

AL-HAKIM FOUNDATION

# ANGLO-IRAQI STUDIES CENTRE (AISC)

## JANUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER



### LAUNCH OF ANGLO-IRAQI STUDIES CENTRE (AISC)

On Saturday 23 January 2016, the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) was launched in London with the presence of Dr Akram Al-Hakim, former Iraqi Minister of Agriculture and the Iraqi Ambassador to the UK, Dr Saleh Al-Timimi. Both gave speeches which emphasised the importance of Anglo-Iraqi studies. Also at the launch were a diverse range of academics drawn from the Iraqi and British communities.

The launch included speeches by Ms Jenny Lewis, literature tutor at Oxford University, who spoke about her Anglo-Iraqi connections and her Mesopotamian projects, and also Mr Ihsan Muhsin, Director of the Al-Hakim Foundation and Mr Nadeem Al-Abdalla, AISC Project Manager. This was followed by an evening of networking and a tour of the centre and its library.

January 2016

#### What's Inside:

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Guests attending the launch of AISC,  
23 January 2016



Nadeem, Ali, Bob, Jenny, Dhiaa and Frances in the  
centre's library. Anglo-Iraqi chat!



Mr Ihsan Muhsin, Director of the Al-Hakim Foundation, welcoming guests to the AISC launch



Dr Akram Al-Hakim, former Iraqi minister of agriculture, speaking to guests at the AISC launch



Guests' networking evening, following speeches to launch AISC, showing the centre's library containing over 1,000 rare books and periodicals





## LAUNCH SPEECHES FROM OUR GUESTS

The AISC launch featured speeches from Mr Ihsan Muhsin, Director of the Al-Hakim Foundation which the AISC project has been established with, to welcome guests to the launch and to the centre. This was followed by a speech by Mr Nadeem Al-Abdalla, Project Manager and editor of this monthly newsletter, introducing guests to AISC, its philosophy and aims, and its services and activities. Next came a speech from Ms Jenny Lewis of Oxford University, who talked about her work in the field of Anglo-Iraqi studies and her various projects on Mesopotamia (Iraq).

Dr Akram Al-Hakim, former Iraqi minister of agriculture, spoke to guests about the importance of Anglo-Iraqi studies in strengthening ties between British and Iraqi communities and in promoting greater understanding of Iraqi culture and the historical ties between both countries. Turning to his experience in the field of agriculture, he has recommended a book kept in the centre's library, *"The Lepidoptera of Iraq"* (by Edward Parr Wiltshire, published 1957) as a key source of information during his university career and his time at the Ministry of Agriculture.

The final speech was given by Dr Saleh Al-Timimi, Iraqi Ambassador to the UK, who also emphasised the importance of Anglo-Iraqi studies in strengthening ties between both communities. His speech can be seen in full below.



Iraqi Ambassador to the UK, Dr Saleh Al-Timimi with Nadeem Al-Abdalla, AISC Project Manager and editor of this monthly newsletter, speaking to guests at the AISC launch

### **Speech of Dr Saleh Al-Timimi to guests attending the AISC launch**

*"Greetings ladies and gentlemen,*

*We are delighted to be celebrating the opening of the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre, which we aspire to have a role in the ideology and cultural communication between Iraq and the UK. First of all, I would like to thank the director and members of Al-Hakim Foundation, the director and members of the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre. Their efforts have created this project, which is based at an important stage in the history of Iraq, and that provides an important and valuable source for those interested in the history of Iraq and the bilateral relations between Iraq and the United Kingdom. These*

*two countries have shared a great history together that will improve their joint work in the future.*

*Today we live in a globalised world which has eased receiving information all around the world, however the cultural exchange between nations depends on their historical relations. Iraq and Britain had special relations for many years, and despite some clashes in the political relations at some periods of time, the relationship between the two nations was not affected and continued to grow, through the existence of big numbers of Iraqis in the UK, including the relationships between the academics, intellectuals and scientists from both sides.*

*Today we are proud of the Iraqi competencies in the UK, those who made a lot of scientific researches in Britain, we are delighted with the special efforts made by the researcher, Mr Nadeem Al-Abdalla, to count the researches of Iraq in the UK and gather it in one book, it was a great achievement for the different kinds of knowledge.*

