



Deputy Prime Minister Visits the Centre Promoting Community Cohesion



Rt. Hon. Angela Rayner MP with the Director

The Centre hosted a visit from Rt. Hon. Angela Rayner MP, who was given a tour of the Centre by way of an introduction to its mission, values, and commitment to the advanced study of Islamic civilization and the Muslim world. Ms Rayner expressed appreciation for the scope and ambition of the Centre's undertaking, particularly

its integration into the wider context of Oxford's research culture and its community-focused initiatives, including its outreach activities and the welcoming of worshippers from across Oxford at the Centre's mosque.

The Deputy Prime Minister emphasized the importance of building a stronger, safer, and more cohesive society by means of open dialogue and mutual respect. Likewise, she commended the Centre's role not only as a scholarly institution in Oxford, but also as an institution that makes valuable contributions to wider British culture and interfaith dialogue. The Deputy Prime Minister commended how far the Centre has come, and expressed hope that it may 'grow not just in terms of place here in Oxford, but in our hearts and culture'.

The Deputy Prime Minister was accompanied by Lord Khan of Burnley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and Minister for Faith, Communities and Resettlement. The visit concluded with a dinner in the Deputy Prime Minister's honour, attended by esteemed guests.

Young Muslim Leadership Programme Marks 20 Years of Training Future Leaders

This year the Centre's flagship annual residential leadership programme for young British Muslims celebrates its 20th year. This programme was initially established as a joint initiative of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and the then Prince's Charities.

The programme has brought together emerging British Muslim leaders from across professional, civic, and academic spheres, equipping participants to engage with the challenges of leadership in a diverse and interconnected society.

The programme offers participants valuable opportunities for networking with prominent speakers, as well as the growing alumni network of previous YMLP cohorts. This year's YMLP keynote address was delivered by Dame Ann Limb DBE, Chair of Trustees of The King's Foundation, who urged participants to 'reach for the stars, but keep your feet on the ground'. She spoke of the enduring need for leaders to combine self-belief with humility and to remain rooted in their communities.



YMLP Alumni reunion

In celebration of the 20th YMLP, the Centre hosted an alumni reception in the King Charles III Garden. It was an afternoon not only of celebration but also of reflection on the journeys taken by over 400 alumni whose contributions have enriched public life in fields ranging from education and law to politics, charity, and the arts.

Trinity Term Seminars

The following lectures and seminars were held at the Centre:

30 April: Professor Sevkettin Pamuk (Bogaziçi University), 'Political Economy and Economic Institutions of the Ottoman Empire in Comparative Perspective.'

7 May: Professor Christophe Jaffrelot (Kings College London), 'Beyond Castes and Regions: The Socio-Economic Decline of Muslims in Contemporary India'

21 May: Dr Michael Callen (LSE), 'Building State Capacity in Fragile States'

28 May: Professor Blain Auer (University of Lausanne), 'The Origins of Perso-Islamic Courts and Empires in India'

4 June: Professor Anoush Ehteshami (Durham University), 'Iran's Crisis of Governance'

Anniversary Fellowships

The Centre has started a new category of fellowships to mark its 40th anniversary. The first Anniversary Fellows elected are Sir Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, and Professor Robert Hillenbrand, professorial fellow specializing in Islamic art at the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews.

International Contacts

Malaysia



HRH Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah

HRH Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, Sultan of Selangor visited the Centre, where he was welcomed by a group of Centre fellows, visiting scholars, and staff. During the visit, HRH engaged in a discussion about the relationship of history and biography in the important process of documenting national heritage. The conversation highlighted the Centre's work in this field.

Algeria



HE Sheikh Mohammed Maamoun El Kacimi

HE Sheikh Mohammed Maamoun El Kacimi, Rector of the Great Mosque of Algeria, delivered a lecture on the life and legacy of Emir Abd Al-Qadir, the nineteenth-century Algerian leader who led the struggle against the French colonial invasion of Algiers. His Excellency gave an illuminating account of Emir Abd Al-Qadir's life.

Brunei



Dato Seri Dr Haji Norarfan

Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Norarfan bin Haji Zainal, Rector for Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), Brunei Darussalam met with the Director. Dato Seri and the Director discussed projects relating to Islamic studies at their respective institutions, noting the breadth of multidisciplinary projects underway. The discussion also addressed strengthening academic relations in the region.

United Arab Emirates



HE Dr Khalid Al Dhaheri

HE Dr Khalid Al Dhaheri, Chancellor of Mohammed bin Zayed University for Humanities visited the Centre with a group of representatives from the UAE. HE Dr Khaled expressed appreciation for key areas of activity at the Centre, particularly its publications projects, scholarships, and fellowships schemes, noting areas of mutual interest with a view to future co-operation.

Book Launch

Disruptive Technologies and Muslim Societies



Sir David Clary and Professor Shahid Jameel

The Centre hosted a book launch for *Disruptive Technologies and Muslim Societies: From AI and Education to Food and Fintech*, a wide-ranging collection of essays edited by Centre Fellows Professor Shahid Jameel and Sir David Clary. The book is a key output of the Centre's project

on Science, Technology and Environment in Muslim Societies, which is led by the editors. Professor Jameel and Sir David offered an overview of the book's focus on world-changing innovations and their impact on Muslim societies, from healthcare to science and technology, AI, food systems and fintech. Several of the international contributors presented on the topics of their research, offering the audience valuable insights into the role that disruptive technologies can play in Muslim societies. The book launch was concluded by a discussion and a reception in the King Charles III Garden.

