



HRH The Prince of Wales lectures on Islam and the Environment

To celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Centre, HRH the Prince of Wales delivered a lecture on Islam and the Environment at the Sheldonian Theatre in front of a capacity audience of scholars, religious leaders, business executives, and representatives of civil society.

Seventeen years after his last speech on Islam and the West, which he delivered on becoming Patron of the Centre, Prince Charles spoke once more of 'healing divisions', but this time not between cultures but instead 'the widening division we are seeing in so many ways between humanity and Nature.' Questioning the sustainability of collusion between the sciences and economic materialism, he argued that, in the light of the environmental crisis the world faces, a different model must be found. Locating the roots of the problem in a 'deep, inner crisis of the soul', he emphasized the way in which religion and religious communities can offer long-term solutions by returning to spiritual and practical values. Pointing towards the success of his own schemes which attempt to combine religious practice with environmental regeneration, he concluded that reverence for the Creation must be at the core of our thought about nature.



HRH The Prince of Wales lecturing in the Sheldonian

The Prince of Wales called upon the Centre to establish a global forum on 'Islam and the Environment' to help develop practical approaches, founded on traditional religious precepts, which will provide guidance on proper environmental policy.

A vote of thanks was delivered by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Professor Andrew Hamilton. Later a group of religious leaders and senior scholars convened at Rhodes House to discuss the lecture.

Preserving Arabia's Cultural Heritage



HRH Prince Sultan giving his lecture in the Taylorian

In Trinity Term, the Centre invited HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Chairman of the Commission for Tourism and Antiquities of Saudi Arabia, to deliver a lecture on 'Saudi Arabia's Heritage'.

Having noted the history of cultural exchange between Oxford and Saudi Arabia, Prince Sultan emphasized the increasingly active role that the Kingdom was playing in international affairs. Arguing that this desire to participate at a global level was inherent in the

long tradition of trade and exchange that has existed in the port towns of the Arabian Peninsula, he suggested that, despite widely held impressions, Saudi Arabia had never been completely isolated from the influence of surrounding civilizations.

It is of vital cultural importance to the government of Saudi Arabia to preserve the unique cultural artefacts that the country contains. He argued that the recent discoveries of ancient towns and cities have provided new insight into the life of the people who once lived in the region. Understanding and investing in this history was a priority for the Kingdom, he said.

After the lecture Prince Sultan bin Salman toured the Centre's new building. The Director then hosted a dinner in his honour at Rhodes House. Distinguished guests from local and national cultural organizations attended the dinner, as did government officials.

Young Muslim Leadership Programme

Training future leaders

The Centre organized its annual Young Muslim Leadership Programme from 26th July to 7th August at Wadham College, Oxford. This programme, the fifth in the series, brought together young men and women from across Britain for an intensive residential course to explore ways of contributing to the wider society.

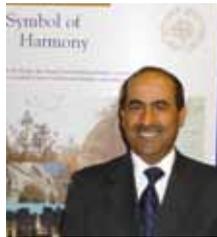
The programme was supported by The Prince's Charities, the British Council, and the Amanah Foundation. It consisted of academic lectures and workshops to introduce the participants to the skills they will need to make the most of the wide range of opportunities open to them to serve in public life.

The focus of discussion throughout was on the future local and national roles the participants could play, and how they can best serve the aspirations and needs of the Muslim communities in the UK whilst still playing a full part in the activities of the country as a whole.

Follow up activities with the Alumni also form an important part of the programme. A reunion of past participants from all four previous years was organized at Clarence House. HRH The Prince of Wales met the participants and talked to them about their experiences on the programmes and the activities they had engaged in as a result of being on the course.

International Contacts

Bahrain

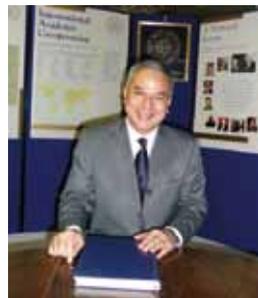


HE Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Kingdom, HE Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Rashid Al Khalifa, was hosted at a lunch in his honour at the Centre. The Ambassador's visit enabled the Centre's Fellows to discuss with him the research projects related to Islamic finance and banking that they are pursuing.

Malaysia

During a visit to Britain the Crown Prince of Perak, HRH Raja Dr Nazrin Shah, was hosted at a lunch in his honour at the Centre. Raja Nazrin was given a tour of the new building and notably visited its Auditorium, which has been supported by Malaysia. He expressed



HRH Raja Dr Nazrin Shah

his satisfaction with the timber carvings made and installed by craftsmen from Malaysia as an expression of their architectural heritage and traditional craftsmanship.

Kazakhstan

HE Mr Kairat Abusseitov, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to London visited the Centre in Hilary Term. Following a briefing on the current activities of the Centre, Ambassador Abusseitov expressed interest in supporting Centre projects and in encouraging greater cooperation between British organizations and academic institutions in Kazakhstan.



HE Mr Kairat Abusseitov

Singapore

A delegation from the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs was received by the Centre. Led by HE Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, the group was given a briefing about the work of Centre. Accompanying the Minister were HE Mr Zainul Arif Mantaha, the Deputy High Commissioner, and a delegation from the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore.



HE Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed with the Director

Carnegie Corporation pledges support for the Atlas project

The Centre organized a roundtable with the President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Professor Vartan Gregorian, to discuss opportunities for collaboration between the two institutions. Centre Fellows gave presentations on their areas of research interest which included: economics and human development in the Muslim world; Muslims in Britain and the USA; and programmes on developing leadership in Muslim societies.

