

Reflections

Myfyrdodau
Μυλιγγοδωδω

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November 2011

Opening Message from the Secretary General:

Praise be to God and peace and blessings be upon His prophet Muhammed PBUH and all the prophets He has sent.

The celebration of Eid-ul-Adha is a constant reminder to us, as Muslims, what Islam means- submission to the will of God; how prophet Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son for the sake of God and without a second of hesitation or question Prophet Abraham and Ishmael accepted the command. This test they passed with flying colours and the tradition and the Abrahamic faiths will remember them till eternity. They have the glory in this world and in the world hereafter.

The celebration of National Interfaith Week with our brothers of Abrahamic faith is a testimony of the love and respect Muslims have for Prophet Jesus, may peace be upon him.

Let us build bridges. Let us work together for humanity, for refugees, for the oppressed, for the poor, for the needy, for orphans, for the sick, for the homeless with the values we all share. Together we can work and together we can make a difference

Saleem Kidwai



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Letter from the Editor:

Alhumdulillah, we have now brought to you the 3rd edition of Reflections. We hope you enjoy the read as much as we enjoyed producing it. There have been a lot of updates and events since the last edition.

Recently, I had the opportunity to go on a weekend long training course in London organised by Citizens UK - a fantastic organisation that works hard on integration, community cohesion and building local communities. From campaigning for better housing to the Living Wage campaign, I was awestruck and inspired by the work they do. The training itself was intense but very beneficial, focused upon community and relational leadership and how it's important to

understand one another's needs and work together to help the community.

Insha'Allah we are working hard with Citizens UK to roll out a one day training courses in Cardiff in preparation for setting up Citizens Cardiff. Keep your eyes peeled. Working together is the way forward.

We pray this edition of Reflections is an insightful read. If you would like to contribute to future editions of the newsletter, please feel free to get in touch with us at info@muslimcouncilwales.org

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Welsh Muslim History

Islam's relationship with Britain, and indeed Wales, is ancient, dynamic and deeply revealing. It is sometimes challenging, sometimes optimistic and always revealing.

Abdul-Azim Ahmed, Assistant Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Wales, has just begun a PhD in Bangor University looking at the history of Muslims in Wales. Below he examines what we know so far, and what he hopes to discover in the future:-

Islam's relationship with Britain, and indeed Wales, is ancient, dynamic and deeply revealing. It is sometimes challenging, sometimes optimistic and always revealing.

The best place to begin the story is in the late eighth century with King Offa of Mercia, who is perhaps most recognised for Offa's Dyke (a partition built along the eastern border of Wales that still remains in parts to this day). However, King Offa is also known for minting one of the rarest and most curious coins of British history. A gold coin with the standard signage of 'OFFA REX', but with an additional Arabic script stamped upon it. The Arabic reads 'There is but One Allah, the Only God, the True, and Muhammad is His Prophet'. The coin has attracted attention for its unique features, and many theories have put forward as to why a Christian King would mint a coin with the Islamic profession of faith. The most tenable theory is that the coin is an imitation of currency that was in circulation in the Abbasid lands. Yet most remarkably, it shows us that so early Wales already had contact and interaction with Islam.

The twelfth century saw Wales develop many of its most stun-



ning and remarkable buildings and landmarks. Included in this development was Neath Abbey, a building once described as 'the fairest abbey of all Wales' by poet John Leland. What is surprising then perhaps is that 'the fairest abbey of all Wales' may in fact have been designed by a Muslim. A handful of records state that Lalys, a captive from Palestine brought to Britain by Richard de Granville, was the architect of Neath Abbey. Despite Lalys' unfortunate circumstances, and indeed the wider context of the crusades of the period, Neath Abbey symbolises the cultural exchange and communication that occurred between Muslims and Christians through trade and travel. This exchange of culture and technology can also be seen in the castles that adorn Wales' borders; many adopted the design and architecture of castles in the Holy Land. I saw this remarkable shared history myself when visiting Syria. As I stood upon Qalaat el Hosn, one of the most important Crusader castles in Syria and looked at the green lush mountains that surrounded the castle, I was immediately reminded of Castell Caerffili. The

link runs deeper even yet. Grahame Davies (author of *The Dragon and the Crescent*) considers the possibility of whether the English military preoccupation with the crusades gave Wales the breathing space to establish and enjoy its two centuries of freedom. We can't answer definitively, but we can say with confidence that Wales and Islam did not exist in isolation during the medieval era.

