

The background of the entire image is a photograph of the 'Angel of the Swallows' sculpture in a grassy field under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The sculpture is a large, dark, stylized figure with long, segmented wings that extend horizontally across the upper half of the frame. In the bottom right corner, a small swallow is perched on a wooden post.

The Songs of The Swallows

intimate portrait of lovely birds

The Songs of the
Swallows





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Pakistan Cultural Society
Islamic Heritage Project - Oral History

Presents

The Songs of the Swallows

Compiled By
Hengameh Ashraf Emami

Editor
Richard-Fouad & Suzanne MacLeod



Munmun KC
Director, Pakistan Cultural Society

*I'm very excited to see an idea developing into
a great community project*

The idea of developing an oral history and heritage project was conceived for the first time in the region back in 2006 through the “Arts and Islam” programme. Due to overwhelming response from the participants and audiences the PCS continued with the theme for the next two years focusing on diverse cultures and heritage of Islam from a global perspective. Alongside this, in 2008 the PCS designed the first Islamic Oral History project in the North East initially for eighteen months with a future vision of expanding the project into a long term programme.

This publication is an evidence of the collective participatory effort from everyone who has contributed during these eighteen months and made it successful. The PCS are thankful to those individuals who shared their stories and helped to create this unique archive for public use. I am delighted to be part of it.



Hengameh Ashraf Emami
Islamic Heritage Project Worker

The journey of this experience was amazing!

I am very honoured to deliver such a very profound, unique and exciting project. The Muslims Oral History project is the first one of its kind in the North East. It was a fantastic experience for me to be trained, and to recruit and train very diverse groups of volunteers.

We set off to interview various Muslims, from different age groups and ethnicities, who I had already approached through mapping Muslims communities in the North East.

The journey of this experience was amazing and each step of the project was full of learning and discoveries for me. As well as the interviews, working with excellent artists on the different workshops has enriched my own experience and knowledge and added a great value to the whole project.

Collectively, all the works give artistic and creative insight in to Muslims' world.

I hope the project will build a bridge between different cultures and open a new window to learn more about multicultural societies.



Paul Summers
Northern Writers' Award Winner 2008

Only by speaking our stories do we make ourselves real.

This simple act of sharing validates our experiences and fashions our identities. More importantly perhaps, it allows us, 'the ordinary people' to exist within the canon of history; a canon that, despite half a century in which oral histories have become more commonplace, is still so often the preserve of the 'politically significant' and the 'venerated'.

The testimonies and creative writing within this book are an important contribution towards chronicling the life of Newcastle and the North East. Not only do they celebrate our diversity and our individuality but they also cement notions of commonality and the universal, and through this they will contribute greatly to the priceless language of community.



Sarah Cotton

Keeper of Contemporary Collecting, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

I have enjoyed learning about the interviewees' homelands and listening to them talk so openly about their lives.

“*A* Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums we aim to represent the whole community of Tyne and Wear. We have been pleased to work with the Pakistan Cultural Society on this oral history project and are delighted to be able to add the recordings to our collection so that the Muslim community of Tyne and Wear is represented in the history we are presenting. All of these recordings will be archived, cared for and kept as a record for the future”



Richard-Fouad MacLeod
Tyne & Wear Photography Award Winner 2008

an excuse is not a success!

I joined the project at a later stage. It was a great experience from the start with lots of things to do and not many resources. I really admired Munmun KC and Hengameh's determination to make this happen using everything they have to make it possible.

I was wooed with the interviews and the intimate portraits of all these wonderful humans. I felt straight away a deep commitment to be part of this project. I want the world to see these intimate portraits.

One participant, Dr Adel really stood out for me. At the exhibition Dr Adel gave a speech to a diverse audience about his own experience as a Muslim living in the North East. Dr Adel presented himself as a person who is made up of all his experiences and friends "I'm a bit of a Sunni, Shia, Sufi, Pakistani, Egyptian ..." and I guess this is what some people –Muslims or not- actually are. As humans we live in groups. These groups develop their own characteristics by socialising with each other. At the end of the day, no matter what you believe in –or don't- we are all humans"

This book gives this message in several –creative- ways and I'm very happy to be part of the team who present you this fantastic publication

Partnership

Tyne & Wear Museum, Taking Liberties & Heritage Project

Funders

The Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council & Faith in Action



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museums**

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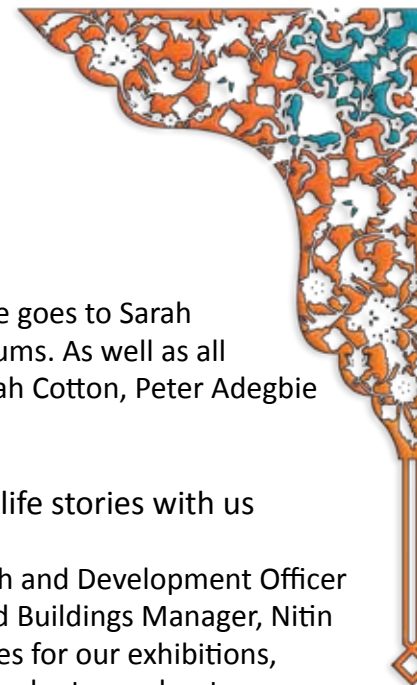
Thanks everyone for making this project a success. My deepest gratitude goes to Sarah Cotton, John Clayson and Sophie Curry from Tyne & Wear Museums. As well as all members of the Islamic Heritage steering group: Munmun KC, Tony Spencer, Sarah Cotton, Peter Adegbie and Andrew Tinkle, for their support and advice.

Many thanks to all interviewees who warmly received us and shared their life stories with us

Thanks to Kath Cassidy, Heritage Service Manager, and Lexy Seedhouse, Outreach and Development Officer from Taking Liberties Project, Mark Thurston Newcastle City Library, Facilities and Buildings Manager, Nitin Shulka Diversity Officer at Gateshead Civic Centre for providing us with the venues for our exhibitions, Peter Hepplewhite Tyne & Wear Museums Archive department for teaching our volunteers about an archiving system.

Special thanks to the Funders, The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Arts Council and Faith in Action; without their support this project could not have been initiated, shaped and come into fruition.

Hengameh Ashraf Emami
Project Worker



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In the next few pages you will meet a few members of the Muslim community in the North East. The Muslim community is a rich and diverse community as much as the North East is. Something which will become apparent to you very soon.

We hope you will enjoy reading about these people as much we enjoyed meeting them.

Many thanks to all interviewees who warmly received us and shared their stories, ambitions and love for the North East with us.

Chapter One *Interviews*





Dr. Adil El-Sobky

I am a Psychiatrist. I am of Egyptian origin and was born in 1946. I came to the UK in 1970. I came to this country as a newly qualified doctor, not specialised in anything. I studied and specialised in Psychiatry. I trained in London until I became a consultant, and then I worked in Leicester in the university for about ten years. Then I worked for a while in Saudi Arabia, as a Professor of Psychiatry, and then came to Newcastle. I have been here for twenty years. I came to live in this country, which has a different culture, and had to learn new principles and new modes of thinking and unlearn others. So you don't just learn, you also unlearn; you lose something and gain something.

We (Egyptians) have a very rich history; our neighbours are the Arabs and Iran. We have many very prominent people who read about history, so on the Islamic level, we can quote Mohammed Abdu as a great reformer in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Along with Mohammed Abdu, we had other characters such as Al-Afghani, a man who came from an Afghan origin, and Mohammed Koraieem. Very much later in the 1950's Saied Kutub came to prominence. Before that we also had Mohammed Abdu, Jamal al-Din-al-Afghani, Mohammed Koraieem and Abdullah Nadeem. Saied Kutub bred the Islamic Movement and the Muslims Brothers from the 1950's onward.

In addition, we had many great Islamic reformers and writers as well as the political figures. Figureheads in politics were like Jamal Abdul Nasser who came with Mohammed Najeeb in the 1950's. And before him we had many national famous people like Saad Zaghloul and Mustafah Kamil.

