



HRH The Prince of Wales visits the Centre



HRH The Prince of Wales speaking at the dinner

HRH The Prince of Wales was the guest of honour at a Centre dinner in Magdalen College to mark his sixtieth birthday and thank him for his work as Patron of the Centre.

Upon becoming Patron in 1993 Prince Charles delivered a lecture on *Islam and the West* which emphasized the need

for dialogue and inter civilizational understanding. Speaking to dinner guests sixteen years later, Prince Charles reiterated that aim and spoke also of the importance of promoting good environmental practices in Muslim societies around the world. Since 1993 the Centre has organized a number of initiatives to promote dialogue and mutual understanding. The annual Ditchley Park Conferences have addressed contemporary issues and challenges facing the global community. The Young Muslim Leadership Programme has brought together over the past four years future leaders and opinion formers from Britain's diverse Muslim communities to promote greater participation in national life.

The Director of the Centre thanked The Prince of Wales for his constant and generous support and for his leadership in calling for civilizational dialogue which has resonated world-wide. The dinner was attended by distinguished international figures, Members of Parliament, Diplomats, heads of Oxford colleges, and the representatives of local and national civil society organizations.

Turkish Prime Minister lectures on 'Alliance of Civilizations'

While in London to attend the G20 Summit Meeting, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, HE Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan, visited the Centre to deliver a lecture on the role of Turkey in the alliance of civilizations.

In the lecture, which was presented to a capacity audience in the Sheldonian Theatre, Mr Erdogan spoke of how the need for such an alliance – particularly in the current context of global economic challenges and climate change – is ever more obvious and urgent. Turkey, owing to the legacy of its geographical and cultural location at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, is perhaps uniquely well placed to influence and foster good relations between the two. The Prime Minister spoke about the compatibility of Turkish culture and European values and referred to Turkey's continuing efforts to gain accession to the European Union.

The Director of the Centre reaffirmed how, in the field of inter-cultural and inter-disciplinary scholarship,



HE Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the Sheldonian Theatre

the Centre is similarly committed to building the mutual understanding and capacity to work together, which must underpin any sustainable alliance of civilizations.

The vote of thanks was offered by the Chairman of the Anglo-Turkish Society, Sir Timothy Daunt, KCMG. The Prime Minister was then guest of honour at a dinner in Exeter College hosted by the Director of the Centre.

Centre Architect Honoured

Professor Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil, the architect of the Centre's new building, has been awarded the 2009 Richard H. Driehaus Prize in Classical Architecture (administered by the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture). This Prize is awarded annually for architectural work that has had an impact on the built and natural environments. Over the past four decades, Professor El-Wakil has designed public buildings, mosques and private residences throughout the Islamic world. In the new building of the Centre Professor El-Wakil blends together features from the college building styles of the Islamic world and Oxford.

Community Volunteers Workshop

As part of the Centre's outreach work, a workshop was organized in Oxford for twenty-five volunteers who work in East Lancashire's Muslim community. The volunteers learned about the importance of continued participation in local life and how to make use of resources offered by the borough councils. They were also made aware of the Young Muslim Leadership Programme, which the Centre has organized for the past four years in collaboration with the Prince of Wales's Charities.

Fellow in Middle East Politics appointed



Professor A.R. Norton

Professor Augustus Richard Norton has been appointed the Sultan of Brunei Fellow in Middle East Politics at the Centre and Visiting Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. Professor Norton, who also holds a chair in International Relations and Anthropology at Boston University, has had a notable academic career, teaching at various

institutions including New York University and the University of Texas at Austin. Researching and writing widely on current issues in the Middle East, his expertise is underpinned by regular fieldwork in the region.

He is the recipient of numerous academic grants and awards from institutions such as the Fulbright, Rockefeller and Ford Foundations.

This appointment significantly enhances the Centre's capacity for teaching and research in politics and international relations of the Middle East.

Expanding Frontiers of Islamic Finance

Given the significant role Islamic Finance plays in the global economy, the Centre is seeking to enhance its ability to contribute to study and research in the field.

Following a visit to the Centre by the Chair of the Securities Commission of Malaysia, Dato' Zarinah Anwar, consideration is being given to a joint conference with the Centre to facilitate analysis by scholars, professionals and financial regulators, of themes concerned with the future contribution of

Islamic finance to world financial markets.

A complementary conference, jointly organized by the Centre, Oxford Islamic Finance Ltd and Dar al-Istithmar Ltd, was held at Wadham College, Oxford, and attended by 44 delegates representing banks, investment funds and other financial institutions. The current global financial crisis inspired the choice of theme for the conference: *The Frontiers of Innovation and Islamic Finance*.

Visitors: Chair Charity Commission

During Hilary Term, Dame Suzi Leather, Chair of the Charity Commission, visited the Centre. She was given a briefing on the Centre's outreach activities and details of the lectures and courses which are available to the general public. Dame Suzi expressed her interest in the Centre's leadership programme which widens access for young people and encourages them to take a more active part in British national life. This successful programme has been jointly organized with The



Dame Suzi Leather with the Director and Registrar

Prince's Charities over the past four years. A component of the programme encourages greater participation in the voluntary sector.

Chief Executive AHRC

The Centre organized a roundtable discussion with Professor Philip Esler, Chief Executive of the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Professor Esler spoke about the funding opportunities available for research within the fields of humanities and social sciences. He noted that current trends in higher education research emphasized inter-community understanding. Centre Fellows provided a briefing on their research interests and discussed possibilities for support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Professor Esler mentioned the opportunities available for Muslim students and expressed a strong interest in collaborating with the Centre in the future. The Centre's own Scholarship Programme will also provide opportunities for a greater number of young people to attend the University of Oxford.