Conversion to Islam was rare in British Isles prior to the twentieth century, but far from unheard of. We find the story of a Welshman 'runagado', an archaic term for conversion to Islam from 1671. Having been on the losing side of a naval battle between his own pirate ship and a Dutch man-o-war, he was hanged from the yard-arm of his ship. The incident is recorded in Charles I Domestic State Papers and gives us a tantalising glimpse into the life of a single Welshman of the time.

Islam and Christianity indeed share many shared origins, being grouped as Abrahamic faiths with a shared faith in one God, in many of the same prophets

and common ethical and eschatological framework. Indeed Islam very much reflects the tone of religion of Wales, a religious experience founded upon an egalitarian ethos with a strong sense of the importance of the individual in their expression of piety, something visible through Wales' non-conformist history.

Islam and Christianity indeed share many shared origins, being grouped as Abrahamic faiths with a shared faith in one God, in many of the same prophets and a common ethical and eschatological framework



Despite Christianity and Islam being viewed as faiths in opposition, Muslims and Christians have often found themselves natural friends throughout history. This is most evident in Wales on the Isle of Anglesey.

Anglesey is home to a remote and ancient Church, that of Llanbadrig. It was said to have been founded by St. Patrick himself (Llanbadrig means the Church of St. Patrick). By the late nineteenth century, the Church had fallen into disrepair.

vided the money for it to be restored. As a mark of respect to its benefactor, the Church incorporated stained glass windows that reflected Islamic artwork, which provides a beautiful integration of Islamic architecture and ancient Celtic architecture.

The close relationship between Christians and Muslims in Wales has continued today through the innovative partnerships between the Muslim Council of Wales and various Christian bodies, such as Churches Together in Wales.

The relationship is not only between Islam and Christianity however. In January 2010, the Muslim Council of Wales and Cardiff University Islamic Society in association the Cardiff Jewish Society hosted what was termed a 'historic event'. In

The event may have been historic, but it was not the first time the Welsh Muslim and Jewish community came together to celebrate their shared heritage.

On the 6th January 1908, over a century ago, a prominent British Muslim convert, Abdullah Quilliam, spoke at Cardiff University College alongside Dr Hirchowitz and Dr Zalkin (at that time, Professor of Hebrew studies). The topic Abdullah Quilliam spoke on was the relationship between Muslims and Jews throughout history. It is encouraging to know that over 100 years, the religious communities of Wales still struggled to find common unity.

The nineteenth century also saw a significant number of Muslims coming to Wales, particularly the docks of Cardiff and Barry. The Muslim community is perhaps the oldest non-Christian community in Wales. Yemenis and Somalis were made up the majority of sea merchants, many of whom stayed in Cardiff while waiting work. These communities slowly became part of the society until Cardiff became home.

Perhaps in recognition of this long established Muslim community, we can see a star and crescent sitting above a stone dragon on the front of City Hall in Cardiff. There are no notes left by the architect and designers on the purpose and intention of this emblem on the front of Cardiff's most famous civic building, so we can only guess as to it's intention for the time being.

Cardiff is also home to one of the earliest mosques in the UK, Peel Street Mosque was established sometime in the 1930s, originally just a converted

It was Lord Henry Stanley, a wealthy aristocrat and convert to Islam (the first Muslim member of the House of Lords) who decided to fund its repair. His conversion was in no way in conflict with his admiration and love of Churches and the Christian faith itself, and so he pro-

honour of Holocaust Memorial Day, Muslim and Jewish communities in Wales attended an event with photo-journalist Norman Gershman, who told the story of Muslims in Albania who protected Jews from the Nazi war machine during the dark days of the Second World War.