I am a consultant psychiatrist. I do clinical psychiatry and I also do a fair amount of medical legal work: that is, to assist the criminal courts on the assessment of offenders; for example, their capacity; mental capacity; criminal responsibility and parenting ability.





Immigration gives you the chance to explore other dimensions and lives; how other people live, to compare that to the way you live, combine the best from that and the best from your own history and make up your own profile - your own mosaic.

I am pleased to tell you that my friends are a very wide mixture of Egyptians, Pakistanis, English and Indian and all manner of Turkish and Tunisians and Persians.

I am interested in poetry and wrote the following poem for the Prophet Mohammad.

Being Egyptian is not a condition, and it does not convey a specific advantage in making friends, whether among Muslims or others. It's very important to know not to limit your acquaintances to one specific circle of people, otherwise you will not grow, and you will not create the understanding between people that the Quran talks to us about.

Seayd Al Kalam (The Master of Speech)

The One and the Creator
He made the prime and the
Master of Speech read
Glory be to the Lord in high
heavens
Alhamdulillah
Al-Wahied Al-Khalaak
He created words and the Master
and the prime word is read
And he put brains in my head and
a pen in my hand and he said
"Consider, witness, utter, speak"
And he sent the messenger to
clear the darkness and smash the
icons and the idols
And plant a tree of goodwill
And he made prayers a marker
for the Moslem and he made the
Azan
Declaration of prayers, a
declaration during the day and
the night that you are equal

And that we are free
And that frustration 'Sujood' Can
only be to God and Mabood, not
to man
And he raised the flag in his hand
to fight the inequities
And he revealed unto him that
silence on indignity is Haram
Shouldn't be silent and he taught
us
That victory is a kind of morality
And that defeat is not due to the
strength of the enemy; it's due to
weakness within yourself
And he asked me to witness with
the right,
For the owner of the right; be
that a Jew or a Christian or a
Moslem, makes no difference
Witness even on yourself and fear
not for your rest, for your food
That's in the hand of God

Witness and tell the
usurper in his face
"You are usurper!"
And permit not decisions to be
taken by others to decide your
life; the course of your life
And remember, we are all free
We cannot be ruled or
inherited.





Dr. Belgin Oazalp

I was born in Burdur, a small city in Turkey, in 1973. I came to the United Kingdom through my marriage about 12 years ago. I was 'number one' in primary school throughout each year, and very successful. I finished secondary school and grammar school also as the top scholar. Then I took the national selection exam and went to university.

I'm the youngest child in my family. I have 2 sisters; one of them is a solicitor, the other is a teacher.

My husband was from my home town, although he lived in Germany after the age of 12, along with his family. They used to come to Turkey for holidays, and during one of those summer holidays we met. His family

were looking for someone as a possible wife for him; but they did not want to start with a big commitment: not like an old style arranged marriage. We started to see each other and to decide if everything matched in terms of cultural things and understanding each other.

I applied for jobs to 200 different places, and I only got one response; that was from Ireland.

I was desperate to work. It was very difficult for me, but I understood that four years of not touching a patient meant a lot, so I didn't blame them.

The only thing which I did think was unfair was the PLAB (Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board) test, which only applies to people from

outside the European Union. Compare this with the situation in the USA: they apply the USMLE (United States Medical Licensing Examination), which applies to everyone who wants to work in America, including Americans, and it's equal for everyone; in my view this is very fair, unlike the PLAB exam in the UK which only applies to people from outside the European Union.

I believe some people have taken this case to court; they applied the test to British qualified doctors and out of 40 only 2 of them passed the exam - which is a 5% pass rate. The pass rate is 40% from other nationalities; demonstrating how much effort they put into passing the exam and that they might be better than the UK qualified doctors.

United States Medical Licensing Examination applies to everyone who wants to work in America, it is not only for overseas, it is equal for everyone.





Kamelia Radwan

I was born on the 6th August 1952 in Cairo. My family was living in Morphet in Egypt. My father was Egyptian and my mother was English. I was brought up in London; we were a large family of eight sisters and brothers. We were brought up in a multicultural environment in London; the majority were Jewish, and there were a few Muslims. Whenever we fasted or did anything like that, the other children were interested to know about it. There wasn't a sense of Muslim community at that time so we were doing it on our own. There wasn't that prejudice against Muslims because we hadn't been high profile and there hadn't been nasty bombings and stories like that.

I am married to an Egyptian.

I remember the first time my father took me to Eid prayer; it was very exciting for me. I remember when I came to the Newcastle mosque and heard the Azan - I was so moved that I started crying, because it is the call to prayer. I remember when my friend from Bosnia came along she was just crying because in her country, they were not allowed to worship.

I did a French degree at university and studied my Masters in the Islamic religion at Leicester. My first job was in nursing. I then worked in a library as a volunteer, and after that worked in a bank. I worked in the British Medical Association office, and finally I worked in Senate House, which is the London University office. I think it is important to learn Arabic because it is the language

of the Quran and we believe it's the language spoken in heaven.

My faith helped me a lot through the years. It has been a progress in understanding it through deeper reading.

I have learnt more "Tawakkol" which is relying on Allah so that in a difficult situation, instead of thinking that you've got to think of your ego, you put the problem in His hands and He can work out the best solution for you. But if you haven't got that Trust in God, and if you actually have got an ulterior motive or you want something for yourself, that's when you get the frustration and the difficulty.





Latifa Jorg

I have been living in Newcastle for 32 years. I was born in India. There were not many facilities for women's education so we moved to Bangladesh in 1956. We were all educated there, and we were very happy for this reason. We moved to East Pakistan, which has a large, mostly Hindu population. They all sent their daughters and sons to school.

When East Pakistan and West Pakistan were fighting, the Pakistani military were not very nice to Hindu people, so we brought them into our house and hid them. We had a very good relationship with them. There are

still some Hindu people living in our region.

We usually wear the sari, special saris are luxurious. All of us look forward to a wedding because we are only able to wear saris on that day.



I was married when I was 20 years old. On 12th of June 2010, it was our forty-fifth wedding anniversary. Now my children are grown up, highly educated and they are working as professionals.

We celebrate two Eids. About 80

people come to my house on Eid occasion and we make food for them. One celebration is called Eid al-Fiter and the other one is called Eid Al-Adha. We celebrate the second one because the prophet Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son; it was a test from Allah. Abraham and his son both agreed to the sacrifice according to God's command.

As Muslims, we should be on good terms with our neighbours. We must care about them. In Islam, if you are not aware of your neighbours and leave them in need, then you are not a good Muslim.





I was born in Isfahan, in Iran, in 1961. My late mother used to say “I want my daughters to go to university like my boys”, and therefore we have all been to university. Although the university was a long way from my home, I was encouraged to go.

I was married while I was a first year medical student, it was my choice. It was the beginning of the Islamic revolution in Iran so we had a very simple wedding and decided to give the expenses to charity instead.

Dr. Malihe Ghazavi

We came to Newcastle about sixteen years ago. My husband had been working at the university as a lecturer in Iran and had a scholarship from the government to study for a PhD in Physics. I had a scholarship too but I could not use it because I had to pass some more exams then the scholarship expired.

I am an expert in Neurodisability, neurology and epilepsy in children. I love my job and helping other people. I really like Newcastle; it is a nice place, the bridges and the people are wonderful.

I have two daughters: Aazaadeh my elder daughter has finished her higher education, and has an MSc in IT, business and

technology. She is currently working part-time in a data entry position. Although she has got a good qualification she could not get a career in which she was interested, so she cannot use her knowledge and skills. Bahaareh my younger daughter is studying pharmacology. I do my best to be a good role model for them. Something I regret about studying medicine was that I was so busy studying and working that I was not able to spend enough time with my daughters. I think if you appreciate your life and who you are and who your friends are, you will enjoy your life and you can take something with you to the afterlife as well.

