

ANGLO-IRAQI STUDIES CENTRE (AISC)

JULY 2016 NEWSLETTER



AISC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

* Iraq was subject to a horrific terror attack on 2 July 2016, the worst of its kind, which claimed the lives of more than 300 people in the Karradah district of Baghdad. Many vigils were held around the world for the victims, including two in London which Nadeem and Ihsan of the AISC team attended. One was held in Trafalgar Square on 6 July, at which the Liberal Democrat Leader, Tim Farron, expressed his condolences and those of the British Parliament to the victims. The other vigil was held in Marble Arch on 10 July.



Tim Farron MP, Liberal Democrat Leader, attending the Iraqi vigil in Trafalgar Square on 6 July 2016

July 2016

What's Inside:

- AISC outreach activities
- From our library (Iraqi marshes books)
- Further information



Marble Arch Iraqi vigil on 10 July 2016

* Another horrific attack took place in Nice, France, on 14 July 2016. Nadeem and Ihsan from the AISC team visited the French Embassy in London on 18 July, where we signed a book of condolence and laid flowers in memory of the victims.



Signing the book of condolence, French Embassy

* Nadeem from the AISC team attended a conference on "Water Resources in Iraq: The Challenges & Solutions" on 2-3 July 2016. This was held at the SOAS campus and the Central Park Hotel in London. At this conference, Nadeem informed the delegates of the great need to document all maps and books written in English about the Iraqi marshes, rivers and dried-up lakes and canals, as this has not been studied enough.



Iraq water resources conference, London



Dr Chris Hewer speaks about introducing religious education into UK schools, 14 July 2016

* Nadeem and Ihsan from the AISC team attended a knowledge presentation at the offices of the Humanitarian Dialogue Foundation (HDF) in London on 20 July 2016. This presentation was given by Dr Tahseen Al-Sheikhly, an expert in the field of information technology and the digital age.

* Nadeem and Ihsan from the AISC team attended an event in London on 14 July 2016. This event talked about the teaching of religious education in UK schools, to include Islam and its various sects. The speakers included experts on the UK's religious education curriculum, and was attended by representatives of educational, cultural and community centres.



Religious education event, 14 July 2016



Dr Tahseen Al-Sheikhly talking about the digital age at the offices of HDF, 20 July 2016



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* The Islamic month of Ramadan took place this year from 6 June to 5 July. During Ramadan, the AISC team attended many Iftar events in London held by several communities and organizations.

One of these Iftar events was held on 1 July 2016 at the residence of the Iraqi Ambassador to the UK, Dr Salih Hussain Al-Timimi. Representatives of Iraqi communities and organizations were invited to this event.



The AISC team attend Iftar at the residence of the Iraqi Ambassador to the UK, 1 July 2016 (above and below)



* A visit was made on 19 July 2016, to the Iraqi Embassy in London by the AISC team. This was to say farewell to the outgoing minister of plenipotentiary, Dr Muhieddin Al-Taaie. After several years working in London with the Iraqi Embassy, Dr Al-Taaie is now returning to Iraq having completed his diplomatic mission here.

Dr Al-Taaie was pleased to receive some of our publications and he wished us well in the future of our project.



Saying farewell to the outgoing Iraqi Consul at the Iraqi Embassy, 19 July 2016 (above and below)



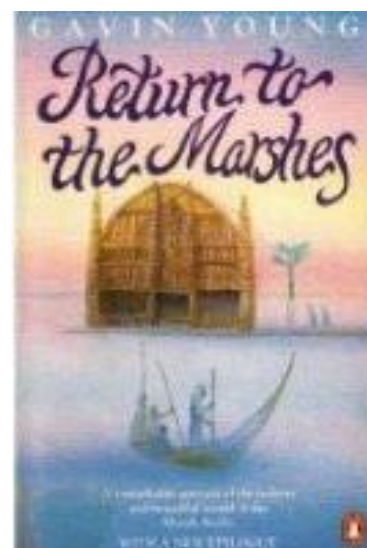
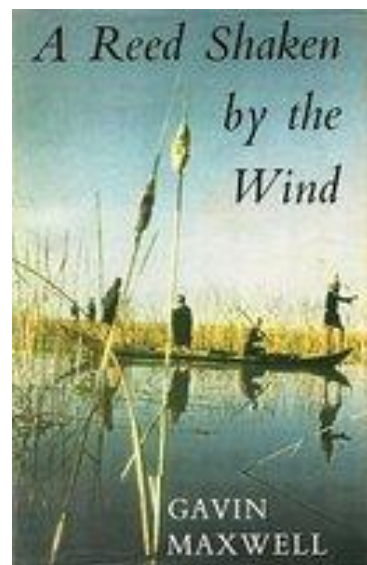
FROM OUR LIBRARY THIS MONTH

Iraqi Marshes in the English language publications

July marked a great achievement for Iraq, as its marshes have now become a recognised UNESCO world heritage site with listed status. This resulted from a meeting of UNESCO, held in Istanbul on 17 July, in which they recognised this area of Uruk, Ur, Eridu and the four marshes in southern Iraq. As such it is now a protected world heritage site. This gives them greater national and international protection.

The Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) are pleased with this news and so we are dedicating this section to introducing some English language publications about the Iraqi marshes. Among these publications are:

- *Haji Rikkan, the Marsh Arab*
(published 1927 by Fulanain)
- *Marsh Dwellers of Southern Iraq*
(National Geographic article,
published 1958 by Wilfred Thesiger)
- *The Marsh Arabs*
(published 1964 by Wilfred Thesiger)
- *A Reed Shaken by the Wind*
(published 1957 by Gavin Maxwell)
- *People of the Reeds (US title)*
(published 1966 by Gavin Maxwell)
- *Return to the Marshes*
(published 1977 by Gavin Young)
- *Mammals of Arabia*
(published 1964 by David Harrison)



**"Haji Rikkan, the Marsh Arab"
(published 1927 by "Fulanain")**

This book was published by the authors under the pseudonym "Fulanain", an Arabic word for an unknown or anonymous person. The authors' real names were later found to be Stuart Edwin and Monica Grace Hedgcock. Stuart Hedgcock (1894-1966) was a former British army major who served as a political officer in Iraq during the 1920s, when Iraq was under British mandate.

Their book was named after Haji Rikkan, an elderly Iraqi marsh dweller who told the authors much about the local life and traditions. This is one of the earliest books written in English about the Iraqi marshes, with photos of the region. It draws attention to the difficulties that faced local women and their social status, and the customs of Iraqi marsh dwellers.



An Albu Mohammad Shaikh and his Mullah
(Haji Rikkan, *The Marsh Arab*, 1927)



The town of Qala't Salih, near Amara
(Haji Rikkan, *The Marsh Arab*, 1927)



Jahalul's bride and her sister
(Haji Rikkan, *The Marsh Arab*, 1927)



The pedlar
(Haji Rikkan, *The Marsh Arab*, 1927)

**"The Marsh Arabs"
(1964, Wilfred Thesiger)**

**"A Reed Shaken by the Wind"
(1957, Gavin Maxwell)**

Wilfred Thesiger (1910-2003) was a famous British explorer who spent most of the 1950s living in the Iraqi marshes. Thesiger wrote an article in the National Geographic's February 1958 magazine about the Iraqi marshes. However, his detailed book "The Marsh Arabs" was not published until 1964. His book, "The Marsh Arabs" was featured in our June 2016 newsletter.

During his time in the Iraqi marshes, Thesiger realised this area was a unique piece of history and geography. In 1956 he asked the Scottish photographer and journalist, Gavin Maxwell (1914-1969) to join him in his quest to document the marshes. Within one year, Maxwell had published his own book, "A Reed Shaken by the Wind" documenting the geography and life in the Iraqi marshes. Maxwell took all the photographs published in his book, and in the books and articles that were written by Thesiger.

Maxwell's book, "A Reed Shaken by the Wind" published in 1957 was later published in the US under the title "People of the Reeds" in 1966. In 1960, Maxwell also published a book titled "Ring of Bright Water", about how he brought an otter from Iraq, named Mijbil, and raised it in Scotland in 1956. This was registered as a new species of smooth-coated otter by the London Zoological Society. Maxwell's book "Ring of Bright Water" was adapted as a film released in 1969.



Gavin Maxwell with his pet otter, Mijbil, found in the Iraqi marshes. Mijbil was recognized as a new, unknown species of smooth-coated otter in the UK



Iraqi marsh dwellers above and below
(photographs by Gavin Maxwell)



**"Return to the Marshes"
(published 1977 by Gavin Young)**

Gavin Young (1928-2001) was a British travel writer who lived and worked in Iraq during the 1950s. Whilst working in Basra for a shipping company he met Wilfred Thesiger, the famous British explorer. This led to Young joining Thesiger in the Iraqi marshes for some time in 1956.

Some 17 years after leaving the Iraqi marshes, Young returned in 1973 and lived there again for some time. His experiences of returning to the marshes after 17 years are documented in the above book. Young published a further book in 1980 about his time in Iraq, titled "*Iraq: Land of Two Rivers, Travels in Mesopotamia*".



Gavin Young (left) and Wilfred Thesiger (right)



Gavin Young returns to the Iraqi marshes, 1973
(Photo by Nik Wheeler)

**"Mammals of Arabia"
(published 1964, David Harrison)**

David Lakin Harrison (1926-2015) was a British zoologist who spent many years living in Arabia in the 1950s and 1960s. He published the above book (in three volumes) covering the mammals of Arabia, Iraq and Syria.



David Harrison in the Iraq marshes, 1955



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FURTHER INFORMATION

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

www.angloiraqi.org

Or contact us at:

Email: info@angloiraqi.org

Tel: +44 20 8452 3270

Correspondence Address:

AISC, PO Box 240, 22 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 3JE

Centre Address:

AISC, Unit C1, 289 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 6NX

AISC Manager:

Mr Nadeem Al-Abdalla

Email: nadeem@angloiraqi.org

Director of Al-Hakim Foundation:

Mr Ihsan Muhsin

Email: alhakimuk@talktalk.net

**Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre/
Al-Hakim Foundation
Charity No: 1154526
Company No: 8323352**