Cardiff is also home to one of the earliest mosques in the UK (although certainly not the first, as has mistakenly been claimed). Peel Street Mosque was established sometime in the 1930s, originally just a converted house. The mosque however suffered along with the rest of the Britain during the Blitz, and was bombed in 1941. A new mosque was rebuilt and finally opened in 1947. Records show a number of the individuals involved with Peel Street Mosque were also part of the British war effort during World War 2. Pictured below is Kaid Shef, who helped in the mosque after:

One particular individual was Abdul-Hamid, who for some time was based in Rhyl in North Wales. He was killed during a bombing in 1944, however records show he was a well known and recognised individual, and



The community is also marked by a growing level of engagement and interaction with the wider public sphere, creating Muslim Welsh identity that speaks strongly of civic contribution, global citizenship and ethical integrity and confident faith in God.

an obituary in the times written by Lord Winterton states that Abdul-Hamid was an 'enthusiastic believer in friendship between Great Britain and... Islamic peoples'.

The sacrifice of Welsh Muslims in World War 2 is one particular aspect I hope to discover more about during the course of my PhD. If one were to visit Barry Memorial Hall today and spend some time reading the names of those killed during both World War 1 and World War 2, they would find dozens of Muslim names. The story of these men is still somewhat unknown.

Cardiff is home now to about a

dozen mosques, ranging from purpose built ones such as the South Wales Islamic Centre in Bute-down, to converted homes such as al-Manar in Cathays. It's home to one of the largest and most active student Islamic Societies in the UK, a scouts group, several Islamic charities and much more. Swansea likewise is currently raising money to renovate and old church, and has a great history of fantastic community relations. In North Wales, the Muslim community in Wrexham has just purchased a building for the site of its first mosque (after decades spent praying in a university prayer room).

The community is also marked by a growing level of engagement and interaction with the wider public sphere, creating Muslim Welsh identity that speaks strongly of civic contribution, global citizenship and ethical integrity and confident faith in God.

There is still much more to know about the history of Muslims in Wales. Most of this information I fear is not within history books or textual records, but within the people of Wales. Stories passed on, life experiences and local knowledge. Rediscovering this knowledge is a challenge, but one I look forward to.

Reflections on 9/11....

Ten Years On

Saleem Kidwai reflects on 9/11 and the effect it had upon Wales. Originally published in the Western Mail on Friday 9th September 2011.

Ten years on, and we can all still remember exactly where we were when we first heard about the terrible attacks upon the Twin Towers in New York City, on September 11, 2001.

The words used to describe our collective reaction to that atrocity have often been repeated by people of all faiths and backgrounds; for regardless of religion or ethnicity, our collective humanity recoiled in shock and horror at those harrowing images of the planes crashing into the two buildings.

Our collective humanity mourned the loss of so many innocent lives, as we learned of the victims and that they too were from many different cultures and faith groups. We all wished for the perpetrators behind the attack to be caught and brought to justice.

On that day, however, few of us realised the harm that had been done by those same attacks, thousands of miles away, to our communities here in Wales.

That the terrorists behind the attack were so called "Muslims" resulted in a devastating impact on Muslim communities across Europe and North America. It was not only the planes that were hijacked on September 11; that day saw the hijacking of the religion of Islam by a group of murderers, who falsely misused the faith of 1.2 billion people around the world to justify their crime.

The backlash against Muslims across Europe and North America began almost immediately;

with a sharp increase in the amount of hate crimes against Muslims and Islamic institutions.

Here in Wales, the Muslim community was confronted by the daunting task of having to deal with the barrage of questions and accusations that inevitably came our way from outside of the community. It was a combination of misinformation, ignorance and fear that bred a certain type of distrust for all things "Muslim" or "Islamic".