During the war between Iran and Iraq, I lost my uncle,

his wife and his daughter. Six or seven patients with babies and my uncle's secretary were all killed in one night in the hospital where my uncle was working as a dedicated doctor. He used to do lots of charity work. He was an extraordinary person, and losing him was very painful for us.

I believe the Quran followed the Bible and most things in the Bible are in the Quran too.





Maryam Mousadoust

I was born in Tehran, the capital city of Iran, in 1971.

My childhood house was not a traditional Iranian house, it was a semi-detached house in a camp area with a big garden. There were lots of different fruit trees, for example apricot trees and different kinds of cherries, golden and black cherries. There was a swing and a barbecue in the backyard with lots of memories.

I did my BSc in chemical engineering (Food industries). My BSc project was based on the crystallization and purification of sugar syrup in the Karag (a city near Tehran) sugar factory in Iran. They liked my project and offered me a job. I did my MSc in Drug chemistry at the University

of Newcastle. I am currently studying for a PhD in chemistry at Northumbria University.

My husband has been living in Britain nearly thirty one years and came to Iran in 1991 because both of his parents were poorly at that time. One of my father's friends introduced me to my husband and after all traditional ceremonies later on we married.

After I gave birth to my daughter I thought teaching would be the best job for me. I believe you have to divide your time when you become a mother, and give plenty of time to your child because they can not find the best way of living by themselves. We have to bring them up in a

way to help them learn. We celebrate both Christmas and New Year, and I usually invite all of my family and friends. I make traditional food for both occasions. We have different types of festivals in Iran; religious and Persian festivals.

In war, many people will lose precious things like family and friends. I think it is ridiculous that two governments fight with each other. If a government attacks you, you have to defend yourself because you have to protect your home, and this is what happened in Iran. We just defended ourselves in the war with Iraq.





I was born in Sari, Mozandaran in the North of Iran, in 1953. I had very caring parents; education was always important to them. I have three sisters and a brother, all highly educated. One sister is an agricultural engineer, one is an environmental engineer and the youngest works in the health food industry. I enjoyed my childhood. I think we can always learn from our parents and grandparents: the main things they taught me were forgiveness and kindness. I studied economics and accountancy together at university, then became a maths

Mehrnaz Saberi

teacher. I worked in Iranian high schools for twenty years and at an Iranian school in Newcastle for three years; then I retired.

War between Iran and Iraq was started in Sharevar 59 (August 1980) and finished in 1366 (August 1987). The war continued for nearly 8 years and over one million innocent people died. When you go to different villages and cities, if you go to the cemetery you can see how many young men and women have died during that period. We were living in Tehran during the war and it seemed as if everything was going to be destroyed. The city was bombarded every single night. We had to live in the dark and put heavy curtains over the windows. My daughter was born

while the sirens were telling us the enemy was about to attack. It was a horrible time. Everywhere was dark!

I believe war affects everyone, not just some families but everyone. You cannot have a life during a war. Nearly every family lost somebody dear to them, and many cities were completely ruined. The warning sirens were going continually, causing great stress. War can never be a pleasant experience for any nation.

We came to England in 1993. My husband was a surgeon in Iran and wanted to study heart surgery in England. He is a very caring father to our children and a caring husband to me. We

came to England but then he went back to Iran to work. We both travel between Iran and Newcastle at different times of the year.

I love birds very much and I have got lots of different birds in my garden and I feed them, especially robins. When they sing, everything looks so beautiful: the grass, trees; I just love Newcastle. My daughter is married to an Englishman in Newcastle, and I love him very much. My sons are busy with their work and haven't married yet.





Dr. Nayarah Khandani



I was born in Iran, in one of the provinces in the north-west called western Azerbaijan – about 45 years ago.

My birthplace was a small town called Salmas. When you go there, it looks quite modern, and the reason is that it was completely destroyed by a massive earthquake in 1921. So if you go to the town you can see it's very symmetrical and you can see it was planned before being built.

I did my masters degree at Newcastle University and trained as an environmental engineer. I got a scholarship from Newcastle University to do my PhD in the same field, so I ended up with a degree and a PhD in environmental engineering. I'm currently working for Gateshead Council. My job is managing waste - mainly construction waste.

I think there is a big difference because here in the UK it's more focused on the subject you really want to do and you want to be trained in. But in Iran, other than this, there are other subjects that, at the end of the day, you find nothing relevant to the subject, so I think in a positive way probably you have more

general knowledge if you have education in Iran, but in a way, it's sometimes a waste of your time because you can't focus on a subject that really matters to you.

I think the main change has happened since last year when the market and recession started. People are a little bit changed, they are more scared of the situation, they are more frightened of foreigners, respect and equality has been ruined.





Dr. Ruksana Chandhury

I was born in Birmingham in 1969. My father arrived in Birmingham in 1959 and then my mum arrived in 1964 with my oldest brother. Three of my brothers and sisters were born in Birmingham.

Did I settle back in Bangladesh? No. Do you know why? Well, all my brothers and sisters are here and I personally just believe Bangladesh is too corrupt. It just feels like if you're rich and you know people, you'll be alright and I don't want to live like that - where you can pull strings. It is not fair. I couldn't live there. Praying, fasting and reading the Quran was in me. It was never forced and then I did make a decision in my head that if I was to marry, I did not want a man to marry me purely for the way

I looked or anything like that. I wanted him to marry me for what I was. Then I put the headscarf on because I did not want, in my later stage of life (about 35 or so) to put the headscarf on - I didn't want my husband to prevent me from doing that.

My husband is absolutely fantastic and hands-on in terms of washing clothes - I haven't washed any clothes since I got married - so he gets rid of the bulk of the work that would really take up my time. If I had to wash six kids' clothes and iron them all week I wouldn't be able to take them out or spend quality time reading, so my husband and I have a really good balance between us.

I did my PhD in London. A lot of my friends were seriously practising Muslims, so I started going to talks, attending seminars, and so - my faith increased that way. I think through friends you learn about your religion, you love it more, and you just want to be better. The reality of God and to live a good life and the most important factors in our lives and the fact that we will be accountable for everything we do.

I'm in a community pharmacy and our roles are expanding now so it's not just literally - you hand your prescription in and we dispense it for you.



Shabnah Ahad

I was born and raised in the province of Sylhet in Bangladesh. I was unfortunate enough to not know my mother, as she died when I was three, but I was lucky enough to be brought up by my dear grandmother and father. I was split up from some of my siblings as they stayed with my other grandma and uncles.

My father was living between countries; he worked in England for years at a time and came back to visit us in Bangladesh for months at a time.

My upbringing was greatly influenced by Bangladeshi culture, and my religion, Islam, but a small part was influenced by England due to my father's travels.

At the age of 14 I came across the seas and settled to live with my father in Birmingham.

After two years in a strange new country, I was married, at the age of sixteen. It was an arranged marriage which I accepted as I had known this man, a relative of mine, all my life. It was a beautiful extravagant occasion with a mixture of sadness and grief running alongside. My mother was not there to share this joyous day with me and the inevitable thought of leaving my family lingered in my mind. Now I have five children and I have never looked back.

I had never liked my name, the reason being it isn't a Muslim name. This is why I insisted giving all my children Muslim names. I wanted to pass on good names with meanings.

My children's names translated from Arabic mean: Messenger, Kind, Appreciation, Nice and Friend. I hope they are able to live up to their meanings!

I live in Morpeth. I feel it's generally a friendly place with friendly people. This is despite a few run-ins with my neighbours. I cannot say for sure if these are racially fuelled or not, but I have been sworn to and spat at.

Ever since I was a young girl, my favourite time of the year has

been Ramadan and the subsequent Eid el-Fitr celebrations. These celebrations mark the end of this blessed month.

I remember rejoicing these days with delicious traditional Bengali dishes my grandmother would cook and wearing brand new shalwar kameez which my father would parcel to us.





Sheerin Amir

I was born on the 29th of January 1992 in the General Hospital in Newcastle.

