



Conference on Political economy of the Middle East

In October the Centre partnered with Oxford's Department of International Development to host Professor Sir Timothy Besley for a talk on "State Capacity, Peace and Development: Challenges for the Middle East." Professor Besley, CBE, FBA, is Sir W. Arthur Lewis Professor of Development Economics at LSE. His keynote address was part of a two-day international conference on "New Perspectives on Political Economy of the Middle East". The conference hosted for the Centre by Dr Adeel Malik was organised in collaboration with Sciences-Po Lille, Heriot-Watt University, and University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. The main objective of the conference was to help develop a new understanding of Middle Eastern economies, while also providing a forum for young and established researchers to submit their work to the scrutiny of their peers.

Papers were presented on a diverse range of themes, including new scholarship on Islamic finance, management of oil revenues, migration and conflict,



Professor Timothy Besley (right), with Professor Christopher Adam (left), Head of the Department of International Development

trade and macroeconomic policies, and politics after the Arab Spring. It ended with a panel discussion on the potential for policy reform in the political economies of the Arab world. Eliciting strong interest from local and international scholars, it attracted 60 participants.

Annual meeting of Trustees Retiring Trustees and new appointments



The Centre's Trustees in September

At their meeting in September, the Trustees marked the retirement from the Board of Dr Abdullah O. Nasseef,

one of the founding Trustees, and Professor Keith Griffin who had also served from 1985. The co-Chair, HRH Prince Turki Al-Faisal spoke of the Board's appreciation and gratitude for their tireless contribution to the Centre and conscientious campaigning on its behalf over the years. The Trustees welcomed, as new members of the Board, His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto and The Rt Hon Dominic Grieve MP, former Attorney General for England and Wales.

The Trustees elected Dr Nasseef as Chairman Emeritus and resolved to establish in recognition of Professor Griffin's exceptional contribution to the Centre, an annual *Keith Griffin Lecture*. This Lecture would not only attract senior scholars to Oxford but it would also complement the Centre's expanding commitment to the study of the economies of Muslim societies.

New Building wins prestigious award

The Centre was one of the winners in the New Building category of the 40th annual Oxford Preservation Trust Awards. The other award categories were Landscape and the Environment, Building Conservation and Small Projects. The Award was presented at a ceremony held in St Catherine's College in November.



The Centre has welcomed the interest in its building. Tours have been provided to local groups including Oxford Open Doors, the Oxford Literary Festival, the Oxford Civic Society and a number of local schools and church groups.

The Centre has received donations from the Oxford Civic Society and from the outgoing Mayor, Mohammed Altaf-Khan who, during his term as Mayor, had designated the Centre's scholarships programme as one of his personal charities.

Special seminar

Dr Paul Shore, Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies, University of Regina, gave a seminar on 'A Baroque Jesuit and the Qur'an: The Translation and Commentaries of Ignazio Lomellini, SJ (1622)'.

International contacts

Morocco

During Ramadan the Director attended the Al Hassania Lectures hosted by His Majesty King Mohammed VI. The series was instituted by HM the late King Hassan II at which distinguished scholars from around the world address issues relevant to Islamic beliefs and contemporary Muslim concerns.

The visit provided an opportunity to strengthen links with Moroccan academic and cultural institutions. Morocco has generously supported a room in the Centre's new building. Dr Ahmad Tawfiq, the Minister of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, has been a long standing supporter of the Centre's work.

India



Mr Y.K. Sinha

Michaelmas Term started with a lecture by HE Mr Y K Sinha, High Commissioner of India, on 'The Indian Story: Past, Present and Future'. He spoke of the challenges that India has faced since 1947 and highlighted the country's potential as it enters a new and exciting stage in its social and technological development. His Excellency's lecture co-incided with India's seventieth anniversary celebrations.

United States

The Michaelmas Term seminar series on 'Islam and Bioscience' was organised in collaboration with the University of Chicago and with the support of the US-based Templeton Religion Trust. Dr Afifi al-Akiti, KFAS Fellow, and Dr Aasim Padela, Visiting Fellow (University of Chicago) were the co-organisers of the series. It is part of an eighteen-month collaboration with Chicago's 'Initiative on Islam and Medicine' and the Templeton Trust and involves academic meetings, conferences, publications, websites and podcasts.

UAE

The Centre welcomed Mr Hamad Kardous Alameri from the Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Foundation to discuss possible collaboration on Centre activities and projects. The Foundation was



Mr Hamad Alameri meets the Director

established in 2007 to support 'Pioneering Initiatives for Welfare'. Its work is principally focused on health and education at the local, regional and global levels.

Azerbaijan

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, HE Mr Ilham Aliyev had designated 2017 as the 'Year of Islamic Solidarity: Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue'. As part of the celebrations, the Mufti of the Caucasus, Allahshukur Pashazadeh, hosted a conference on inter-faith understanding which was attended by the Director and scholars, scientists, community and religious leaders from across the globe. The Centre has long standing links with Azerbaijan. A number of visiting fellows from Azerbaijan have been in residence at the Centre and HE Mr Tahir Taghizade, Azerbaijan Ambassador to London, has participated in Centre activities.

Malaysia



HM the Queen of Johor with the Director

including the provision of visiting fellowships and scholarships.

