

# ANGLO-IRAQI STUDIES CENTRE (AISC)

## SEPTEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER



### OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

\* Nadeem Al-Abdalla, Manager of the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre, attended an event held at Europe House, London, on 12 September 2016.

The title of this event was: "What Does Brexit Look Like?"

This event was held to talk about the implications of "Brexit" following the UK's vote to leave the EU on 23 June 2016.

Speakers at this event included Stephen Kinnock MP, son of the former Labour leader Neil Kinnock, Nick de Bois from the UK's business community and Rob Owers from Twitter UK.

This event was organised by "My Life My Say", an organisation which aims to increase participation and interest in topical issues of this nature. Europe House, where the event was held, was formerly the headquarters of the Conservative Party (known informally as the Conservative Central Office).

September 2016

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Nadeem at the "What does Brexit Look Like?" event at Europe House, London



\* Nadeem and Ali Al-Mousawi from the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) team also attended an event on 14 September 2016, hosted by the Conservative Association's Middle East & North Africa Group. This group frequently invite guests from the Middle East/North Africa to talk about issues affecting this region.

This event featured a talk by the Iraqi scholar Sheikh Khalid Mullah, about the current situation in Iraq and the way in which extremists have enforced a warped version of Islam.



Nadeem and Ali attend a talk by Sheikh Khalid Mullah at Millbank, London

\* Ihsan and Nadeem from the AISC team attended an evening of Iraqi music at the Naim Dangoor Centre, London, on 18 September 2016. This event was hosted by Awlad Al-Taraf, which in English translates to "Boys of the Neighbourhood".

This event included performances from the Iraqi musician Ehsan Al-Imam. Ehsan talked through the Iraqi music between the 1920s and 1960s and then gave performances with examples of each musical style.



Nadeem and Ihsan at the Naim Dangoor Centre, London, 18 September 2016

\* Ihsan and Nadeem also attended an event at Salam House, the offices of the Humanitarian Dialogue Foundation (HDF).

This event featured a talk by Dr Majid Abdulla Jaber, an Iraqi academic, about the rise of right-wing parties in Europe and its negative impact on Arab communities living in Europe.



Dr Majid Abdulla Jaber at Salam House, London

## CULTURAL VISIT FROM IRAQ

On 23 September 2016, we received a visit from the Al-Rafidain Centre for Dialogue to our offices. They were accompanied by a representative from the Iraqi embassy in London, and were received by Ihsan Muhsin, Director of the Al-Hakim Foundation, and Nadeem Al-Abdalla, manager of the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre.

Their centre, which focuses on cultural dialogue, is based in Najaf, Iraq. More than 12 delegates visited us, as part of their tour of the UK's cultural and academic centres. These delegates, members of the Al-Rafidain Centre, are academics, writers and councillors/governors with local authorities in Najaf, Iraq.

The Al-Rafidain Centre's director and spokesperson briefed us about their work to strengthen community relations in Iraq, and their efforts to be a think-tank giving advice to others, locally and internationally. They then talked about their efforts to make international visits, as they have visited Iran recently and are now visiting the UK.

We in turn briefed them about the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC), and our aims in gathering, reviewing and re-presenting Iraq through the English language publications of the last two centuries, and our work to connect Iraqi-British grassroots with the wider academic society. Following this, we took them for a tour of our offices and the centre's library where we showed them examples of many English language publications from 100 years ago about Iraq/Mesopotamia. The delegates were pleased with our work and their visit to our centre, and they have asked us to continue this work and to find a way to expand our work inside Iraq, to make our work available to Iraqi people there.



Delegates from the Al-Rafidain Centre for Dialogue, Najaf, visiting our offices in London (above and below)





## CULTURAL EVENTS

On 24 September 2016, the office of the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre (AISC) also hosted a cultural event featuring the music and traditions of Ur in ancient times.

The title of this event was: "Gold Lyre of Ur: Echoes of History – Sounds of Music", and was a cultural event featuring a talk and performance by Andy Lowings from the "Gold Lyre of Ur Project". As he put it, it was "a journey through the music, history and language of Mesopotamia". This event was televised by several Iraqi media/TV channels.