My mum and dad were born in Iraq, but originally they are Kurdish Faili from Iran. About nineteen or twenty years ago they left Iraq and came here. First my dad came here to study, and then when everything happened between Iraq and Iran, my dad obviously couldn't go back. That's how he had to stay here and start work. I was eleven or twelve when the war in Iraq started. I remember America went in - I'm sure it was for oil – right? They got rid of Saddam Hussein.

My uncle was killed because of people being taken away



- some of them were brutally murdered.

If you were a young lad you could be taken

away and killed; they would just take you randomly out of your house. Basically like another Hitler, and that's what was happening in Iran and Iraq, even though no one really knew about it. It was stressful for my family. Saddam Hussein was a sick guy, he killed so many people - nine of my uncles were taken away and have been killed. People actually don't know exactly what he did; it hasn't actually been told to the world that this is the kind of man he was.

My dad works in the Civic Centre; he's a highway engineer working with traffic. My mum is a crèche worker. My uncle is married to an Englishwoman and she used to come over for Christmas all the time.

Recently I've been thinking about wearing a headscarf but there are a lot of things stopping me, because I don't want people to treat me differently.





Yusef El-Sobky

I was born in 1990 in Whitley Bay.



My name is the name of a prophet, also called Joseph. I am studying business at Edinburgh University. I think the main misconception people seem to have is of the word 'Allah', they think that it's a word which relates only to a Muslim God, when in fact it's the Arabic word for 'The Deity', so even Arabic Christians and Arabic Jews etc. will refer to God as Allah.

I think one of the biggest worries that people have in general is why they're here, or what their purpose is. Particularly with people who have reached the height of what everyone thinks of as success; so they might have lots of money and go back to their penthouse with their model wife - but realise that they're not happy, because they're not fulfilling their purpose, and it can be quite confusing if you are not sure. My faith has helped me by acting as a reminder of the true purpose of life, so anything else that we do is a sideline or a bonus, but it's not the focus of life.

Usually I go to the mosque next to the campus. Having a place to

pray close to your lectures recalibrates you, and it's a constant reminder to you of what your purpose is, and it stops you being distracted from that purpose. If you're in a secular environment, it can act as a test sometimes, but also sometimes as an advantage to you, because then you can focus on your inward progress without any distraction.

If you were living in Saudi Arabia, and you had to follow the prescribed practices and dress in a certain way, then it would be difficult to determine the line between what you were following as a law abiding citizen, or what you're following by your own volition and motivation.



Zakar Husain

My name means 'Pray to God'. I was born on the 18th April 1973 in Pakistan, in a village called Inzeri. I moved to Lahore, which is a big city, in 1991 and began studying civil engineering. To get useful experience I joined a Turkish company on a small salary, then I started teaching in a Technology College; after that I worked as a drainage consultant.

I did my postgraduate diploma in computing at Northumbria University, and then I studied for my Masters in project management. Since November 2004 I have been employed



by Newcastle City Council as a highway design engineer – I remain in the same job today.

I am very proud of my grandfather. He was an educated and respected man in the community, who used to read lots of books and encourage us to read more too. He has been to many places and he assured me I would not face any problems for practising my religion.

I arrived in Newcastle on the 5th September 2001. My first day at university was 9/11. The terrible news was announced and it was hard for us at that time; children and teenagers sometimes shouted at us, "Oh look, Osama Bin Laden."

I believe Islam is a peaceful religion, but some people propagate it in a really dangerous way. Respecting the elderly and your parents is emphasised in the Quran. It says we cannot harm anyone, or snatch people's rights. I think we must look after each other, and be sociable and help each other.





(anonymous)

My name means wise woman

I am 36 years old. My name means wise woman. I was born in Haripur in the northwest frontier of Pakistan. It is not a very big city, but very green and beautiful and very famous for spectacular scenery.

We came to Newcastle in 1994. I decided to pursue my studies so I did a BA degree through the Open University.

I believe a good human being will share a good way of living with others. It is important how we spend our lives, how we behave with other people, and how we interact with everyone. Muslims are responsible for showing the real face of Islam and we must know that just being a Muslim

does not make us a better person. We should be known as a part of community here. The Muslim image has already been damaged, and we have got a very bad image, but Islam is not as it is perceived by many people; Islam demands different things from us, and teaches us different things.

We have a lovely neighbourhood in Newcastle; we are like a big family. Consequently, I feel very safe here. There are lots of people in this neighbourhood and many of them do lots of things for the church and for charity. I think people in Pakistan care more about their culture than their religion. They forget about

their religion; they put it behind them. It is clear that the system in Pakistan is not fair because the best jobs are given to influential and wealthy people, and whatever is left will go to others who may be clever but are not from rich backgrounds. But in this country however, I have found the system is quite fair, and most of the time you get whatever you are looking for, although that is not always the case. There are not too many limitations for you.





(anonymous)

My name means balanced, sensibility and respect



I was born in Damascus in Syria in 1978. Damascus is one of the oldest cities in the world. The alphabet was created in Syria. Syrians love delicious food and sweets like Baklava.

My father is an orthopaedic surgeon, and my mother is a haematologist. They sent me to

a private primary school which was mixed boys and girls, and then I moved to a state school. I studied dentistry for five years at Damascus University, and did two years training. During that time, I got engaged and then married, and straight away came to England, to join my husband. He came here

to do a PhD. If I had not done the dentistry course, I would not have met my husband, and things would have been very different.

I started building up more ambition after moving to England. My husband was thinking of doing more training for his PhD, and he has

done it. I thought of using every opportunity to do further training and gain more qualifications.

We had an extraordinary spiritual journey – the Hajj pilgrimage - in 2006. Seeing the diversity of people from all over the world who go around the House of God, called Kaaba; and feeling detached from the world was an excellent experience which is not comparable with any worldly journey.

The main culture shock I had in Newcastle was seeing a drunken man in the street one Saturday evening. I had never ever seen a drunken person in my whole life before coming to England.



The project commissioned local artists with international reputations to run workshops with members of the local Muslim community.

The workshops explored with the participants how to look deep and allow hidden emotions to flow. Emotions were poured with the coloured ink on the white paper, feelings were captured in motion, words were sculptured into poems, stories, paintings and even films.

This was not just to give a variety of ways of expressions but also to give a variety of ways of engaging as well. We wanted to allow a wider audience to be able to engage with human experiences, emotions and the stories the participants had to share.

In this chapter you will see some samples of the work produced. Some of the work is by individuals who had never expressed themselves before in this creative way.

Other non-Muslim members of the community were welcome into the workshop and together they painted a lovely picture of love, peace and harmony.

We hope you enjoy them.

Chapter Two *Workshops*



Poetry

with

Paul Summers

About the workshop

To explore the life experiences of Muslims living in the North East, the Islamic Heritage Project provided three successful workshops with Paul Summers; two workshops took place at the Pakistan Cultural Society and the third one at the Islamic Heritage exhibition in Newcastle City Library.

The workshops were designed to get people to think about significant moments from their lives. Some wise person, whose name escapes me, once said that poetry has the capacity to fuse together anything that has been fragmented. In those terms it's a great way of examining our pasts and our notions of ourselves and our identity.

Much of the time in the workshops is spent building a poetic landscape for these memories and reflections to 'live' within. The participants are asked a series of questions or given prompts to get them to focus their sense of sight, sound and smell. They are also encouraged to use some simple literary techniques. Hopefully, the result will be to transform a piece of recollection, a history, into something a little more poetic.

Paul Summers

Paul Summers

Paul Summers was born in Blyth, Northumberland in 1967. He now lives in North Shields.

His poetry has appeared in print since the late 1980s and he has performed his work all over the world.

He was founding co-editor of the 'leftfield' magazines Billy Liar and Liar Republic and a co-director of Liar Inc Ltd, responsible for facilitating countless creative projects across the North of England in a diverse range of educational and community contexts. He has also written for TV, film, radio and theatre and has collaborated many times with

artists on mixed-media projects.