It was a watershed moment for Welsh Muslims, where it seemed our loyalties were called into question, and our religion of Islam was under suspicion.

Under such pressures and negativity, the likelihood of anything positive coming out of such a tragedy would seem improbable. And yet, in the 10 years after the events of 9/11, the Muslim community in Wales has built some of its strongest relationships and institutions yet.

One of the most important initiatives created as a result of 9/11 was the "Faiths Forum", initiated and chaired by the then First Minister of Wales, Rhodri Morgan. The Faiths Forum is a partnership of leaders from all religious communities in Wales, as well as representatives from the various political parties in the National Assembly.

At the Faiths Forum I had the privilege to meet and work with leaders from the Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Bahai, Buddhist and Hindu communities.

It was through respectful dialogue, mutual education and our sincere intentions to work together, that we were able to look past our differences, break through our prejudices and stand together in unity.

It was through the friendship

and support of other faith and cultural communities, that by the grace of Allah, the Muslim community in Wales was able to look beyond the negative, and focus our energies on creating positive and proactive initiatives in Wales to educate the public on the true teachings of Islam.

The way Christian and Muslim communities have worked closely on a project called Finding a Common Voice, set up together, has also had a tremendous impact in bringing communities together.

The magnanimity, support and commitment demonstrated by the Archbishop of Wales and Archbishop of Cardiff and other faith leaders reflects the understanding, trust, respect and a genuine desire to build bridges and work together.

Earlier this year, for the first time in Welsh history, the Muslim and Jewish communities in Wales came together to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.

It was at this particular memorial where members of the public were invited to listen to the untold story of how 2,000 Jews were saved by Albanian Muslims from the hands of the Nazis.

These examples of how different faith groups can come together in even the darkest of days, inspires me with hope at the power of communities coming together.

Wales is a shining example of how, even in the worst of times, our communities will not be divided by ignorance, fear and hatred. Rather we will take the extra step, go that extra mile to reach out to our neighbours, whoever they may be and stand firm as communities united.

Hir oes i Gymru

FOSIS Annual Conference 2011



Mohsin Malik, chair of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies Wales, reflects on the FOSIS Annual Conference held in Cardiff this year.

In June 2011, for three days, all of Britain converged into Cardiff for the FOSIS Annual Conference. FOSIS stands for the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, founded in 1963 it is one of the oldest and longest running British Muslim organizations. Its annual conferences have been a highlight of the student calendar for Muslims for five decades. Cardiff had the honour of hosting the conference for the first time (although it was held in Swansea during the eighties, so it is stranger to Wales).

On the morning of Fri 17th, the coaches slowly began to arrive. Students from Scotland, the North, London, Birmingham and the Midlands and indeed other parts of Wales all arrived in regular waves. By midday, over 500 students were sitting in Julian Hodge Lecture Theatre for the official opening of the

FOSIS stands for the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, founded in 1963 it is one of the oldest and longest running British Muslim organisations



FOSIS Conference. Nabil Ahmed, President, gave the opening speech. Followed by the President of Cardiff University Islamic Society and Saleem Kidwai, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Wales. The first order of the day was the Annual General Meeting, where the FOSIS exec were held to account and new leaders were elected. Those not representing a University were given walking tours of Cardiff's numerous sties.

For the next three days, we were given workshops, lectures, debates and food galore. Highlights included the South African Mufti Menk, who delivered rousing speeches on the importance of the Prophetic virtues of patience, kindness, mercy and love. A debate on freedom of expression on cam-

pus attended by Nicola Dandridge of Universities UK also went down well. Fringe events included a careers fayre with Google and the Civil Service in attendance, as well as workshops on working with the deaf, social media and the role of faith in the public sphere.

The event was kindly sponsored by the Muslim Council of Wales, who also helped invaluablely in the logistical organization of the event beforehand. We are truly grateful for their support.