A presentation was made to Professor Gregorian on the Centre's Atlas Project which studies the social and intellectual history of the Muslim world. The occasion offered an opportunity for Professor Gregorian to discuss specific projects that could be developed with the assistance of the Corporation. At the conclusion of the roundtable Professor Gregorian suggested that the Atlas Project be the first to be taken forward and pledged the funding support necessary to make this possible.

The Rapprochement of Cultures

As part of the United Nations International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, HE Mrs Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, delivered a lecture at the Centre.

Starting by focusing on the role that the Centre has played in contributing to international dialogue and suggesting that its existence has become 'more relevant, more compelling' given the global political situation, she explored the ways in which UNESCO uses heritage and dialogue to bring cultures closer together. By drawing both on her experiences as a child in a mixed religious community and the broader historical past, she argued that Islam has always been a force for toleration and has encouraged cultural and linguistic diversity. It is because of this, she suggested, that it is so important not to allow resentments to linger and be sustained through ignorance. Pointing towards UNESCO-led initiatives such as the World Digital Library, the 'Intercultural Vademecum', and the Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, she showed the way in which education can practically and tangibly benefit the cause of global understanding.



HE Mrs Irina Bokova speaking

She concluded by congratulating the Centre on being 'an outstanding contributor to inter-cultural dialogue' before adding: 'May you continue to shed light on Islamic culture and civilization for many, many more years to come!'

After the lecture, HE Mrs Irina Bokova attended a dinner in her honour at the Centre.

Collaboration with Duke University

The Centre has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Duke University, North Carolina. This will establish joint research initiatives and facilitate the exchange of scholars between the two institutions. Dr George L. McLendon, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Dean of Trinity College, represented Duke University at the signing ceremony.

It is hoped that this memorandum will lead to increased cooperation and knowledge sharing between the Islamic and the Western worlds of learning.

Following the signing of this memorandum, a delegation led by the Vice Provost, Professor Gil Merckx, visited the Centre in order to discuss further collaboration between the two institutions. Possible research themes included the social and intellectual history of the Muslim world; Islam and the Environment; Muslims in Britain and the United States; and projects related to economic and human development in Muslim societies. There is also scope to organize joint conferences and summer programmes. Among the delegation from Duke were Professors Bruce Lawrence, miriam cooke and Jen'an Read. While in Oxford they were able to attend the Prince of Wales' lecture and took an active role in the roundtable session that followed.

25th Anniversary meeting of the Board of Trustees

The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees was held in July. They reviewed all aspects of the Centre's activities during the academic year



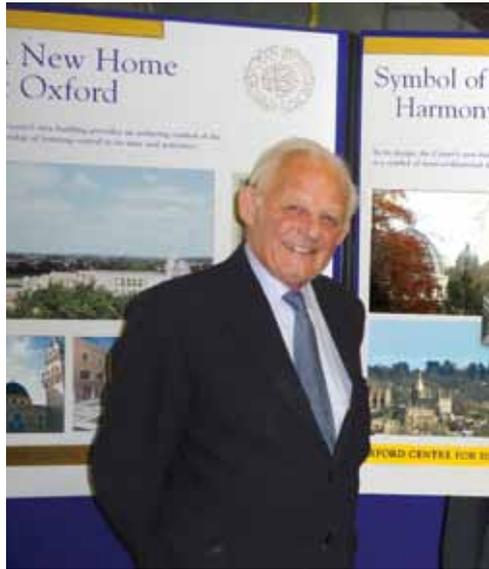
Trustees of the Centre met in Ditchley

2009-2010 and discussed the priorities for the forthcoming year. These included: continued support for an increase in those appointments which contribute to the academic life of the Centre and to teaching and research in the University; the approval of research programmes being prepared jointly by the Centre and external institutions; continued emphasis on the international outreach of the Centre which involves contact with scholars and institutions in many countries around the world. The Trustees expressed their satisfaction at the progress of the Centre over the previous year and noted the continuing expansion of its activities in Oxford and beyond.

The Board also received reports on the Fellowships and the Student Scholarships that were awarded in the previous academic year.

The latest issue of the *JIS* contains articles by Ronit Ricci on Islamic literary networks in South and Southeast Asia; Joseph C. Liow on religious education and reformist Islam in Thailand's southern border provinces; Monika Arnez on empowering women through Islam in Indonesia; and Kenneth Garden on Al-Māzarī al-Dhakī: al-Ghazālī's Maghribī adversary in Nishapur. The issue also contains 26 book reviews of some of the most important recent publications about Islam and the Muslim world.

David Browning retires as Registrar



Dr David Browning at the New Building

At the end of this summer, Dr David Browning, founding Registrar of the Centre and a Secretary to the Trustees, retires after an immensely distinguished career at the Centre.

Following a stint in HM Diplomatic service, Dr Browning completed his DPhil at St Antony's College before winning a Fellowship at St Cross College in the geography of Latin America. He then played a vital role in the establishment of the Centre and was elected as its founding Registrar in 'the wooden hut days'. In the past quarter of a century the Centre has drawn hope and strength from his unstinting dedication, and not one of its achievements would have been possible without his sincerity and wise counsel. He will remain in Oxford, and therefore will not be far away if, as will be the case, the Centre once more finds itself in need of his guidance.

During the forthcoming Michaelmas Term a seminar series will be organized in commemoration of his achievements and his uniquely important role in the development of the Centre. A David Browning Scholarship for promising students to read for Oxford degrees has also been established.