



International Academic Conferences on Islam in South Asia and Muslims in Europe



Participants at the Atlas conference held in March

The Centre has organised several academic conferences in recent months, some with international partners, in furtherance of its research commitments to the social and intellectual history of Islam in South Asia and the history

of Muslim presence in Europe. In March the Centre hosted a conference in Oxford to consider future extensions of its Atlas Project to regions other than South Asia. This major research programme is examining the diffusion over time and space of social and intellectual networks in the Muslim world.

The twenty participants in these discussions included senior scholars from the Muslim world and from the UK, USA, and India. They were joined by experts on publishing and digitisation.

Discussions focused on the temporal and geographical boundaries and scope of the future extensions of the Atlas and on how to proceed with digitisation to maximise the value of the research findings and make them easily accessible to users within and beyond universities.

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Politics of the Muslim World

The analysis of contemporary political and social developments in the Muslim world was an important focus of the Centre's seminar series, with a range of Special Seminars by visiting speakers during the Hilary and Trinity Terms in Oxford.

One of the two seminars on Afghanistan was led by Mr Rory Stewart MP, writer, traveller and acknowledged expert on the region. The second was led by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, formerly British Ambassador to Afghanistan and later UK Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, who has also written about his time in Kabul.

Their analysis centred on Western political and military interventions in Afghanistan and the lessons to be learnt in terms of policy, decision-making and the effectiveness or otherwise of these interventions. The topic sparked

very lively discussion and debate at both events.

The Centre also hosted a discussion of British Middle East policy, led by Mr David Quarrey, Director in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the Middle East and North Africa. He highlighted the complex issues now confronting policy-makers in Whitehall arising from recent upheavals and realignments of political power in North Africa and the Levant. *Continues on page 3*



Mr Rory Stewart MP during a special seminar at the Examination Schools

Fellows' Seminars

The Hilary Term Fellows' Seminars provided an opportunity for members of the Common Room to hear from the Centre's Visiting Fellows about their work in progress. The following presentations were made:

Dr Yusuf Yuksel: *A Social Development Model Based on Local Dynamics*; Mr Haekal Talib: *The Concept of Wasatiyyah in International Relations*; Dr Ousman Murzik Kobo: *The Gun and the Rosary*; Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar: *Corporate Responsibility*; Dr Munif Nordin: *Ilm al-Tafsir and Critical Discourse Analysis*; Dr Siti Obid: *Community Financial Liberation Model*; Dr Murat Inan: *Reading Hafiz of Shiraz in the Ottoman Empire*.

Graduate Colloquia

Centre scholars and other Oxford graduate students presented their research at the Centre's Graduate Colloquia.

In Hilary term presentations were given by: Shireen Walton, Aleeza Rasool, Jose Jowel Canuday, Carolyn Hou, Tabasum Wolayat, Konstantina Isidoros, Anam Baig, and Fariana Rangkuti.

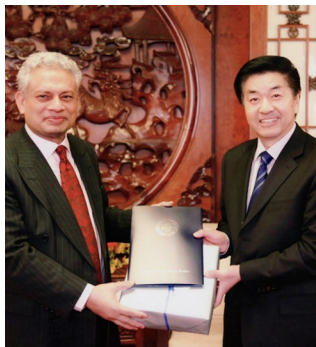
In Trinity term presentations were given by: Shozab Raza, Megan Robb, Chin Pin Wong, Byron Gray, Pavol Kosnac, Meredith McLaughlin, Hem Borker, Jia Tsing Ng, Joe Copestake and William Musker.

International Links

China

The Director of the Centre lectured at Minzu University, Beijing, in December 2012 and also met with Mr Zhang Lebin, the Deputy President of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, Mr Chen Guangyuan, the Chairman of the China Islamic Association, and Professor Song Min, the Deputy President of Minzu University.

He discussed the potential for cooperation with academic institutions in China and reciprocal visits by Chinese academics and officials are now being planned.



Iraq

A delegation from the College of the Great Imam in Baghdad was welcomed at the Centre on 25 February.

The purpose of the visit was to discuss the potential for cooperation with the Centre and a number of options were proposed. The group also visited the Centre's new building.



A framework for future co-operation and academic exchange between the College and the Centre was agreed.

USA

The Centre's relationship with Duke University Islamic Studies Centre was further reinforced by hosting the annual meeting of the DISC Advisory Board in Oxford in May.

The Advisory Board received presentations on the Centre's teaching and research activities by Centre Fellows and the Dean of Scholars. There were also discussions on how to develop further academic collaboration between the two institutions.

ASEAN

HE Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN (2008-2012) and a former Foreign Minister of Thailand, delivered a lecture on 28 January 2013 in the Examination Schools. He spoke about the challenges facing South East Asia, and particularly its Muslim communities, as ASEAN embarks on an ambitious programme to modernise and improve its effectiveness.



India

The Centre welcomed the High Commissioner of India, HE Jaimini Bhagwati to lecture on "Languages of the Rulers of Northern India: Past to Present". His lecture traced the linkages between language and political power over the centuries.



Kyrgyzstan

President Roza Otunbayeva, former President of Kyrgyzstan met Centre Fellows at a lunch hosted in her honour on 10 January.

Diplomatic Visitors

The Centre hosted visits by HE Mr Thambynathan Jasudasen, High Commissioner of Singapore, and HE Mr Mustafa Mujezinović, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Centre hosts Roundtable on Islamic Finance

In March experts in the field of Islamic finance, both academics and practitioners, gathered at Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire for the 4th Joint Roundtable organised by the Centre and the Securities Commission, Malaysia, to promote exchange and innovation in the field.

