

ANGLO-IRAQI DIALOGUE FOUNDATION

ANGLO-IRAQI STUDIES CENTRE (AISC)

FEBRUARY 2017 NEWSLETTER



February 2017

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IRAQI-BRITISH CULTURAL CENTRES SEMINAR AT AISC'S OFFICES, LONDON

On 16 February 2017, the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) hosted a seminar for representatives of some Iraqi and British cultural centres and groups based in London, at the offices of AISC. This seminar was initiated by the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre/Anglo-Iraqi Dialogue Foundation, to develop informative mechanisms of co-ordination of the centres' work, projects and events with those of other Iraqi and British cultural centres, groups and organisations in London.

The seminar was attended by representatives of the Anglo-Iraqi Dialogue Foundation/Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre and representatives from the Iraqi Embassy in London, Iraqi Academics Association, Association of Creativity for Peace, Islamic Studies Centre, the Horizons organisation and the Muslim Youth Forum/ Mesopotamian Youth Association.



AISC seminar, 16 February 2017, London



Nadeem Al-Abdalla and Ihsan M Al-Hakim of the AISC team, hosting representatives from several Iraqi-British cultural centres and organisations at their seminar in London

AISC OUTREACH VISITS

As part of AISC's efforts to participate in community events, and also to strengthen their links with academics and professionals, AISC has undertaken a number of outreach visits this month.

LEBANON: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, HOUSE OF COMMONS

On 23 February 2017, Nadeem Al-Abdalla from the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) attended a special session held at the Houses of Parliament, London.

This session was held on the subject of "Lebanon: Looking to the Future", and the talk looked at the impact of the current Middle East crisis on Lebanon. The Syrian conflict has resulted in more than one million Syrians entering Lebanon, in addition to nearly half a million Palestinians who have been living there for several decades.

The panel consisted of two British Members of Parliament, Mr Stephen Gethins and Mr Tom Brake, former British Ambassador to Lebanon Ms Frances Guy, who also worked in Lebanon with the humanitarian aid organisation Christian Aid, Palestinian Delegate General to the UK Mr Manuel Hassassian, Dr Andrew Arsan of Cambridge University, an expert on Lebanese politics and Dr Najat Benchiba-Savenius from Oxford Strategic Consulting, who spoke about the economic situation in Lebanon.



"Lebanon: Looking to the Future",
House of Commons, London



Nadeem Al-Abdalla from the AISC team at the
Houses of Parliament, London



BISI AGM & LECTURE, BRITISH ACADEMY, LONDON

On 22 February 2017, Nadeem Al-Abdalla from the AISC team attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BISI), with its new chairperson, Dr Paul Collins who replaced Professor Eleanor Robson. This AGM was held at the British Academy in London, and was followed by their annual lecture.

This lecture was called "Neanderthals and Modern Humans in the Zagros" and looked at "new investigations at Shanidar Cave, Iraqi Kurdistan" in northern Iraq. It was delivered by Professor Graeme Barker from Cambridge University, who led a team of investigators at this site in 2015. His work builds upon many previous investigations of this area, including the excavations carried out by Professor Ralph Solecki of the Shanidar caves in the 1950s in which he found the remains of many skeletons and skulls from Neanderthals (early humans) dating back 40,000 – 60,000 years.

In this lecture, Professor Barker talked about his team's recent work at the Shanidar caves and what the discoveries there tell us about early human life in that region. Professor Barker has worked in Iraq and many other countries, including Italy, Libya and Jordan.



Professor Graeme Barker of Cambridge University at the British Academy, London



"Neanderthals and Modern Humans in the Zagros"; Professor Graeme Barker (above and below) delivers his lecture on the Shanidar caves in northern Iraq



IRAQI-US RELATIONSHIPS: PRESENT & FUTURE CHALLENGES *Media Forum Seminar*

On 17 February 2017, Nadeem Al-Abdalla from the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) attended a seminar organised by the Media Forum, and held at the offices of the Muslim Youth Forum/Mesopotamian Youth Association in London.

