

# INTERVIEWS WITH THE EMBASSY



*UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) is the government organisation that helps UK-based companies succeed in international markets. We assist overseas companies to bring high quality investment to the UK's vibrant economy. British Embassy Trade & Investment sections form UKTI's worldwide network.*



**Paul Fox** became Deputy Ambassador in Warsaw on 15th December 2008. He retains a role on the commercial side of the Embassy's work but will be responsible, after the Ambassador himself, for a very wide range of Embassy work including consular, EU and political.

■ **Congratulations on your new role, Paul. What are you most looking forward to in the new job?**

I am in a unique position. I have been in Poland for almost two and a half years, so I feel I know Warsaw and Poland well. It is rare for a senior diplomat to move jobs in the same Embassy. However, it is a new job, a merger of my existing responsibilities with my predecessor's. I am looking forward to shaping this new job and to working with the Ambassador in making the Embassy an even better outfit than it is now.

■ **What challenges will you have to deal with?**

There are plenty, so it is hard to choose. The key challenge will be moving to a new purpose-built Embassy this summer. This is a task of mammoth proportions. The building of the Embassy and the organisation of

the move will be major projects in themselves. But it is not just about moving sites. In the new Embassy we will have to develop a new way of working. Teams from two sites - Al Roz and WCC in Centrum - will be brought together. It will be one of several changes in our operations over the next year. And amongst all this I want to ensure we continue to deliver as an Embassy. I want our commercial team to remain one of the best in UKTI's network; to continue engaging successfully with the Polish government on a whole range of issues from climate change to EU reform, from Afghanistan to law and order; and to maintain a high level of service to our consular and visa customers.

■ **What do you expect will be the impact of the global financial crisis on Poland?**

No country is going to be immune from current global economic conditions. But some are better placed to weather the storm. So far Poland is one of them and the Polish government has taken action both at a national and EU level to manage the impact of the crisis.

■ **Have you got a message for UK firms thinking about doing business in Poland?**

There continue to be commercial opportunities for UK companies. All the advantages that existed before the crisis - strategic location, a well-educated, skilled workforce, a potentially strong domestic market - remain in place. Also EU funds, which amount to around €70 billion, will continue to flow into the country and will provide much needed investment in Poland's infrastructure and bring with them opportunities. It won't be plain sailing and the competition will be tough. But UK firms are well placed to win their share of work.

■ **And what about the Embassy's relationship with the BPCC? How will that change now that you have moved on?**

The relationship between the Embassy and the BPCC will be as strong as ever. The Ambassador will remain Honorary President, I will become an Honorary Member and Liz Basing (Director UKTI Services at the Embassy) will take my place on the BPCC's board. These links will be reinforced by our teams working closely together on a whole range of projects.



**Liz Basing** joined the Commercial Section of the British Embassy in Warsaw in August 2008. Liz came to Warsaw direct from a four year post as deputy director of UK Trade and Investment in the East Midlands region.

■ **How are you enjoying life in Poland?**

I've been in Warsaw just about 6 months now. As well as settling down at the domestic level, that time has allowed me to really get the measure of ►

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS INCLUDING OUTWARD MISSIONS TO POLAND, INWARD MISSIONS TO THE UK AND BRITISH GROUPS AT TRADE FAIRS March 2009

Date	Event	Organiser	Link to Embassy's Contacts
<b>March 2009</b>			
10-12 March	<b>Sector: Rail</b> Inward Mission to Railtex exhibition, London	<b>Neil Walker</b> , UKTI; e-mail: <a href="mailto:neil.walker@uktradeinvest.gov.uk">neil.walker@uktradeinvest.gov.uk</a>	<b>Iwona Bogacz</b> , Senior Trade & Investment Adviser e-mail: <a href="mailto:iwona.bogacz@fco.gov.uk">iwona.bogacz@fco.gov.uk</a>
16-19 March	<b>Sector: Multisectoral</b> UKTI South East Outward Mission to Poland	<b>David Bax</b> , UKTI South East, e-mail: <a href="mailto:david.bax@uktisoutheast.com">david.bax@uktisoutheast.com</a>	<b>Halina Kosicka</b> , Senior Trade & Investment Adviser e-mail: <a href="mailto:halina.kosicka@fco.gov.uk">halina.kosicka@fco.gov.uk</a>
25-26 March	<b>Sector: Power</b> Clean Coal Technology Seminar in Katowice	<b>Bob Bish</b> , UKTI Power ISG, e-mail: <a href="mailto:bob.bish@ukti.gsi.gov.uk">bob.bish@ukti.gsi.gov.uk</a>	<b>Slawek Morawski</b> , Senior Trade & Investment Adviser e-mail: <a href="mailto:slawek.morawski@fco.gov.uk">slawek.morawski@fco.gov.uk</a> <b>Darek Czarnocki</b> , Trade & Investment Adviser e-mail: <a href="mailto:darek.czarnocki@fco.gov.uk">darek.czarnocki@fco.gov.uk</a>