His latest collection Big Bella's Dirty Cafe was published by Dogeater in 2006. Home (in 3 bits), a spoken word/music

collaboration with former Lindisfarne musician Dave Hull-Denholm was also released in 2006.

Other publications include

- Three Men on the Metro (Five Leaves Press 2009)
- Cunawabi (Cunawabi Publishing, London 2003)
- The Rat's Mirror (Lapwing Press 1999)
- The Last Bus (Iron Press 1998)
- Beer & Skittles (Echo Room Press 1997)
- Vermeer's Dark Parlour (Echo Room Press 1996, 2nd Ed. 1998)
- 140195 (Echo Room Press 1995).
- Union New & Selected Poems, will be published in 2011 by Smokestack Books.



On Celadon Beach

Group Work poem with Paul Summers

Autumn sun warms my bones.
Today the sea is blue steel,
Gentle waves massaging the beach,
The slow rhythm of heartfelt prayer.
Foam whipped to soft meringues,
A carpet of seaweed and dead jellyfish.
The jewelled sand's diamond glare
Is forcing my eyes to squint;
I search the horizon for other lands.
I am lost to it:
Transported on the breath of wind
To THEN.

The shadows of trees stoop
Under the weight of summer fruit,
Each leaf a miniature emerald
Shimmering in the perfume of warm earth.
A tangle of joyous girls are acting out their
futures:
Carefree days, our eyes glowing with hope and
mischievous,
All our laughter a hymn of praise.

Jannat plays mother,
Squawking a chorus of clipped commands,
And we conspire to disobey,
Compete to build the finest homes,
To make the finest food from fallen leaves.
Our faces are reddened by the day's heat,
Drifting through time in a trance of activity.

Mamman bellows, calls us home,
The sun sinks behind the city,
The rose glow of a day ending.
Cicadas hiss, a symphony of whispers,
And we head back for supper, reluctant.
Tomorrow will hold another adventure,
And all our tomorrows will grow into today.
The sea is God's clock;

Keeping time for us to dance.
This beach renewed by every tide;
Each grain dredged and cleansed,
But back again to play tomorrow.

Mother

By Sedighea

I love my mother who smells like
jasmine it reminds me the garden of
heaviness that I can dream of it.

I enjoy the smell of the delicious
food that takes me to my childhood's
memories. It bounds me to my dream.

I am thankful god of all the beauties he
created.

On that holy night I can remember my
beautiful mother with long blond hair.

The light in her face was competing
with the moon.

Her brownish eye was as sweet as
honey.

Her kindness was like a breeze and I
could feel her great love always.

Remembring

By Sedighea

One of the special nights of
Ramadan, The night of destiny

I could see the Angels
Worshiping and whispering together

That memory was so sweet

I had a chat with my God

Again looked at the sky

Bright stars were twinkling kindly

Moon was showing itself proudly

The sun was taking the moon's place
extremely beautiful and calming

I was lost in meditation

Between the dance of the moon and
the Sun.



A deep ocean azure

By Liam Hutchinson

A small streak of cotton wool
Softly spinning and softly dispersing
Softened by the pale yellow of lemon
Downside up, upside down
Slipping into the unknown

A pristine field of polished apple green velvet
Front tiered by grey paving and soot like tarmac
Prefab slumped like tired old man
Four posted trees providing crumbling carpet of crimson

A gaggle of ecstatic children stampede with faces alight
Encircled by military fence
Which beyond, metallic bottles scuttle around

Some buzzing, others chugging, screeching
Close to the edge, piercing screams and dimmed yelling

Clattering voices, I dare to tare his book up
The vocally discordant wind, whistling
The leaves rustle in a quirky interlude of jazzy complement

The apple scent of freshly cut grass, gliding like swallows
The damp smell of the undergrowth rising and hovering like a blue bottle involving the pungent aroma of the teacher's aromatic coffee

Memories empowered by the warm elation of childhood
With days mapped out like crazy paving
Close to nature and flights of fancy
A world of magnets and miracles

Nature & Life

By Liam Hutchinson

Two magpies play flight up walk a telephone wire
A blade of blue light
A joyful rainbow
The colours all say the story of life

The stream is ripple of gentle applause; Plump birds sing their fragile hymns, simple joy entwined in the counted, the slow rhythm of breaths,
A cocktail of perfumes weave a clumsy lace; wet leaves and stale breath,
Fresh cut grass and frosty water, roses and garlic, scents lily unwanted guest pouring on my shoulders.

My head buzzes with the fragile waltz of memory;
The gentle warmth of clasped hands last our...
frozen like a milt over the beach, the fading glance of the dead

The field is light velvet
An unbitten apple; the pre-fob slumps like,
A tweed old man; two trees static; slowly rusting in autumn damp
A crunching carpet of leaves
Crumble like cookies, a wet fire
A gaggle of joyous children stampede on sooty tarmac;
Faces as light as butterflies

The sky is smuggled graphite
Fat clouds congregate, trudging like elephants towards Heaton.
Two magpies tight rope walk a telephone wire.
A blade of blue sun- light disperses through horse chestnut leaves.





from his [the Lord's] miracles that he
created pairs from you
to be in peace with
Qur'an 30:21

Creative Writing

with
Amy Mackelden

About the workshop

“Microfiction is about snapshots, capturing moments, revealing just enough of the story to get the reader interested. And these stories fit on postcards or pages, can be as little as 6 words (SMITH Magazine in New York pioneered the six word memoir, and Ernest Hemingway’s “For sale: baby shoes, never worn” is much cited in the discussion of short shorts) and often contain a revelation from the writer.

The workshops encouraged people to use personal objects to trigger memories that were the starting points for short pieces of written history and memoir. Using objects in writing can raise so many questions. Who owns the object? Does it have any spiritual significance? Where is it from geographically? Some participants created poems inspired by their objects, as well as microfictions, others wrote statements, accompanying dialogues, and reacted to the work of others.

Above all, it was important the workshops were accessible, that everyone had the opportunity to tell their story.”

Amy Mackelden

Amy Mackelden

Amy Mackelden is from the Isle of Wight, and now lives in Newcastle upon Tyne. She studied Creative Writing at Cardiff University, and has since completed a PGCE at the University of Sunderland.

Amy’s stories have appeared in anthologies by Leaf Books and Cinnamon Press, and she was recently runner-up in the Leaf Books Micro-fiction Competition 2010 with her story conversation four (or, looking for right angles).

Her stories have also featured in print in Square Magazine and Leaf Writers’ Magazine and online at Pindeldyboz and Spilling Ink Review. A piece she co-wrote with Glasgow-based writer

Laura Tansley is forthcoming in Amsterdam-based publication Versal.



Amy was commissioned by New Writing North and The Sage Gateshead to collaborate with folk musician Dan Walsh on an original piece for The Words and

Music Festival in May 2010. The duo have since received Arts Council funding to develop the work, have recorded a CD and were the support act for Simon Armitage at Durham Book Festival’s launch event in October 2010.

Amy also performed one of her stories at BBC Radio 3’s Free Thinking Festival 2010.

She facilitates creative writing workshops across the North East, with a focus on short forms such as microfiction, and most recently worked on Gateshead’s Empty Shop scheme, Shop Art.