The main speaker at the seminar was Dr Lukman Faily, former Iraqi Ambassador to the USA. Dr Faily talked about the relationship between Iraq and the USA, in light of the recent inauguration of President Donald Trump, and the changes that may lie ahead. He also talked about his experiences dealing with the USA during the presidency of Barack Obama and the challenges which faced Iraq at that time, due to Obama's foreign policies and his approaches to Iraq and the Middle East.

This meeting was attended by more than 20 people, including Iraqi journalists and media personalities, and specialists in the field of Iraqi and Western relations.

Dr Lukman Faily was presented to the audience by Mr Basim Al-Awadi, who facilitated this seminar.



Dr Lukman Faily, former Iraqi Ambassador to the USA, addresses the seminar in London (above and below)



Media Forum seminar on Iraqi-US relations

ALLIANCE JEWISH SCHOOL IN IRAQ, 1860-1950

On 15 February 2017, Nadeem Al-Abdalla and Ihsan M Al-Hakim from the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) attended an event held at the offices of the Humanitarian Dialogue Foundation (Salam House) in London.

This event featured a talk by Mr Emile Cohen, a specialist on the subject of Iraqi and Arab Jews. He talked about the Alliance Jewish school in Iraq between 1860-1950, its history and achievements, and the graduates of the Alliance Jewish school.

Hundreds of these graduates played key roles in the 1920s and beyond, when Iraq was born as a new political entity and entered the United Nations (UN) in 1932. Many of these graduates filled necessary gaps left by the Ottoman and British administrations.



Mr Emile Cohen giving a talk about the Alliance Jewish School in Iraq (above and below)



MAPS OF THE 20TH CENTURY: BRITISH LIBRARY EXHIBITION

On 28 February 2017, Nadeem Al-Abdalla from the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) attended a map exhibition at the British Library in London, where hundreds of maps produced in the 20th century by many countries were on display. These maps were of industry, landmarks, cities and military conflicts, such as the London Underground, Abadan Oil Refinery map of 1912, Sykes-Picot 1916 map, a 1991 pilot rescue map from the first Gulf War and Soviet maps of British cities from the 1980s.



"Maps & the 20th Century: Drawing the Line", exhibition held at the British Library

FROM OUR LIBRARY THIS MONTH

Agatha Christie's Iraqi & Middle East connection

Agatha Christie (1890-1976) was a prolific British crime writer, who published several books and novels during her lifetime.

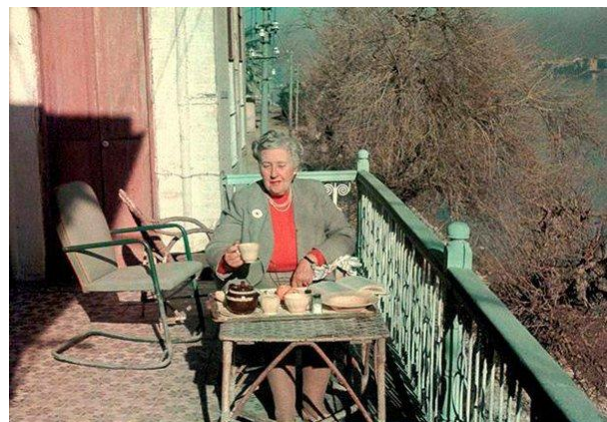
Agatha's longstanding connection with Iraq and the Middle East began in the 1930s, when she married her second husband Sir Max Mallowan (1904-1978). Her husband was a renowned British archaeologist who led several digs and excavations in Iraq (Mesopotamia), Syria, Turkey, Jordan and Egypt.

Agatha accompanied her husband on his archaeological missions in these countries. Her extensive involvement helped him to preserve artefacts recovered from excavation sites in Iraq and Syria.

Agatha's love of archaeology was reflected in several of the novels she wrote about archaeological sites and the Westerners who lived and worked there. These include *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934 – set between Syria, Turkey and Europe), *Death on the Nile* (1937 – set in Egypt), *Appointment with Death* (1938 – set in Jordan and Palestine), her memoir *Come, Tell Me How You Live* (1946 – about her time in Syria and Iraq) and a collection of poems and short stories, *Star Over Bethlehem* (1965). She also wrote books which focused on Iraq, which are discussed further on the next page.