*There are a lot of British principal achievements translated into Arabic, on the other hand a lot of Iraqi principal achievements were not translated to English. We strive for building centres that specialise in translating documents to both Arabic and English to help increase and encourage further understanding of each other's ideology.*

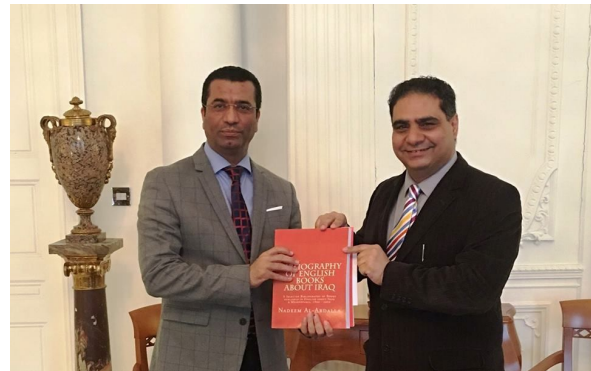
*The studying centre is playing a big role in consolidating cultural and ideological relations between the nations, and it can improve the knowledge and science for those*

*nations.*

*I believe the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre will open the horizons for new knowledge and cultural exchange between the people of the two countries for their progress and prosperity*

*I wish the centre all the success.*

*Thank you."*



Iraqi Ambassador to the UK, Dr Saleh Al-Timimi with Nadeem Al-Abdalla, AISC Project Manager and editor of this monthly newsletter. Nadeem Al-Abdalla is the author of the book pictured, "Bibliography of English Books About Iraq", containing a selected bibliography of over 2,500 books written in English about Iraq (Mesopotamia) in the last two centuries. One of AISC's projects is to expand and update this bibliography and publish a further edition in time.



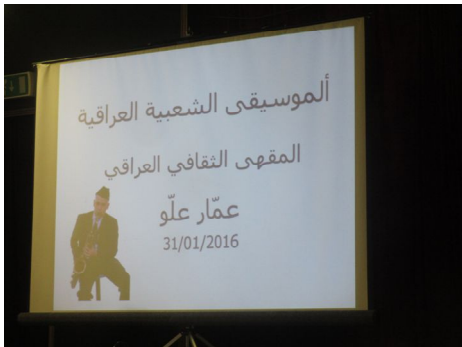
## AISC OUTREACH VISITS

As part of AISC's efforts to participate in Iraqi community events and to embrace Iraqi culture within the wider UK society, and also to strengthen their links with academics and professionals, we also undertake a number of outreach visits.

One of these visits was to the Iraqi Cultural Cafe on 31 January 2016. Based in Hawley Road, Camden Town, this cultural event included an evening of classical Iraqi music from Dr Amar Alaw, saxophonist and specialist in Iraqi music, which was well received by those in attendance at the event.



Faisal Al-Laibi, Iraqi artist and Iraqi Cultural Cafe Facilitator, presenting Dr Amar Alaw at this cultural and musical event on 31 January 2016



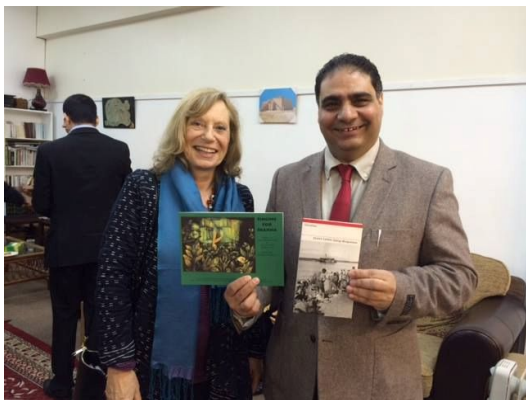
Ihsan Muhsin and Nadeem Al-Abdalla from AISC with Faisal Al-Laibi, Iraqi artist and Iraqi Cultural Cafe Facilitator, 31 January 2016



## FORTHCOMING CULTURAL EVENT

Our next event will feature a talk by Jenny Lewis, poetry tutor from Oxford University, about her experience of Anglo-Iraqi relations and her projects in this vein. The date of Jenny's talk will be confirmed online at [www.angloiraqi.org](http://www.angloiraqi.org).