the job here, and think through one or two ways we can enhance the excellent work the team's already doing. It's my perception that countries like Poland - relatively buoyant and stable; not too far from home - look even more attractive to a lot of British companies in these challenging times. Everything's relative of course and it would be a brave man or woman who made any firm predictions for 2009 and beyond, but Poland continues to offer a lot to UK business from a trade perspective.

#### ■ What were the highlights of your first half year here?

That's such a difficult one to answer! The visit of Digby, Lord Jones in September, which turned out to be his last overseas engagement as Minister for Trade, was something of a baptism of fire for me, but went off without a hitch. The team has run some very successful events for clients, including in November: Seminar on Financing Urban Regeneration - Scoping and Delivering Projects through PPP, Food & Drink Mini Exhibition, and a EURO 2012 UEFA Football Championships conference in London. And we have more in the pipeline for the remainder of the financial year, as you'll see from the calendar.

#### ■ How's the team doing, and what do you hope to achieve during 2009?

Work-wise, the team is on track to deliver everything UK Trade and Investment expects of us this year, and more. We'll get a new set of targets for 2009/10, and the bulk of my job is about making sure we achieve those. Beyond that, we've already put one or two new systems into practice, for example we're testing out a customer follow-up project to make sure our past clients know what we have to offer and to keep Poland near the top of the agenda when they're thinking about international trade. We've also produced a business-friendly document on the opportunities for UK business arising from the use of EU funding in Poland, and how we could help companies get involved. We're looking forward to closer links with our colleagues in other Embassy teams, for example on climate change, particularly with the move to the new Embassy building in the summer. And, as Paul says, this year I'm looking forward to collaborating closely with the BPCC, wherever we have common clients and objectives that mesh together.

#### ■ Are you glad you moved here?

Absolutely. Warsaw's a great place to live and work, and this is one of the most enjoyable jobs I've had. I'm looking forward enormously to the rest of 2009 with all its challenges and opportunities. ■



# All things great and training

By Mary Brooks, CEO, The LMT Co Ltd

**M**any managers express a need to develop the skills of junior, middle to senior management in order to help maintain and develop the competitive edge and financial stability for their organisations.

Last year, in the UK, 90,000 people enhanced their leadership and management skills with a qualification, while over 30,000 ambitious management professionals secured increased professional recognition and support through management membership.

In simple terms Management qualifications give key managers an internationally recognised qualification up to degree standard, without having to achieve prior higher education.

This is achieved through a series of workshops, coaching, work based assignments (WBA's) and management reporting and projects which in turn are independently verified. The time commitment for the managers is dependant of the level being studied.

#### Has training ever been more crucial?

Well not really, this is all relative; each bygone era will trumpet the importance of training, but that doesn't diminish the profoundness of training, here and now.

Do you remember that LHR Terminal 5 was not successful when it opened despite all of the milestones of the project being reached, the money it cost and state of the art technology used? The day it opened it crashed...why?...no-one had thought fully about the training aspects, just the project aims.

Even when all was corrected the stigma of the first day's disaster still remains in everyone's memory and people groan if they have to use Terminal 5, even though the problem does not exist now. A great achievement is

*In the current financial trading environment it is essential that we keep ahead of our competition.*

now shrouded in doubt. This must be very painful for all the people, from architects to cleaners, who worked so hard to build the

very astonishingly beautiful Terminal 5.

Mud sticks.

Training and developing your staff is the most critical issue for all organisations now if they want to survive. Most organisations cutting training and development is merely a knee jerk reaction to cost cutting; this is a very short sighted view of the macro environment they work in.