Republic of Uzbekistan Strengthening academic collaboration

In December the Director attended, in Taskent, a series of meetings with academics and government representatives, including the Prime Minister of the Republic, His Excellency Mr Abdulla Aripov. The purpose of these meetings was to consolidate the ties between the Centre and academic institutions in Uzbekistan. Memoranda of Understanding were signed with the Imam Bukhari International Scientific Research Centre, the

Center of Islamic Civilisation in Uzbekistan and the Center for Research on Islamic Studies of Tashkent Islamic University. These agreements will facilitate effective cooperation in research, education and training through the exchange of scholars, workshops and conferences, research projects, academic publications and joint training programmes.



Prime Minister
Abdulla Aripov

Ambassador Idriss Jazairy speaks on Citizenship Rights of Rohingyas

Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, Special Rapporteur to the UN Human Rights Council and Executive Director of Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue, lectured at the Centre on 'The challenge of equal citizenship rights: a case study of Myanmar's Rohingyas'. The Ambassador recounted the historical background to the long time presence of the mostly Muslim Rohingyas in what became the modern state of Burma/Myanmar. He described in some detail the terrible conditions being suffered by the Rohingyas both in Myanmar and as refugees in

neighbouring Bangladesh. He argued that inclusivity is a characteristic of progressive societies, one fully compatible with diversity in religious, cultural, ethnic or geographic background, in socio-political origins. However, he noted that even the most progressive societies were discovering (and being tested by) the entail of economic neo-liberalism and financial globalisation.



Ambassador Jazairy

Workshop on Islamicate networks

Centre Fellows Dr Talal al-Azem and Dr Moin Nizami convened a two-day workshop in September on 'Islamicate Networks in the Early Modern World: Global and Regional Impact'. The workshop explored how the early modern world was interconnected via intellectual networks of Muslim scholars and mystics as well as by networks of productive crafts and trade. The workshop also looked into how the networks were created and how sustained; their role in the transmission of cultural motifs between regions, and the features that indicate a sharing of knowledge and technique while preserving certain

distinctive characteristics. By covering several geographical regions, the workshop enabled useful comparative study of the different ways in which these networks of knowledge and culture interacted.

The keynote address was given by Professor Suraiya Faroqhi (Ludwig-Maximilian University). Among other speakers were Professor Judith Pfeiffer (University of Bonn), Dr. Mahmood Kooria (University of Leiden), Professor Knut Vikor (University of Bergen), Professor Anne K. Bang (University of Bergen), Professor Doris Behrens-Abouseif (SOAS), and Dr. Annabel Teh Gallop from the British Library.

OIC Meeting on Culture

In November, the Director and the Registrar, attended the 10th Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, hosted in Khartoum by ISESCO and the Sudan Ministry of Culture. Focused on 'Culture and the Islamic city of the future', the meeting provided an opportunity to explore new areas of cooperation with ISESCO and a number of member countries.

OIC Summit on Science

Trustee and President of Magdalen College, Professor Sir David Clary, accompanied the Director to the first Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Summit on Science and Technology in Astana. Following conferences and seminars on the subject, the visit formed part of a growing research interest on Islam and Science.

Islam in Indonesia

During a visit to the Centre in December, Professor M. Din Syamsuddin, the Special Envoy of the President of the Republic of Indonesia for Inter-faith and Inter-Civilization Dialogue, spoke at a roundtable on 'Islam, Indonesia and Inter-Faith Relations'. In addition to representatives from the Indonesian embassy, the roundtable was attended by senior academic members of the Centre and the University of Oxford.

Lady English retires as Dean of Scholars

At the end of 2017, Lady English retired from her role as the Centre's Dean of Scholars. Since the establishment of the position in 2011, she has looked after, and overseen the academic administration of, over 70 OCIS scholars. Her retirement marks the end of a fourteen year formal association with the Centre's academic activities. Lady English will continue as a Senior Associate Member of the Centre and as such will continue to participate in lectures, seminars and graduate colloquia. Centre Fellow, Dr George Malagaris, has assumed the Dean's responsibilities from January 2018.

ISESCO - OCIS Prize

UNESCO Director-General Receives Award

At a prize-giving ceremony in Paris in September, UNESCO was presented with the ISESCO-OCIS Prize for Educators, 2017, in recognition of its contribution to the Promotion of Peace and Co-existence. After speeches by His Excellency Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, Secretary General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, and the Director of the Centre, Dr Nizami, the Prize shield was formally accepted by the Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova. Earlier in the year, the Prize jury had identified a number of very strong candidates (individuals and institutions) who had been nominated



for consideration for the award. The jury was unanimous in its appreciation for the exceptional



HE Dr Altwajri, Mrs Bokova and the Director

importance and distinction of the work of UNESCO in recent years, notably UNESCO's 'Different Aspects of Islamic Culture' collection published earlier in the year. The Prize is one of a number of formal academic initiatives established between the Centre and ISESCO (itself formally established in 1981 to promote cooperation between OIC member states in the fields of education, science and culture).

OXFORD CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Marston Road, Oxford, OX3 0EE, UK

Tel: +44 1865 278730 Fax: +44 1865 248942 Email: islamic.studies@oxcis.ac.uk

www.oxcis.ac.uk