



Oxford's New Vice-Chancellor visits the Centre

The newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Professor Louise Richardson, honoured the Centre with a visit in September. Professor Richardson is an internationally recognised scholar in the fields of international relations and security studies. She has held many senior academic positions internationally and was previously Dean of the Radcliffe Centre for Advanced Studies at Harvard and then Principal and Vice-Chancellor of St Andrews University. She was welcomed by the Director and other Fellows of the Centre; the Trustees were represented by Professor Sir David Clary.

The Centre has, from its foundation, worked to develop the closest links and cooperation with the University and this first visit by Professor Richardson was a welcome opportunity to brief her on the Centre's work and to discuss future plans. She also viewed the new facilities now available in the Centre's building.



Professor Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, plants a tree in the Prince of Wales' Garden

During her visit, the Vice-Chancellor planted a tree in The Prince of Wales Garden as a further symbol of the maturing relationship between the University and the Centre.

Library Lectures 'The Evolving Library'

A series of lectures on the value, place, and future of the library within global scholarly communities was hosted by the Centre at the Weston Library. Dr Sarah E. Thomas, former Bodley's Librarian and current Vice-President of Harvard University Library gave a lecture on 'The Evolving Library: Collections, Connections and Communities'.



Dr Thomas discussed the integration of technology into study spaces and book production. She proposed that the libraries of the future would develop as a social space where academic resources were pooled and lead to a more interconnected kind of scholarship.

Dr Ismail Serageldin, the Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandria, gave a lecture on 'The Library of Alexandria: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow'.

Lectures were followed by dinners in the speakers' honour in the Oman Hall in the Centre's new premises on Marston Road.

This is an important moment for the Library. As with other Centre programmes and activities, the greatly enhanced facilities improve the scope for further development and expansion. The lectures offered an additional and timely opportunity to discuss and review acquisitions policy and library best practice more generally with internationally recognised experts in the field.

Two new issues of the Journal of Islamic Studies were published recently. January's issue (27/1) contains 25 book reviews, and articles by Mark Muehlhaeusler: 'Additional Reading Marks in Kufic Manuscripts', and Janne Mattila: 'The Philosophical Worship of the Ikhwān al-Safā'. The May issue (27/2) contains 17 book reviews, and articles by Phil Dorroll: 'The Universe in Flux: Reconsidering Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī's Metaphysics and Epistemology', Fedor Benevich: 'The Classical Ash'arī Theory of Ahwāl: Juwaynī and His Opponents', and Timothy J. Fitzgerald: 'Murder in Aleppo: Ottoman Conquest and the Struggle for Justice in the Early Sixteenth Century'.

Oxford Open Doors Tours

Following the success of the Oxford Literary Festival's tours of the new building in March, the Centre participated in the Oxford Open Doors weekend in September. Over 230 visitors were guided through the building and the Prince of Wales Garden and were briefed on the Centre's academic role.

Given the growing interest in its new premises, the Centre is considering ways to meet the need by enabling tours of the new building on a more regular basis.

International Links

Algeria

The Ambassador of Algeria, HE Mr Amar Abba, visited the Centre during the summer. His visit offered an opportunity to explore ways to strengthen academic cooperation with Algeria.



HE Mr Amar Abba
with the Director

Azerbaijan

The Centre was pleased to host a visit from the current Shaikh Ul Islam, Allahshükür Pashazade, Director of the Caucasus Muslims. The Shaikh was accompanied by HE Mr Tahir Taghizadeh, the Ambassador for Azerbaijan, and an interfaith delegation for a roundtable discussion with Fellows and staff.

India



Mr Navtej Sarna
with the Registrar

HE Mr Navtej Sarna, the High Commissioner of India, was welcomed to the Centre in Hilary Term. His Excellency had recently been appointed to the post of High Commissioner, and was keen to learn about the Centre's work. He was given a tour of the building by the Registrar and Atlas Senior Research Fellow Dr Moin Nizami, and during a visit to the Exhibition Gallery was shown the extensive work undertaken at the Centre.

UN Alliance of Civilisation

The Director attended the 7th United Nations Alliance of Civilisations Global Forum held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Forum explored the themes of 'Living Together in Inclusive Societies: A Challenge and a Goal' and brought together civil society actors, governments, media, the private sector, and religious leaders from around the globe. The two plenary sessions focussed on 'Platforms and Partnerships for the Prevention of Violent Extremism' and 'Good Practices for Social Inclusion', while breakout sessions built upon UNAOC's four pillars of action: youth, education, media, and migration.

Oman

The Centre hosted a dinner for the participants of the "7th Conference on Ibadism and Oman" held at St Antony's College during the Spring. In attendance were Professor Abdulrahman Al Salimi from the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as over 30 delegates from Oxford and around the world, including many very senior academics in the field.

Qatar

The Director attended the 12th Doha Interfaith Conference held in Qatar. Topics discussed included the role of religion in protecting individual freedoms and moral values, the negative impact of media and radical influences, and the protection of youth.

From 21–23 May, the Director and Dr Adeel Malik, Globe Fellow, participated in the 16th Doha Forum, which included discussions on issues of security and defence, economics, energy, and civil society.