Muslim students are in a unique position to really change the society we live in, to contribute towards a brighter and more optimistic outlook in life. The FOSIS Annual Conference, I hope, helped to bring that vision into clearer focus.

Islamic Social Support Association (ISSA) Wales hosts 2nd Annual Conference

MCW
Initiative



The ISSA Wales 2nd annual conference was held on 21st September in City Hall, Cardiff. The theme was 'Working with Muslim clients', advising 60 delegates on how to strength social service provision by accounting for faith-based needs. The delegates ranged from mainstream public-sector services, to charities and the third-sector including a large number of volunteer organizations.

The conference included presentations, workshops and round-table discussion on issues surrounding provision to Muslim clients. There was also time allocated for networking and building relationships between the many social support organizations in South Wales.

The chief guest and the keynote speaker was Mr David Francis, Chair Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, who emphasized the close working relationship between the health board and ISSA Wales and how other main stream agencies can benefit from working in partnership.

Guest speakers also included Ayesha Aslam, an Islamic coun-

selor who spoke about how counseling can be approached from an Islamic perspective.

Dr Abdalla Yasin OBE (Director of ISSA Wales) also spoke on the heterogeneity of the Muslim community and how to take this into account. Dr Yasin explained that ISSA supports clients in a multicultural setting and the model used within the organization. He believed that ISSA and similar organizations were vital to bridge the gap with mainstream services.

Dr Amani Hasaan, a Consultant Child & Adolescent psychiatrist reflected on the issues she faces in her workplace. She talked about the challenges and how they were overcome by maintaining a relationship with the patients family and friends to adjust care and provision to individual needs.

Mark John, a Christian prison chaplain discussed the need for supporting individuals through a faith perspective and the value of considering religious needs.

ISSA Wales provides social support to Muslim clients across Wales. Its services range from

counseling, chaplaincy, advocacy, relationship therapy and pastoral support. ISSA Wales is a project initiated by the Muslim Council of Wales.

Janaza—Cardiff

After a listening campaign amongst our affiliates and the local Welsh Muslim community, we found that funeral services were a concern amongst many local Muslims.

In response to this concern, ISSA Wales, in conjunction with Dar Ul-Isra Muslim and Educational Welfare Centre and The Muslim Council of Wales, has set up Janaza—Cardiff, a funeral service based on Islamic principles.

ISSA Wales has been training men and women in the Islamic teachings around treatment of the dead and preparation for burial.

If you require the services of Janaza—Cardiff or would like more information, please contact ISSA Wales on:

info@issa-wales.org or

029 2034 5294

ISSA Wales provides social support to Muslim clients across Wales. Its services range from counseling, chaplaincy, advocacy, relationship therapy and pastoral support

MCW Initiative



In the last two editions of the newsletter, we have written about the Muslim Council of Wales initiative called ADFYWIAD, which stands for "Advisory Directorate for Youth, Women and Imams Active Development" and is also the Welsh word for "Revival". ADFYWIAD hopes to deliver capacity building and leadership skills to mosques, as well as women and the youth, within the Muslim community in Wales. It aims to engage and empower individuals and groups of youth, women and Imams in different skill areas required for the successful running of any project or organisation.

One such initiative developed by ADFYWIAD includes iLead Wales which stands for "Islamic Leadership Education and Development Wales" and whose primary strategy is to train and develop a team of competent youth in leadership and project management.

Since its inception in May, both groups of delegates (community challenges aimed at those aged between 13-16 and the main training programme aimed at those aged 16+) have completed the first component of the course based around self development. Saira Chaudhry, who is currently a part of the iLead Wales team commented "For the past 4 months, our objective has been to let the delegates get to know themselves

and their strengths and weaknesses – we have equipped them with tools and techniques that they can utilize in their day to day lives. We have also merged this learning with what the Quran and Hadith teach us so they get a 2 dimensional understanding. Furthermore, we have tasked all the younger group iLEADERS with several challenges throughout the first semester and the biggest of these challenges was to coordinate an Iftar for the whole iLEAD team including the mature programme delegates and facilitators, which tested their project management, communication, time management, decision making and team working skills".