Andy brought the Lyre that he has lovingly re-created, which he has modelled on the "Lyre of Ur" found by Sir Leonard Woolley during his excavations of ancient Ur in the late 1920s.

Nadeem introduced Andy to the audience and he presented more than 10 English language books about the Ur excavations and the Lyre of Ur.

As well as giving us an evening of music from ancient Mesopotamian times, Andy talked to the audience about the "Gold Lyre of Ur Project" which he set up with others in 2003 and which aims to bring to life the music, culture and history of ancient Mesopotamia.



Andy Lowings presents an evening of ancient Mesopotamian music, culture and history at AISC's offices in London





Guests enjoy Andy's evening of Mesopotamian music, culture and history at our offices in London



### A Sumerian poem

The above photo shows Andy playing a musical piece to accompany a Sumerian poem called, "My Mother". Nadeem recited that poem in Arabic to the audience, with Andy playing the sounds of the lyre during the recital. Below you will find the Arabic text of this poem, recited at the cultural event.

دعني اعطيك وصفا اخر لامي  
امي تشبه الضوء الساطع في السماء  
ظبية على سفوح التلال  
هي نجمة الصبح تشرق حتى في الظهيرة  
هي كالعقيق النفيس ، كتوباز مارهاسي  
هي جوهرة لشقيق ملك مليئة بالجمال  
هي درة ، هي حلية كالشمس  
هي سوار من القصدير ، هي خاتم من الانتاسورا  
هي كتلة متألئة من ذهب ولجين لكنها حية  
تبعث الانفاس  
هي تمثال من الرخام لالهة حماية تنتصب على  
قاعدة من اللازور  
هي تمثال صغير ينبض بالحياة اطرافه يملأها  
الجمال



## FROM OUR LIBRARY THIS MONTH

**"Ancient Mesopotamia: A Light  
That Did Not Fail"  
Published 1951 by E A Speiser**

The above article was published in the January 1951 National Geographic magazine, and it was written by the American academic and Assyriologist, Dr Ephraim Avigdor Speiser (1902-1965). When Speiser wrote this article he was the Chairman of the Department of Oriental Studies at Pennsylvania University. He was also the former director of the American School of Oriental Studies in Baghdad.

Speiser first came to Iraq in 1926, to study the remains of the ancient *Mitanni* and *Hurrians* in the north of the country. In 1927, he discovered the *Tepe Gawra* (Great Mound) in northern Iraq, where he oversaw excavations in the 1930s. Speiser also translated *Hurrian* legal texts found during his time in Iraq.

After serving in the American intelligence services during the Second World War, Speiser returned to academia and remained the Chairman of Pennsylvania University's School of Oriental Studies until he passed away in 1965.



Tepe Gawra, ancient city of Assyria (above & below)



Dr Ephraim Avignor Speiser (1902-1965)



مركز الدراسات الإنكلومراقية  
ANGLO-IRAQI STUDIES CENTRE

## ANGLO-IRAQI IMAGES

### ***"Ancient Mesopotamia: A Light That Did Not Fail"*** ***(paintings by H M Herget)***

The above was the title of an article published by Dr Ephraim Avignor Speiser (1902-1965) in the National Geographic's January 1951 magazine.

In this article, Speiser used "24 illustrations in colour from paintings by H M Herget". Herbert M Herget (1880-1950) was an American painter who travelled the world, providing paintings and illustrations that were subsequently used in several articles and publications.

Although Herget had passed by the time Speiser's 1951 article was published, Speiser drew on several paintings he had made of Mesopotamia/Iraq during his visits to the country, particularly to the sites of excavations being carried out in Iraq at that time.

From 1935 to 1951, shortly after his death, National Geographic articles featured several paintings by Herget; he was employed by National Geographic as an "archaeological painter" during that time until his death. National Geographic issued four detailed magazines, dedicated to ancient civilisations: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Herget provided the paintings for these articles. He visited ancient Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt and other sites in the world, including southern Europe, Mexico and Peru, where archaeological excavations were taking place.



Paintings by H M Herget, showing aspects of ancient Mesopotamian life



## FURTHER INFORMATION

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

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