

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN, Prof. DAVID E. BROOKES

Dear Member,

I hope you and your family and colleagues are safe and coping in these unusual and extremely trying times.

As we approach the dual Celebrations of the 75th. Anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe and the prospect of the gradual easing of current restrictions on business and private lives, we have much to be grateful for.

To those who fought to ensure our freedom then, and those who are now fighting another threat to our health and safety, our heartfelt thanks are due. I grew up in England during the war and can well remember family members and friends serving in the Armed Forces and also experienced the dangers to which civilians were exposed during bombing raids, together with the general privations and restrictions imposed upon the population. We were, however, never occupied on the mainland. My family has long-standing links with Norway and one could only feel for all those here who suffered more directly during the occupation. So we give thanks in the best way we can in the circumstances 75 years on for the hard-won freedoms our forefathers gave us and remember them.

Now we are approaching what is to be hoped will be a newer form of freedom as the health services begin to get on top of the latest worldwide threat to us all leading to a gradual easing of "lockdown". Heartfelt thanks are due all those, both here and in UK, who have worked so hard and selflessly to alleviate the suffering of those affected by this new and fearful threat to health and safety.

But what will this new freedom entail? The consensus in UK would seem that working conditions will long be different from those before the "lockdown" and many of these changes will also probably apply to Norway. In particular, the tendency to work more from home will most likely be the most visible change. Together with phased, or staggered, work patterns on a team basis, these new patterns may also have consequences for the size and configuration of the workplace as well as of the workforce. Is the traditional gossip around the coffee machine a thing of the past? "Life after Lockdown" is a theme being covered in many webinars and communications, not least by our umbrella organization, the British Chambers of Commerce. As a member of BNCC, these are available to you and details may be found on our website. With its 63 Regional UK Chambers and ever-expanding Global network of International British Chambers, of which we are one, BCC gives you and your company access via us to over 83,000 companies worldwide and provides a powerful voice in any concerted representations to interested third parties. Here, at BNCC, we are in preliminary discussions with the Nordic and Baltic Chambers exploring the possibilities of a future Regional Collaboration and an example of such a possible collaboration is the British Swedish Chamber organizing a webinar on 26th. May at 11a.m. on Crisis Communication. Details will shortly be finalized and when available these will be posted on our website. You will then be able to sign-on directly via the Swedish website.

In closing, once we have held our postponed AGM, your new Board will doubtless be making new arrangements to also celebrate our own 50th. Anniversary. In the meanwhile, stay in touch via our website or email and all very best wishes for the future for yourself and your business.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David E. Brookes', with a large, stylized initial 'D'.