She further added "All iLead delegates have been very enthusiastic and committed to the course, showing great enthusiasm towards learning and all the challenges set so far. They have progressed in confidence and



teamwork and we are confident they will continue to be outstanding throughout the remainder of the course".

The training session continues with the second semester pivoted around "engagement with the wider community". Over the past two months, iLead delegates have had sessions on interfaith, the Welsh political system, which included a tour of the Senedd and citizenship.

Their challenge following the interfaith session was to write an interfaith report. Sara Djoudi, an iLead delegate wrote the following in her report:

"On the 17th of September 2011, we had an iLEAD session on the importance of interfaith. Firstly, we learned about this from an Islamic perspective, studying about how the prophet practiced interfaith when interacting with people of other beliefs, such as the Jews of Medina. Also, we discussed many ayahs in the Qur'an, which all clearly stated about the importance of being respectful and understanding when talking to non-Muslims, no matter what the circumstances are. We then went on to learn about the etiquettes of Interfaith, such as listening carefully and trying to respect and comprehend other peoples' points of view, not to insult or accuse one another's beliefs and opinions. After Lunch, Father Peter, a priest from the 'Our Lady of Lourdes' Catholic church in Gabalfa, kindly gave up his time to come and talk briefly about Christianity during our session in order to enhance our knowledge of the religion. He covered the history of Christianity and then gradually moved into the present, where he told us about the various denominations that are currently around today. When he had finished, we then had the privilege to ask questions about things we may not have clearly understood before regarding the Christian religion. Finally, we presented our beliefs of Islam and how we think it links with the teachings of the Prophet and the Qur'an. Although Islam and Christianity are two very different religions, there are many things that are very similar in both as well. Firstly, both relig-

-ions are monotheistic, meaning that they both believe in one God. Muslims call this belief 'Tawhid', meaning the 'Oneness of God'. Tawhid is one of the first things you must accept otherwise you can't be a Muslim. Even though the Christians believe that it was God and only God at the beginning, who created everything in the universe, they differ with Muslims when they then start to link God into the trinity.

This leads me onto my next point. Both religions believe in Jesus. In Islam, Jesus is considered to be one of the greatest prophets who ever lived, one of the reasons being that he was born from a virgin woman, Mary. Also, when he started to preach about the existence of only one god, by the will and help of Allah, he was able to perform amazing miracles such as healing the lepers, curing the blind

Islam and Christianity have their own sacred scriptures, the Quran being the holy book of Muslims and the Bible being the holy book of Christians. Both these religious manuscripts generally promote and support the same rules and moral values, such as being kind to parents and elders, not lying, stealing or killing, discouraging discrimination and racism, encouraging peace and mainly instructing people to lead a good life in order to get the reward of Heaven in the hereafter. The Quran and the Old Testament Bible also talk about stories of similar prophets. They both discuss the lives of prophets such as Adam, Noah (Nuh), David (Dawud), Moses (Musa), Solomon (Sulayman), Zachariah (Zakariyah) etc.

As I slipped in above, Christianity is one religion, although it has many denominations

So all in all, we have more in common with Christians than we think and so there is no excuse for the lack of interfaith between, not just Christians, but all the other religions too. Everyone wants peace. But to have peace, we must come to terms with our differences and push away the barriers of stereotypes and misconceptions. We can't be ignorant and listen to what others have to say about other religions. We have to find out the truth for ourselves and how can we do that? Interfaith is the solution. By setting our differences aside and working together, we as a community can accomplish more than what one person is able to do alone. I don't mean to bring fiction into this but, but what Albus Dumbledore says is true. We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided. Interfaith is essential and my only hope, is that it will not be too late when people

"All iLead delegates have been very enthusiastic and committed to the course, showing great enthusiasm towards learning and all the challenges set so far. They have progressed in confidence and teamwork" –

Saira Chaudhry (iLead Wales)

and even raised someone from the dead. This, of course, was only possible because Allah made it so, as I mentioned before. The Christians also believe that Jesus was a great man who performed many miracles too. However, they do go on to say that Jesus is the son of god, as he, in their opinion, is part of the Trinity, a fundamental belief that unites all the Christians denominations together.