International Contacts

Turkey

A delegation from Ankara University visited the Centre during Hilary Term. The delegation included: Dr Halis Ibayrak, Vice Dean of the University, Dr Nahide Bozkurt, Professor of Islamic History, and Dr Mualla Selcuk from the Department of Religious Education. The visit provided an opportunity to consider possibilities of co-operation. The visitors were interested in the Centre's training and outreach activities such as the programme for teachers of religious education in British schools and the Young Muslim Leadership Programme.

USA

The Director attended a conference in New York on *Bridging the Divide between the United States and the Muslim World* organized by the Dialogues Centre at New York University, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Asia Society. The event brought together religious and community leaders, scholars, artists and policy makers from the Muslim world, the United States and Europe, to examine ways of promoting mutual understanding between peoples and nations.

Roundtable discussions:

Britain, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf

During a visit by Sir William Patey, HM Ambassador in Riyadh, the Centre organized a roundtable discussion on Britain's relationship with Saudi Arabia and its interests in the wider Middle East. Sir William gave a broad overview of political developments in the region and discussed the potential for change brought about by a new American administration. Consideration was also given to current developments in society and economy in Saudi Arabia, and the ways in which the United Kingdom and the European Union might assist and support this process. Academic cooperation was one avenue for such cooperation and Sir William welcomed the contribution being made by the Centre forming to such partnerships.

Syria

HE Mr Mohammad Abdul Sattar Al Sayed, the Minister of Awqaf of the Syrian Arab Republic visited the Centre as part of an official tour of the UK organized by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the work of the Centre and to explore common interests and possible cooperation with the Ministry. This included discussions on the establishment of a series of training programmes and joint workshops. During a lunch hosted by the Director in honour of the Minister, Mr Al Sayed expressed his support for the Centre and encouraged greater cooperation with academics in Syria. He noted that the long tradition of interfaith dialogue and understanding in his country could provide a strong basis for collaboration between institutions in the UK and Syria. Afterwards Mr Al Sayed was given a tour of the Centre's new building.



The Director with HE Mr Mohammad Abdul Sattar

Links between ASEAN and the UK

The Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), HE Dr Surin Pitsuwan, visited the Centre during Hilary Term. Discussions were held regarding the effects of the global economic crises and the impact of the new US administration on relations between Washington and Southeast Asia. Dr Pitsuwan also spoke of the efforts to bolster socio-economic ties between the countries within the region. In his meeting with the Fellows of the Centre, Dr Pitsuwan encouraged the development of collaborative research projects between the Centre and academic institutions in the Southeast Asia.



HE Dr Surin Pitsuwan

Seminars

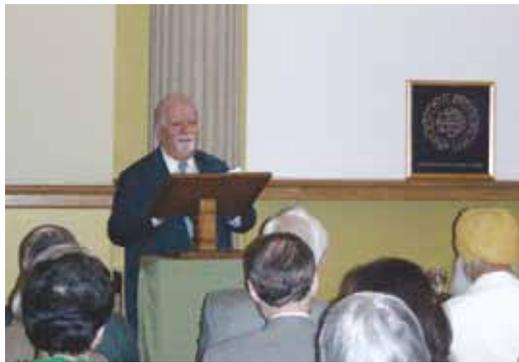
Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals: Strategies of Central Power

During Hilary Term, the Centre organized a series of eight weekly seminars on the strategies of central power among the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals.

The guest speakers who participated in this series were Professor Charles Melville (University of Cambridge), on 'History and its illustration in the early Safavid period'; Dr Colin Imber (University of Manchester), on 'Land tenure in the Ottoman empire'; Professor Polly O'Hanlon (University of Oxford), on '*Regional centralizations* in the Mughal empire'; Dr Katherine Brown (King's College London), on 'Sense and Sensibility: the place of music in Mughal society'; Dr Andrew Newman (University of Edinburgh), on 'Shahs and Subalterns: The response of the Safavid court to *voices from below*'; Professor Edmund Herzig (University of Oxford), on 'Safavid trade policy'; Ms Susan Stronge (Victoria and Albert Museum), 'Portraits of power at the Mughal court'; and Dr Evrim Bin Bas (University of Chicago), on 'The Constitutional Crisis of the 15th century and the Timurid antecedents of the Early Modern Islamic discourse on the absolute monarch'.

The latest issue of the *JIS* contains articles by Ali Usman Qasmi, on a reform movement in early twentieth century Punjab, by Hatim Mahamid on institutes of higher education in Mamluk Syria, and Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq on Islamic inscriptions in Bengal. The issue also contains 20 book reviews of some of the most important recent publications about Islam and the Muslim world.

Distinguished Visiting Lecturer: President of Carnegie lectures on Faith and Reason



Professor Gregorian delivering his lecture

Professor Vartan Gregorian, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, gave a lecture at the Taylor Institution at the invitation of the Centre on 'Encounters between Faith and Reason in Christianity and Islam.'

The lecture drew on Professor Gregorian's personal involvement with the interaction of Islamic and Christian beliefs, which can be

traced back to his early life and academic studies. He emphasized how intellectual and social links between these religions have been crucial to some of the main developments in the history of thought, across cultural boundaries.

Professor Gregorian went on to advocate the concept of a shared civilization, whose characteristics developed from the interplay between Christianity and Islam. He noted that scholars have always explored the dynamic relationships between *fides et ratio*, religion and reason, and gave many examples of how the best analytical minds throughout history have always been drawn to these areas.

A vote of thanks was offered by the Dean of Christ Church, following which the Director of the Centre hosted a dinner in honour of Professor Gregorian.