The conference was preceded by a dinner at Lancaster House in London at which participants were addressed by HRH Raja Dr Nazrin Shah, Centre Trustee and Financial Ambassador of the Malaysian International Islamic Financial Centre.

Once in Ditchley, the Roundtable settled down to detailed discussion on the theme of moving from a Shariah-compliant to a Shariah-based approach – one of the fundamental challenges facing the Islamic

finance industry worldwide.

Participants included the Chairman of the Securities Commission, Malaysia, Datuk Ranjit Ajit Singh, Centre Visiting Fellow Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar and a wide range of financial regulators and policy-makers from around the Islamic world, alongside leading academics in the field and banking experts.



Conference participants meeting at Ditchley in March

Visiting Fellowships 2013/2014

The Centre received 93 applications for Visiting Fellowships and 70 applications for Visiting Research Fellowships. The following elections were made: Dr Aria Nakissa (Brandeis University) to the *Muhammad Bin-Ladin Visiting Fellowship*; Dr Gulnihal Kupeli (Marmara University) to the *Abdul Aziz Al-Mutawa Visiting Fellowship*. Dr M. Murat Erdogan (Hacettepe University) and Dr Lala Aliyeva (Baku State University) were both elected to Visiting Fellowships.

Three Chevening Visiting Fellows elected for 2013/14 are: Dr Mahmoud Abdulrahim, Director of the Research Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Prof. Amidu Sanni, Prof. of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at Lagos State University, and Dr Muhammad Syafii Antonio, Rector of Tazkia University College of Islamic Economics, Indonesia.

Dr Saiful Umam was elected to the *Imam Bukhari Visiting Research Fellowship* and Dr Karim Sadek, to the *Imam Tirmizi Research Fellowship*. Dr Saif al Bedwawi was elected to a Visiting Research Assistantship.

Centre Scholar awarded Fulbright

Mr Kawsar Zaman, the Centre's *Tun Mahathir Scholar*, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to undertake doctoral study in law at Harvard commencing autumn 2013.

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Centre Research Activities

The Centre also partnered with UNESCO and Hacettepe University to organise a conference in Ankara on 'Migration, Islam and Multiculturalism in Europe'.

The President of Turkey, and Centre Trustee, HE Mr Abdullah Gül, gave the opening address.

Centre Fellows engaged in subsequent

discussions as panelists alongside academics and policy makers from Europe, Turkey and around the world.

Discussion focussed on the key questions of identity, integration and assimilation and the linkages to wider developments in human rights and fundamental freedoms across Europe, with special reference to the Turkish-origin communities in European countries.

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Politics of the Muslim World

Syria was on the agenda for discussion at a seminar led by writer and journalist Dr Patrick Seale, who has written and published extensively on that country and the region.

He traced the course of the 'Syrian Tragedy', surveying the complex and violent course of internal developments in Syria, their implications for the region and the difficult options facing the international community.

The theme of change in the Arab World was taken up by Gazan politician and academic, Dr Ziad Abu Amr, who served as Foreign Minister in the Palestinian unity Government of 2007. He gave a Palestinian perspective on recent developments in the region and its implications for the peace process. The series concluded with an analysis of events in Egypt by the current British Ambassador to Cairo, Mr James Watt.

Ministerial Visits

Mr Alistair Burt MP

The Centre welcomed Mr Burt for a roundtable discussion of his area of ministerial responsibility in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Middle East and North Africa. Discussion covered a wide range of current issues in the Arab world, and in particular the implications of a period of upheaval and change in several Arab countries.

Lord Astor

The Centre also hosted a visit by the Rt Hon Lord Astor, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Defence, who met a number of Centre Fellows, and members of the wider academic community in Oxford. He was briefed on the range of the Centre's academic activities and partnerships.

Seminars

Centre seminars on *Islam in Europe* and *Islamic Education*

In Hilary Term, the Centre hosted a seminars series on 'Islam in Europe'. The speakers and topics included:

Lucinda Platt, University of London, *British Muslims' Social Networks and Intergenerational Change*; Ron Geaves, Liverpool Hope University, *Sufi Orders in the West*; Kaveri Qureshi, University of Oxford, University of Sussex, *Islamic Marriage Manuals: Circulation, Discourses and Interpretations Among Muslims in the UK*; Lucy Michael, University of Hull, *British Muslim Leadership: Working with a Crisis-Centred Analysis*; Maurits S. Berger, Leiden University, *Applying Sharia in Europe*; Leon Moosavi, University of Liverpool; *Conversion to Islam in Contemporary Britain: Interrogation and*

Negotiation; Ayse Güveli, University of Essex, *Religiosity Among European Turks and Turks in Turkey*, and Chris Allen, University of Birmingham, *Between Left and Right: Islamophobic Discourse in the Political Sphere*.

In Trinity Term, the Centre hosted a seminars series on 'Trends in Islamic Education'. The speakers and topics included:

Dr Mohammed Saleh, Toulouse School of Economics, *From Kuttabs to Schools: Educational Modernization, Religion and Human Capital in Twentieth Century Egypt*; and Dr Abdullah Sahin, Markfield Institute of Higher Education, *New Directions in Islamic Education: Pedagogy and Identity Formation*.