Muslims and Christians also believe in the Day of Judgement, where everyone will be questioned and judged about their actions and life on earth. If you have led a good life, then you will go to Heaven. If you haven't, then it's to Hell you'll have to stay.

(groups). The three main ones are the Protestants, who are 'normal', Roman Catholics, who are quite strict and Orthodox, who are very strict. Islam is also split into three major groups too. Sunnis are the majority, and, suggested by the name, they follow the Sunnah as best as they can interpret it with the help of scholars. Sufis are quite similar but they prioritise dhikr and have many gatherings where they sit, stand or dance in a circle and make dhikr. Shias, on the other hand, have quite different beliefs to the other sets. They believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib was the one and only Khalifah after the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and that he was his only successor.

wake up and come to realize that"

The programme continues to run monthly with the younger delegates now working towards their big challenge of developing a project proposal in groups, where the project needs to be aimed at helping the local community, promoting better community cohesion and meeting local needs.

For more information about iLead Wales or if you are interested in enrolling your kids onto next year's programme, please email:
info.ileadwales@gmail.com



Launching National Interfaith Week in Wales

20th – 26th November



National Interfaith Week 2011 will be taking place from 20th-26th November. The Muslim Council of Wales, in recognition of the contribution and importance of interfaith in society, will be hosting a launch event on Tuesday 22nd November.

The event will bring together the Archbishop of Wales Rev Barry Morgan and Ibrahim Mogra, a British Muslim teacher and scholar with international repute. The event will take place in the National Museum of Wales and will be attended by the First Minister, RT. Hon. Carwyn Jones AM and Jane Hutt Minister for Finance & Leader of the House.

The topic of discussion will be 'Believing in Faith' and it is hoped that new directions on the role of faith in society, its value in all aspects of life ranging from the private to the public, and its importance in a modern world will emerge.

The Muslim Council of Wales is committed to the value of interfaith. In the Quran, we are instructed by the Divine to "come to a common word" (3:64) with members of other faith groups – a process we believe begins through dialogue. Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) showed us what this meant in practice. One example is the Hilf al-Fudool (or 'the Noble Agreement') in which the Prophet

Muhammad and various other members of society (of all and no faith) agreed to work together to ensure social justice in Makkah. As Muslims, he is our utmost example of virtue and goodness and it is in his footsteps we hope to follow through our interfaith efforts.

The interfaith event is open to all. Please contact the Muslim Council of Wales for more information.



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Tribute to Alan Schwartz



It is with deep regret that members of the Muslim Council of Wales heard about the passing of Alan Schwartz, chairman of the South Wales Jewish Representative Council.

He was committed to building bridges between faiths in Wales, and as such it was with pleasure and honour that Muslim Council of Wales worked with him on a number of projects over the last decade.

His belief in the value and importance of interfaith is shown through his distinguished work with the Welsh Interfaith forum, Cardiff Interfaith Association, the Cardiff Council of Christians and Jews, the Interfaith Network and the Interfaith Council for Wales.

It goes without saying that the

Jewish community will feel the loss of such a capable, committed and humble leader. The Muslim community too mourn Alan Schwartz. Although he is no longer with us, his legacy lives on triumphantly, and furthermore, the Muslim Council of Wales is committed to the interfaith work he believed in so dearly.

Saleem Kidwai, Secretary general Muslim Council of Wales said, 'He was a great loss to the Jewish community in particular and the faith communities in general, a real gentleman, an icon for the Jewish community, a fair man respected by all, we have lost a good friend.'

Our thoughts, prayer and condolences are with his family.

MCW
Events



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