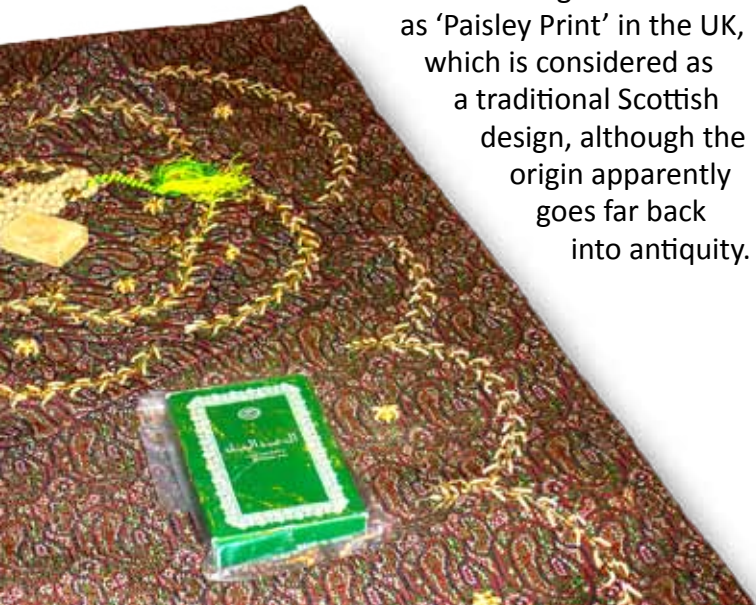


Participants were passionate to talk and write about their legacy, their friends and family often left far away in their homelands represented with different items from their culture

A young woman showed the group a beautiful bejewelled prayer mat. Another lady had a length of white material. Both were wedding gifts.

The design of the materials was a typically classical in their

culture. The design is known as 'Paisley Print' in the UK, which is considered as a traditional Scottish design, although the origin apparently goes far back into antiquity.



Three people brought a copy of the Holy Quran, the central textbook of Islam. They explained later that there are certain conditions about who should read the Quran and how. , They also said that some scholars know the whole book off by heart.

One lady gently expressed how reading the Quran gives her great peace, especially when she feels worried or anxious. She explained how she prays five times a day observing certain hygiene rules which symbolise purification before praying.



Jaa-Namaaz

By Fatemeh Beigi

Traditionally Jaa-Namaz is placed in the centre of Sofreh-ye Aghd to remind the couple of the importance of prayer, both at peaceful blissful times and times of hardship.

This prayer kit includes a small rug 'Sajjaadeh' to be spread on the floor at the time of prayer, a small cube of moulded clay with prayers written on it 'Mohr' and a strand of beads 'Tasbih'. They are usually handmade and designed beautifully using some decoration. For example: this Sajjaadeh was made by my friend's granny for her wedding. I love my Sajjaadeh because it was specially made for me.

The material of Sajjaadeh's is called 'Termeh' and it has a special famous pattern called 'Botehjengheh'.



Iranian Calligraphy

By MY

Iranian Calligraphy : Amongst all the subjects sat on the table, the Calligraphy pen caught my eyes. It brought back memories; of my first Calligraphy writing session at school when I was 8/9 years old. Our teacher gave us our pens back (she had collected them a week before, to cut the nibs and ensure they would provide the correct writing style). We each had two pens, one for larger style writing and one for fine writing. In that session, she taught us individually; how to hold the pen in the correct position and how each character should be placed on/above/under the lines (we used lined paper), and how we should join the characters to make a word. In winter time we used to collect scrap paper to make a fire in the classroom's huge stone fireplace and staring at the reddish, orangey purple, dancing flame was the most enjoyable moment for us all. However, for as long as I can remember, I was fascinated by such artistic handwriting and it became one of my hobbies after I left school.

Life's Pen

By M.M.Tabatabaei

The sound of pen's steps being drawn Going slowly On the slippery road Memory of land and past Memory of friends Memory of relatives	My daughter Write well "knowing the name of God's office" Whispers in my ears, Again I have A new word to say To you Every moment Take a step Place it firm On slippery roads Longer life Look well Be honest And think And don't let life end Flow pen's steps Go towards Eternity Be free Up to mercy Till Eternity
Memory of relatives Reminding of black trace A track and mark An ambiguous voice From far away Whispers Whispers in my ears, Warm hands Gentle and in silence Placed on my hand How familiar Its warmth Perhaps They will stop shaking I leave a black spot	

Hafez

By Fatemeh- Nilofar

I received the most precious gift from my uncle. It was a book called 'Divan Hafez'. It is a collection of poems by an eminent, mystic poet.

He is called Hafez because he learned Quran by heart. It is said that he also knew other Iranian poetry books by heart such as Nezami, Rumi, Attar, Sa'di.

When one has a nagging problem in mind or at heart, the complete or whole poem that appears is a subtle and sometimes powerful explanation or piece of advice that is exactly what was needed.

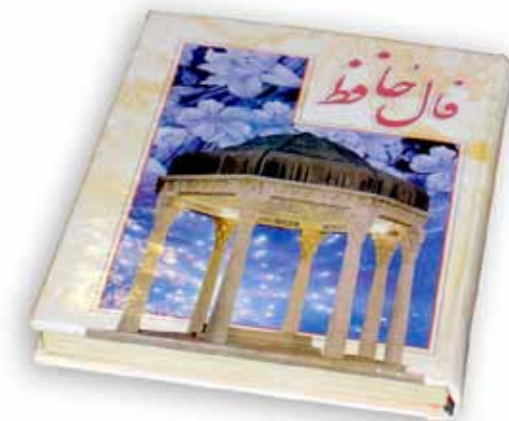
We believe it is a gift that Hafez out of his divine generosity and wisdom has given to all of man kind, for all time. The practice of using Hafez as an oracle and spiritual guide began before he was buried. There was some dispute over whether he should be given a proper funeral or not, some people did not respect him. They opened his book and the

following verse came up:

'Don't be so cruel,
Even though Hafez is so sinful,
He will still go to Heaven'

It is a part of our culture to use 'Divan Hafez' in gathering or when one needs some advice or just a change of mood and enlightenment.

'Divan Hafez' reminds me of the pure love that can exist between the 'created' and the 'creator'. How one person can empty his soul of himself and be filled by God.



Wedding Table

By M.M.Tabatabaei

I hear	You, Angels
There is tumult in sky	Embrace my children
Among Angels	I had been waiting for them
Sweet fragrance spread in the	They were angles and the
holy sky.	lofty paradise
A tumult of shouts and yells	was their abode
could be heard	Hug them warmly
It is happiness and rejoices	Flow the downpour of my
"Humans"	blessing to them
They ascend to empyrean	Smooth their way
To be engaged	Settle their affair
Glorious light	They are lover
Descending from eternity	And do not care, except me
Light is raining down	(said Lord)
Rain of light	They reached me by love
Earth and sky intertwine	Embrace them warmly
"Earth and sky interweave"	Embrace...
Lord said:	

Quran

By Latifa

Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim

I am a Muslim, I pray 5 times a day. I read Quran everyday. I keep my Quran and whenever I get free time I read it. I feel it is God's word. Whenever I have got a problem I take it out and find some solution. I can't read Arabic; I don't understand it so that is why I keep my Bengali Quran. If it is written in Arabic then I can not touch it without wudu. Wudu means before I touch it I have to wash myself. We have to keep our body clean. When I want to touch the Quran in Arabic I have to wash my face, arms and feet. I keep myself clean all of the time.

The Pen & Ink

By Fatemeh- Nilofar

Seeing the traditional pen and ink reminded me how joyous it was when I finally learnt to write the special hand writing known as 'Nastaleekh' with the pen and ink. It took a lot of practice and hard work but the end result was worth it.

I couldn't stop admiring the order and the perfection which was required for this type of hand writing. It also requires an excellent judgement to know exactly how much ink to take, so that it will last.

My Phone

By Pedram

The first day that I got my phone was very exciting, partly because it was my first touch screen phone. I use my phone for several things such as texting, calling, playing games and mostly listening to music.

My Object (Plate)

By Mojgan

When my family and I left Iran to come to the UK, I recieved a gift. It was from my cousin, my aunt's daughter.

It is a Ceramic plate, it's made from Isfahan. It's very famous and painted by pen; it has Islamic patterns with blue Persian colour.