Agatha Christie and some of the many books she authored during her lifetime



Agatha Christie on the balcony of her hotel in Baghdad, overlooking the river Tigris



Agatha Christie and her husband, Sir Max Mallowan, at one of his excavation sites in Tell Halaf

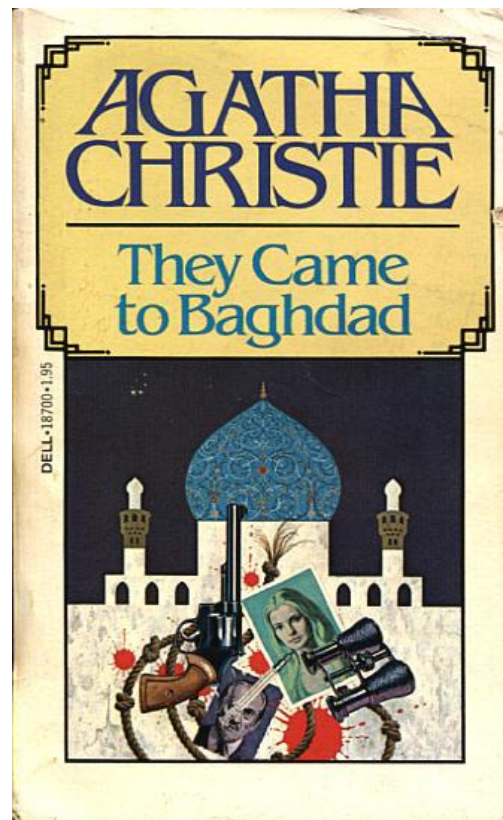
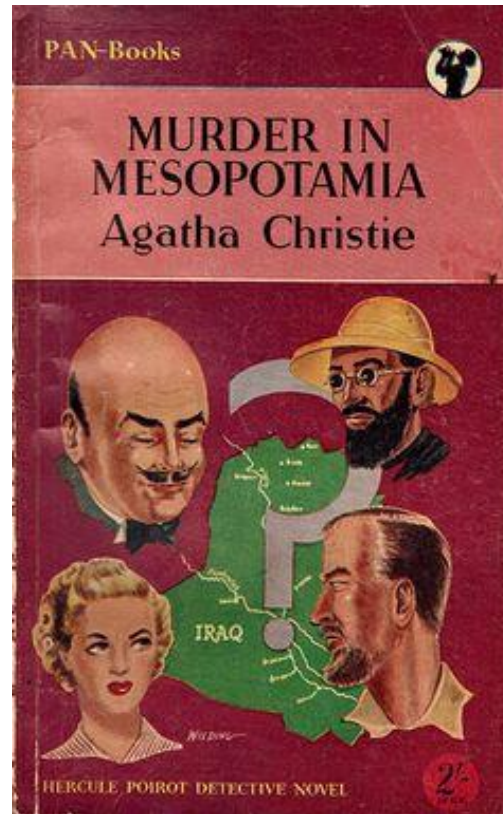
During her long career as a novelist, most notably as a crime writer, Agatha Christie published several books and novels. Her series of novels were later turned into TV series, focusing on the characters she created through her novels.

One of these characters was the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, a private detective who was present in the plots for her novels set in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Jordan and Palestine. These novels focused on the lives of Westerners living and working on the archaeological expeditions in these Middle Eastern countries. When any one of these parties was found killed, Hercule Poirot was present to uncover the mystery and the identity of the culprit.

Two of Agatha's novels, set in Iraq, were *Murder in Mesopotamia* (1936) and *They Came to Baghdad* (1951).

Murder in Mesopotamia was set at an archaeological excavation in Iraq, and was based on Agatha's own visit to the site of the Royal Cemetery at Ur. This book was adapted for television in 2002. Hercule Poirot, now working as a private detective, was on a trip to the country and became involved in resolving the killings of three Westerners living and working at the excavation site.

They Came to Baghdad was a novel based on a secret summit held in Baghdad, which Western countries sent representatives to. Notably, this novel was a description of the ways of life and spy networks present in the Middle East at that time.



FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about the AISC project, our activities and services, please visit our website at:

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"Enhancing Integration Through Knowledge,
Where East Meets West "

