITICS

19-23 September

Liberal Democrat Party Conference

Venue: Bournemouth International Centre, Exeter Way, BH2 5BH

www.libdems.org.uk/autumn_conference

27-30 September

Labour Party Conference

Venue: Brighton Centre

Info: www.labour.org.uk/pages/annual-conference-2015

4-7 October

Conservative Party Conference

Venue: The Manchester Central

https://conservativepartyconference.com/index

NETWORKING

8 September

Taj Welcome Back Reception

Reconnect with colleagues after the long summer break with cocktails and delicious bites with the team at the Taj Hotel

Venue: St James Court - a Taj Hotel, 54 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E

Time: 18.00 til late

20 September

BMW Family Day

Join BMW Park Lane for a day of family fun on the Goodwood Estate, home to the Dukes of Richmond.

Watch this space for details...

EMBASSY EVENTS

16 October

Embassy Induction Seminar

Sign up for the popular must-attend orientation day for new diplomats and their families

Time: 09.00-18.00

Venue: 11-13 Cavendish Square London W1G 0AN

Info: kaye@embassymagazine.com

Ecuador

HE Mr Carlos Abad

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