Be an Ocean

By Hengameh

Be an ocean and move on	If you cannot be a river
If you cannot be an ocean	Then be the rain
Be a sea and go on	Rain to the thirsty desert
If you cannot be a sea	Let flowers grow
Then be a wave and carry on	
	If you cannot be rain
If you cannot be a wave	Then be a drop of dew
Be a river with tiny fishes	On a perfect rose.
Let the fishes live in you	Give a smile to a lover.
Let children wash their hands	





Persian Calligraphy

with
Mehrangiz Modarres Tabatabaie

About the workshop

Mehrangiz Modarras Tabatabaei has taught six Persian Calligraphy workshops in Islamic Tawheed Centre. The scope of teaching was broad. The participants who attended were from various age groups and they enjoyed the workshops, learning the basics of Persian Calligraphy and meeting new friends.

Skills learned were:

- The history of Calligraphy.
- The technique of writing Calligraphy.
- How to give Persian writing a more artistic and fluent look.



Mehrangiz Modarras Tabatabaei

Mehrangiz Modarres Tabatabaei was born in Tehran, the capital city of Iran, in 1967. Her main interest is painting. She is familiar with Persian Calligraphy and its contemporary combination form. She also has some experience in “miniature”.



Mehrangiz qualified from Shanghai, China in “Gong bi” and “xie yi” which are two methods of Chinese painting.

Mehrangiz exhibited several banners of her own work at the Shanghai performance hall. She also trained local Chinese juniors to make cyrus cylinders with clay, and familiarised them with ancient cuneiform calligraphy.

In 2009 Mehrangiz was commissioned by the PCS to work with Dr Chun Chao Chiu to produce Persian and Chinese Calligraphy artwork. The artwork was later exhibited at the

Ouseburn Warehouse Workshops & Studios in Newcastle. She also ran a workshop at the opening. The audience was happy to engage with Mehrangiz and have their names written in Persian.

Mehrangiz has maintained a close working relationship with the PCS. Since August 2009 Mehrangiz was heavily involved with the “Islamic Heritage Project”, and apart from her commission to deliver 3 Persian calligraphy workshops she volunteered on many tasks for the project.



وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُم مَّوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

He (The Lord) made between them love and mercy
Qur'an 30:21

Calligraphy Painting

with

Richard-Fouad MacLeod

Contemporary Arabic, Persian & Urdu



About the workshop

Richard was commissioned to continue delivering the calligraphy workshops with the intergenerational Muslims with very diverse backgrounds.

The workshops consisted of a comprehensive course exploring some calligraphy styles from across the Islamic world i.e. Arabic, Persian and Urdu. Through exploring Islamic Heritage, attendees learned that calligraphy was used as the primary form of art for visual creativity and represented unity, beauty and cultural values.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- Using Art Calligraphy as a modern art form and in contemporary design
- Introducing the technique of writing, tools, and calligraphy materials
- Reflect upon the beauty of Arabic calligraphy
- Experiment with extinct Arabic calligraphy.

Dynamic teaching and good interaction made a very lively and effective learning environment. Using vibrant and vivid colours, fantastic pieces of eye-catching work were created.

Participants –mostly teenagers who had never attended such workshop before- worked passionately and were very keen to have more workshops with the artist. It was one of the most successful workshops, which participants wished wouldn't end! Because of the high demand, Richard volunteered to deliver a free extra session. By the end of last session participants had produced more than 50 artworks of good standard. Everybody was happy and proud of their artwork. The artwork produced had a dedicated space at the later exhibitions.



Richard Fouad MacLeod

Richard-Fouad MacLeod is a British-Lebanese artist based in Newcastle upon Tyne.

In 2001 Richard had to flee his country -Lebanon- seeking asylum in the UK. He struggled for a while with the culture shock, the immigration system and the perception of asylum seekers. A struggle which turned into an inspiration embeded in all of Richard's artwork.

In 2008, Richard joined a Short Film Making program at Northumbria University Newcastle and made a documentary. In the film Richard reflects on the spiritual aspects of his journey and the emotional aspects of it, rather than the technicality of the journey. The film was a great success and

this personal account became a reference for migration and integration for universities in Europe. The film was featured in a few cinemas and was critically acclaimed.

Richard is now a full time artist and says "My art is all about people, their feelings, emotions, pain, anger happiness and love. All these feelings to me are part of a universal language. When I capture the pain of a depressed young man or the pain of a child missing her father or the pain of a wife abused by her husband no matter where they from, the audience can relate to that pain and understand it. I want to highlight social issues and raise awareness. I want my artwork to ask questions and provoke answers.



This is my way to help to change the world. Hopefully to the better"

Richard has exhibited his artwork in many exhibitions both alone and in collaboration with other artists across the UK, in USA and Russia and he is hoping to exhibit soon in the Middle East.

His art portfolio is ever expanding and he now has;
Award winning Short Films
Award winning Photography
Calligraphy art (Arabic, Persian and Urdu)
Award winning (Arabic) Poems
Digital Painting
Short Stories
And coming soon on iTunes the first album of Richard's poetry performed by himself.





Short Film Making

with
Richard-Fouad MacLeod

About the workshop

To explore the cultures and identities of diverse groups of Muslims, four workshops in short filmmaking were delivered by Richard. The films produced from the workshops reflected the participants' challenges and experiences as Muslims living in the North East. Four short films were produced by the end of the workshops.

The element of faith in a daily life which is a universal message was one of the themes expressed in the short film "£12".

"Channel B" reading poetry is about expressing integrity through creativity and moral courage.

"Welcome to Newcastle" conveys the idea of the everyday life of a multicultural society, appreciating and respecting living with others.

"The diary of a Geordie girl" is the video diary style short film of Shireen. Shireen was also one of the interviewees in the project and the interview expresses a young Muslim girl's point of view of the dilemma of wearing Hijab in Western society.

Skills learned:

- Using Flip Camera
- Composing a story board
- Composing creative shots

Welcome to Newcastle

Farah Hariss

Farah is a Muslim international student who had just arrived from Lebanon to Newcastle. What does she think of Newcastle?

The diaries of a Geordie Girl

Sheerin Amir

Shireen is a young woman who was born and bred in Newcastle. She enjoys the diversity the city hosts. She is thinking of wearing the Hijab but she is concerned about how this might change things around her.

£12

Khojasti

The story of a single mother struggling to provide to her two little children during festive times.

Channel "B"

Wajid Hussain

Mr. Hussain landed at the Dulles International Airport, Washington DC. Out of the group of thirty, 29 went through channel A and Mr. Hussain was randomly routed to Channel B!

To watch the films please visit www.Youtube.com/FouadTV



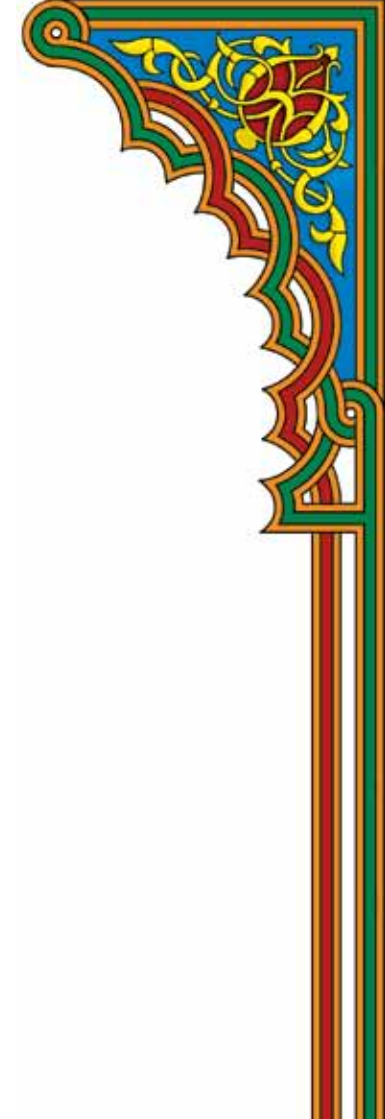
Muslims Oral History Exhibition

A great deal of time was spent training volunteers and doing the groundwork. Creative workshops were held. Group sharing/telling of personal stories were held, all in preparation for the Muslim Oral History Exhibition.