Roundtable on Hajj and Umrah Sacred Spaces, Seamless Journeys



HE Dr Tawfig Al-Rabiah with the Director

The Centre hosted a visit from HE Dr Tawfig Al-Rabiah, Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for a roundtable on the topic of 'Sacred Spaces, Seamless

Journeys: Transforming the Pilgrim Experience'.

The keynote focused on Saudi Arabia's enduring commitment to upholding faith, innovation, and service, with the aim of enriching the experiences of pilgrims undertaking Hajj and Umrah.

In his address, His Excellency reflected on the challenges and opportunities presented by a fast-changing world, highlighting the importance of harnessing modern technology and digital innovation in support of the Ministry's mission.

Visiting Fellowships Programme Enriching Academic Collaboration

The Centre's Visiting Fellowships programme continues to bring international researchers to Oxford, broadening the Centre's academic network. An important part of the programme is the OCIS-Chevening Fellowship scheme, a joint initiative with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The number of available fellowships under the scheme has been expanded from 4 to 6.

The Centre's Visiting Fellowships programme will also benefit from an

MoU with TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities), a hub for multi-disciplinary research projects at the University of Oxford. The MoU, signed by Professor Daniel Grimley, Head of the Humanities Division, arises from a shared recognition of complementary strengths and commitment to supporting international visiting researchers engaged in Humanities research. Plans for joint affiliation for visiting fellows will enhance integration into Oxford's research environments.

Astrolabe Exhibition

Rare Manuscripts on Display at the Centre

The Centre's current exhibition has been enriched by a valuable loan from Qatar National Library. This generous addition comprises four rare manuscript copies, which illuminate the production, transmission, and application of astronomical knowledge, particularly highlighting the scientific sophistication behind the astrolabe as an important astronomical device in the Islamic world. They provide an essential narrative extension to the astrolabes already on display.

Among them is a previously unknown North African copy of 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sūfi's (d. 986) *Book on the Astrolabe*, one of the most



Qatar National Library HC.MS.00716

comprehensive treatises on the subject ever written. Also featured are illustrated folios from a 15th-century copy of *Fifty Chapters for the Sultan* by Rukn al-Dīn al-Husayn al-Āmūlī, composed for Sultan Baysunghur, ruler of Herat.

Visiting Fellows

The Centre welcomed the following Visiting Fellows in Trinity Term 2025:

Professor Vincent Biondo, PhD (UC Santa Barbara)
Visiting Fellow

Dr Chouki El Hamel, PhD (Sorbonne)
Abdul Aziz al-Mutawa Visiting Fellow

Dr Ikram Haque, BA, MA MPhil, PhD (JNU)
Atlas Visiting Fellow

Dr Muhammad Naseem, PhD (Wuerzburg)
Visiting Fellow

Dr Ayesha AlKetbi, PhD (Sharjah)
Visiting Research Fellow

Dr Alexandra Cotofana, PhD (Indiana-Bloomington)
Visiting Research Fellow

Dr Yusuf Oldac, DPhil (Oxon)
Visiting Research Fellow

Mr Wan Jamaludin, BSocSC (UNIMAS) Sarawak
Sabbatical Academic Visitor

Dr Sabba Mirza, LL.M., PhD (Copenhagen)
Academic Visitor

Trustees' Meeting

The Trustees' meeting coincided with the 40th anniversary celebration. The sub-committee and board meetings focused on upholding the Centre's strengths and enhancing its areas of activity. To mark the anniversary, the Trustees planted a new tree in the Trustees' Garden.

New Atlas Research Fellow

Dr Fouzia Farooq Ahmed has joined the Centre as an Atlas Research Fellow, she will be contributing towards the completion of the Centre's project *An Atlas of Social and Intellectual History of Muslims in South Asia*. Her research explores themes of power dynamics, intellectual traditions, and socio-cultural transformations within Islamic and South Asian contexts.



Dr Fouzia Farooq Ahmed

Centre Scholarships

Creating New Opportunities for the Young

The Centre continues to support students reading for graduate and undergraduate degrees at the University of Oxford, with 20 students currently supported under the programme. Centre scholars read for a wide range of subjects, not only those directly relating to Islamic studies, history, theology and religion, but also other disciplines that have the potential to impact Muslim societies world-wide, including development economics, international relations, and philosophy, politics and economics.

Centre scholars have the opportunity to live at the Centre and join its academic and social events, such as the weekly term-time seminar series. The expanding alumni network of Centre scholars is likewise an important way to build community and ensure an active professional network.

The student body at the Centre also comprises



The Centre's Kuwait Library

exhibitioners—students reading for degrees thematically aligned with the remit of the Centre's research programmes. Centre scholars and exhibitioners benefit from participation in the Graduate Colloquium, held each Michaelmas and Hilary term. This lively forum enables participants to share their research with their peers and Centre members, offering valuable opportunities for critique, questions, and conversations about their projects.

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OXFORD CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Marlston Road, Oxford, OX3 0EE, UK

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

www.oxcis.ac.uk