**Jenny Lewis** is a poet and playwright. She has had seven plays and poetry cycles staged at major UK theatres including *After Gilgamesh* (Mulfran Press, 2011) for Pegasus Theatre, Oxford. Her recent work includes *Taking Mesopotamia* (Oxford Poets/Carcanet, March 2014) and *Singing for Inanna*, poems in English and Arabic with Adnan al-Sayegh (Mulfran Press, 2014). In 2012, she was awarded a Hawthornden Fellowship to study Babylonian literature and translate lines from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* from cuneiform. Jenny is currently working on a re-imagining of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. She teaches poetry and verse drama at Oxford University and at Pegasus Theatre, Oxford.



Jenny Lewis with Nadeem Al-Abdalla, AISC Project Manager & editor of this monthly newsletter

## ABOUT THE AISC PROJECT

As this is our first newsletter, we thought we should share details with you about the AISC project and its aims. This is an academic and community project established with the Al-Hakim Foundation, a registered UK organisation. AISC aims to enhance knowledge and understanding of Iraq, Anglo-Iraqi studies and Iraqi-British connections. The centre has no political or religious biases; its aim is to gather, present and review publications written in English about Iraq. This can be achieved via our regular cultural events, knowledge presentations, researcher sessions and outreach visits. The centre's library holds more than 1,000 rare books and periodicals and has more than 2,000 of these stored electronically. Our activities include updating our bibliography of books written in English about Iraq, and compiling a database of organisations and individuals specialising in the field of Anglo-Iraqi studies. Overall, we seek to promote and increase Iraqi-British citizens' integration into UK life and to be a place "Where East meets West for the Best".



Neville Green and Dr Akram Al-Hakim

## FROM OUR LIBRARY THIS MONTH

***"The Loss of the Tigris, a Poem"***  
**(published 1840 by Henry  
Richardson)**

and

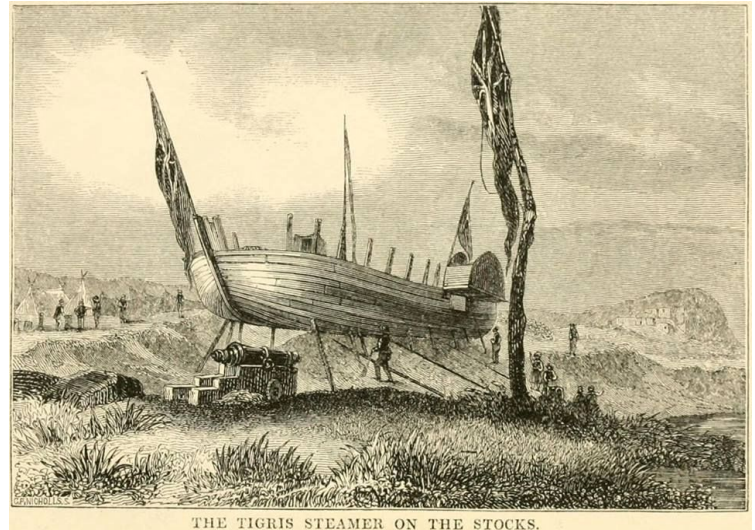
***"Narrative of the Euphrates  
Expedition"***

**(published 1868 by Francis  
Rawdon Chesney)**

These books relate to the sinking of the Tigris, a British steamer ship which sailed from the Upper Euphrates to the Gulf in 1836. In 1834, Captain Francis Rawdon Chesney, a British sailor and adventurer, sailed from the Upper Euphrates to the Gulf by a local boat (raft/kelek). This convinced him the river Euphrates was navigable as an alternative trade route between Britain and India via Iraq (Mesopotamia) without sailing round the Cape of Good Hope.