Personal testimonies were recorded, typed and condensed. Text was printed on text panels- professionally designed by Richard MacLeod- all to be wall mounted. Audio recordings, video recordings, short films and photographs were all used to document the Muslims' Oral History.

Traditional items, calligraphy paintings, stories, films and poetry were among the topics explored in preparation for the exhibition. The outcomes were presented at the exhibition for the public. Wonderful Persian carpets, Islamic art paintings and calligraphy adorned the Newcastle library and the Gateshead Council walls. Without exception, all guests expressed enjoyment of the day

Chapter Three *Exhibitions*





Newcastle

upon Tyne

The Exhibition was a festival of video, paintings, illustrations, short stories and artefacts all wrapped with community spirit. It was a celebration of history, light and faith.

The occasion illustrated a warm and vibrant community spirit. All those who were involved were very proud of what they achieved. Many visitors re-iterated that view as well. All visitors were impressed with the display and the activities.

The day was a nice celebration of all the hard work the volunteers and staff had put in to make the project a success.

The day started with a word from the project worker Hengameh then a word from Mehrangiz and Richard, who shared with the audience their experience of the project. Khojaste overcame her shyness and stood in front of the audience and talked about her film £12 before the four films where shown.

The Bewick Hall
Friday October 22nd 2010
10.00am to 5.00pm
The Newcastle City Library

The day continued with the guest speakers marking the official opening of the exhibition. The guest speakers at the event were:

- 1- Chi Onwurah - MP
- 2- Irin Ali (Cllr) - Councillor
- 3- Dr Adil el-Sobky - British/Egyptian interviewee

Calligraphy and Poetry workshops were part of the day's activities. Mehrangiz and Richard each at their own stall engaged with the audience to write the audience names in Arabic/Persian/Urdu Calligraphy. Four of Richard's students were confident enough to stand next to him and take part in this cultural festival. They painted names for the impressed audience. Children, guided by Richard, also wrote their names in Arabic. They were very happy.

Mid-way through the event a dynamic Poetry workshop was held which was led by Paul Summers. This complimented the display-tables, audio-visuals, and photographic displays and the films running on the walls.







Gateshead

Gateshead Hall
Monday November 22nd 2010
10.00am to 4.00pm
Gateshead Civic Centre

Gateshead Council was keen to host the Islamic Art Exhibition and for that they allocated the main hall. This was a chance to allow the public to experience Islam in a new way and a new light.

The Mayor of Gateshead, Councillor Michael Hood vowed to meet as many local people as soon as possible, as soon as possible when he was appointed and engage with them, so he dedicated time to attend the exhibition and was happy and impressed with the art and the artefacts exhibited. He also commended the hard work of the volunteers and all those who were involved in the project.

“It certainly had a great impact on all those who visited the exhibition. The Mayor, Roger Kelly (Chief Executive of Gateshead Council) and Jane Robinson (Assistant Chief Executive of Gateshead Council) were impressed by how well the exhibition was presented, and were greatly moved by the testimonies of those who took part in the project.”

Nitin Shulka
Gateshead Council diversity officer







This project wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for the dedication, support and the passion of all those who engaged with the project, paid or unpaid. This is just to say

Many thanks to all of you

Chapter Four

The Team



Business & Organisations

CSV for providing guidelines for recruiting volunteers

ETEMP for providing venue and facilities for film making workshops

First Step for providing volunteers

Oral History Society for providing excellent training

Ouseburn Trust for providing volunteers and training for volunteers

Richard MacLeod Art & Design for donating all the professional art work and designs for the exhibitions, the project logo, free sessions of Arabic Calligraphy, the long hours of film editing and all the advice and guidance provided during the process of compiling this book

Taweheed Islamic Centre in Bentinck Rd, for providing a venue and a friendly environment for calligraphy workshops

YMCA Sunderland, volunteers

Artists, Teachers & Trainers

Alex Boyd Auditory training

Emmy Mackelden Creative Writing workshop

Mehrangiz Tabatabaei Persian Calligraphy workshops

Paul Summers Poetry workshops

Richard-Fouad MacLeod Arabic, Persian & Urdu Calligraphy Painting and Film Making workshops

Silvie Fisch Oral History interview

Volunteers

Training & Work

The following volunteers were trained and/or worked in different parts of The Islamic Heritage Project, including transcribing, and/or interviews

Aleea Mahmood transcribe

Alice Thomas trained

Amina Marix Evans interviewer, trained

Annie Quranulain Lund-Baloch trained

Dr. Asghar Mohammad Beigi interviewer, trained

Atefeh Beigi interviewer, trained, transcribe

Carol Grayson trained

Frances Clark proof reader

Freda Scott interviewer, trained, proof reader

Glenn White filmmaker

Lewis Greener interviewer, photography, trained, transcribe

Liam Hutchinson trained

Maria Knot trained, transcribe

Maryam Mousadoust contributed with cultural objects and other items for the exhibition

Mehrangiz Modarres Tabatabaei edited audio and text, interviewer, transcribe

Moigan Junbakkhsh trained, transcribe

Nasreen Riana trained

Parsa Enshaei transcribe

Ran Bi trained

Ronnie Passley graphic designer, photography

Sarah Victoria Jones interviewer, transcribe

Seyedeh Fatemeh Moussavi pour Gharbi contributed with cultural objects for the exhibition

Shamshad Shah interviewer, trained

Sogol Ghassemi interviewer, trained, transcribe

Stewart Gray trained

Suzanne MacLeod proof reader

Tom Jesson transcribe

Yumiko Shoji trained

Yunjin Wang interviewer, trained, transcribe



Volunteers

Background & Comments

Sarah Jones

I was born in Newcastle and I moved to Glasgow in 2004. I spent four years studying Spanish language, literature and culture at the University of Glasgow and a further year at the University of Oviedo in Asturias, northern Spain. In my free time I am a musician, my main interest being folk and traditional music from Northumberland and Scotland, and I have played fiddle in a number of bands. Since graduating I have volunteered for different cultural organizations in Newcastle and I am currently working for an arts festival in London.

My two passions are languages and music and I love learning about the cultures of different parts of the world. While I was living in Asturias I developed an interest in the regional language and folk music and I began to interview the local people to find out about the different perceptions of their regional identity. The Islamic Heritage Project has given me the opportunity to be part of another oral history project. I have enjoyed learning about the interviewees' homelands and listening to them talk so openly about their lives.

Mojgan Janbakhsh

I have been involved with the Islamic Heritage project since September 2009. We had an exhibition in the town library in October 2010; it was very interesting for me because we could show the rich Iranian calligraphy, Islamic weddings and New Year ceremonies in an Islamic country like Iran, as well as Persian rugs and enamel. Last but not least I would like to express my special thanks to the organizer of the exhibition, the Pakistan Cultural Society, and most importantly to Hengameh Emami for her unremitting efforts.

Yunjian Wang

I have learned lots of things from this project. First were oral history interviewing skills, which are certainly related to my major at university —cross-cultural communication. I also took advantage of the interview data to complete my dissertation. Secondly, I learned teamwork spirit from Hengameh and other volunteer colleagues. We worked together, and cooperated with each other frequently. Volunteering in this project has meant a lot to me. I learned some things I didn't know before about the Muslim community, and I also learned skills that could be helpful for the future. I practiced communicating with people from different cultures

as a supplement to my academic studies. The most interesting part of the whole project was that we were able to get to know lots of people from various communities, not only those outside this ethnic group who were enthusiastic about this project. It was an amazing experience for me to get involved with, and I really got a sense of achievement from helping out.

Freda Scott

ESOL Tutor
Taking part in this project was an enjoyable and interesting experience.

Glenn White

I enjoyed helping to put DVD footage together to help make this project accessible to a wider audience.

Mehrangiz MT

I have been involved in this project as a volunteer for one and half years. In my opinion, what has been achieved so far is a valuable piece of work that has great potential to be exhibited at other locations, not only in the North East but also across the whole of the United Kingdom.





**Islamic Heritage
Oral History**

2009 - 2010