Singapore

The Centre was honoured by a visit in May from HE The High Commissioner



of Singapore, Ms Foo Chi Hsia. This visit

made it possible to review the Centre's latest academic activities and prospects for further collaboration with partners in Singapore.

Turkey



HE Mr Ali Babacan

HE Mr Ali Babacan, Adviser to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey visited the Centre in the Spring. He took the time to meet Fellows and to discuss opportunities further to enhance the Centre's existing strong academic links with individuals and institutions in Turkey.

Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister calls for Tolerance and Moderation



HE Dato' Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia

HE Dato' Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, visited the Centre and delivered a well-attended

lecture on Wednesday 9th November 2016 at the Malaysia Auditorium in the new building. He took as his title 'De-Rooting Radicalism and Extremism.' Noting Malaysia's traditions of multi-culturalism and cooperation between different ethnic and faith communities, he surveyed the threats of extremism in its various guises and ideologies. He argued that a sophisticated and coordinated response was required.

We should avoid blaming entire communities, and strive together to identify effective approaches to tackle social and other grievances, while emphasising the benefits of tolerance and moderation, based on a true reading of faith and tradition. The Vote of Thanks was proposed by Professor Sir David Clary, President of Magdalen College and a Trustee of the Centre.

Young Muslim Leadership Programme

From 28 August to 10 September 2016, the Centre ran its annual Young Muslim Leadership Programme, in cooperation with the Prince's Charities, and supported by the Amanah Foundation and ISESCO. The 24 young men and women who participated this year came from across Britain and brought together a diverse range of interests. The intensive residential course included leadership training, lectures and workshops, held in the Centre's new building, as well as visits to Parliament and Buckingham Palace.

On 3 September, the Centre held a YMLP Alumni Day, in which previous participants were able to meet and reflect on their experiences of the Programme and since. They shared their reflections with and gave encouragement to this year's group.

As every year, the Centre is indebted to the many senior people who give freely of their time to present their insights and experience to course participants. These included former government Ministers, senior civil servants, and those with a wealth of experience in sectors such as non-governmental organisations, business, finance and journalism. It is this direct contact with highly successful people in a variety of different fields that gives the YMLP its inspirational character and appeal.

Azman Hashim Fellow appointed Enhancing the Study of British Muslims

The Centre welcomes the new Azman Hashim Fellow, Professor Mark Halstead, who carries responsibility for co-ordinating research on Muslims in Britain.

Professor Halstead studied for his undergraduate degree at Oxford and subsequently completed an MPhil and

PhD at Cambridge. His last post was as Professor of Education in Huddersfield and he has published widely on issues related to religious education.



Professor Mark Halstead

Saudi Oxbridge Alumni welcomed



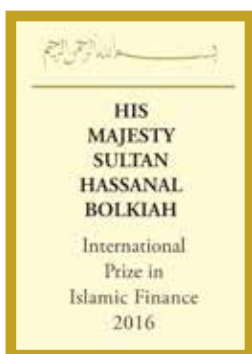
The Saudi Oxbridge Alumni Association in the Centre's Garden

The Centre continues to support the development of alumni associations relevant to the Centre's interests and work. The

Inaugural Meeting of the newly founded Saudi Oxbridge Alumni Association, headed by HRH Prince Faisal bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, was hosted by the Centre in May. The alumni joined members of the diplomatic community for a lunch at the Centre before the evening event at the Weston Library. The alumni were welcomed by speakers, Sir Alan Munro and HRH Prince Muhammad bin Nawaf bin Abdulaziz, before receiving the address from Prince Faisal bin Salman. This was an opportunity for the alumni to discuss future directions, and possibilities to reconnect and network.

Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah Prize in Islamic Finance

In late summer, the Centre was pleased to invite nominations for the highly prestigious international Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah Prize, awarded for excellence in the study of Islam and the Islamic World. The theme for this year's prize is Islamic Finance and an international jury will decide the recipient for 2016.



7th SC-OCIS Roundtable Influencing change in finance and society

The annual SC-OCIS Roundtable on Islamic Finance was held in Malaysia this year and focused on 'Influencing change in finance and society.'

As before, the Roundtable drew participants from a range of highly experienced scholars, academics, regulators and industry participants. The meeting was inaugurated by HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah, Ruler of the State of Perak and the Royal Patron for Malaysia's Islamic Finance Initiative.

His keynote address stressed the importance of an enabling environment to incentivise the growth of Islamic finance.

Discussion centred on the mechanisms needed to enable the Islamic finance industry to realise its potential as an alternative financial intermediation system. The particular goals of Islamic finance were identified as improved financial stability together with a stronger commitment to balancing economic growth



Securities Commission CEO Rajit Singh (left), the Sultan of the State of Perak (and Centre Trustee) at the SC-OCIS Roundtable

and poverty reduction, wealth creation and wealth distribution, financial policies that were inclusive as well as expansive. Particular attention was given to the need for regulatory policies and legislative changes to provide impetus for growth and to remove impediments to unlocking the potential of the industry, especially with regard to extending the reach of Islamic finance into parts of the economy not adequately serviced by conventional finance.