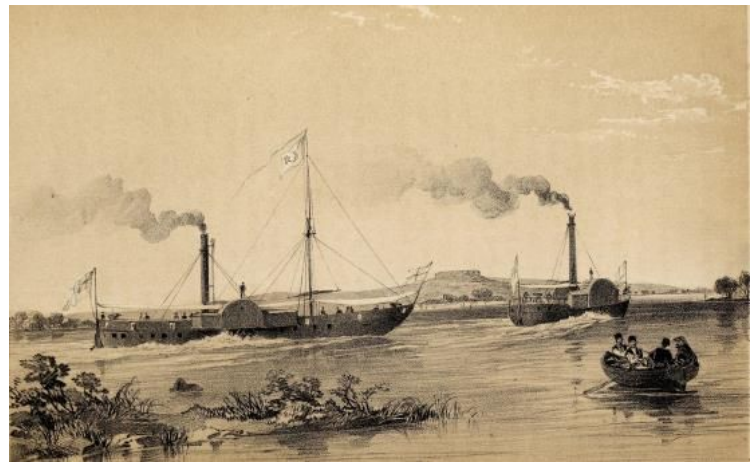
The British government supported Chesney's idea and in 1836, two British steamer ships named the "Tigris" (22 metres) and "Euphrates" (32 metres) sailed from the Upper Euphrates to the Shatt-al-Arab at the mouth of the Gulf. On 21 May 1836, both ships were hit by tornadoes and sadly the "Tigris" sank with the loss of 22 lives. Only the "Euphrates" steamer was able to reach the Shatt-al-Arab at the mouth of the Gulf some three months later.

In 1840, the British poet Henry Richardson wrote a 90-page poem dedicated to the lives lost when the "Tigris" ship sank in the Euphrates.



THE TIGRIS STEAMER ON THE STOCKS.

The "Tigris" steamer in construction, 1836



The "Tigris" and "Euphrates" steamers passing each other on the river Euphrates, 1836

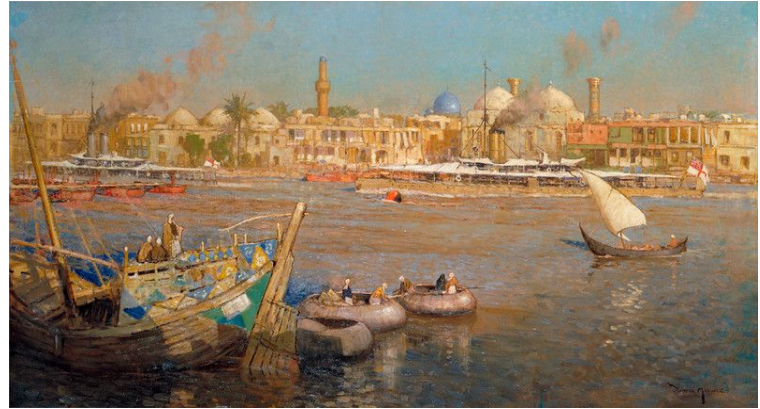
مركز الدراسات الإنكليزية  
ANGLO-IRAQI STUDIES CENTRE



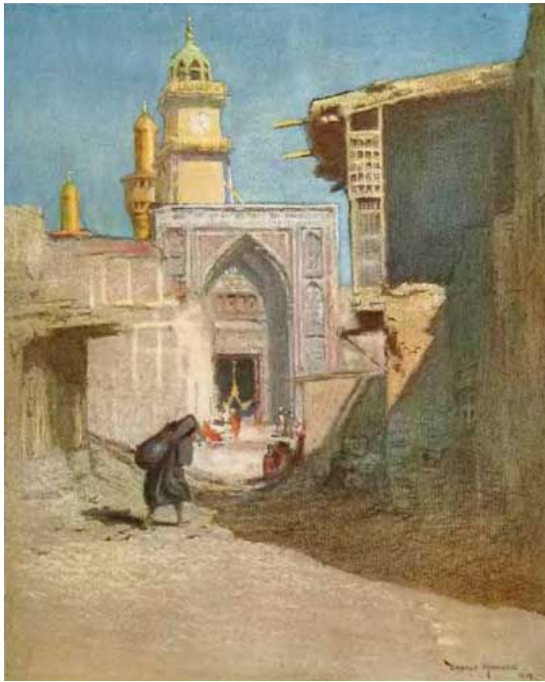
## ANGLO-IRAQI PAINTINGS

From "*A Dweller in Mesopotamia*", by Donald Maxwell (published 1920)

The above book can be found in the centre's library. This book was written by Donald Maxwell about his travels in Mesopotamia (Iraq) and includes several paintings of Iraq at that time. Two of these paintings can be seen below.



Ships and boats at the river Tigris, Baghdad, 1920.  
Painting by Donald Maxwell



The mosque at Al-Khadamain, Baghdad, 1920.  
Painting by Donald Maxwell



Anyone interested in this book can find a copy in the centre's library.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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

[www.angloiraqi.org](http://www.angloiraqi.org)

Or contact us at:

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