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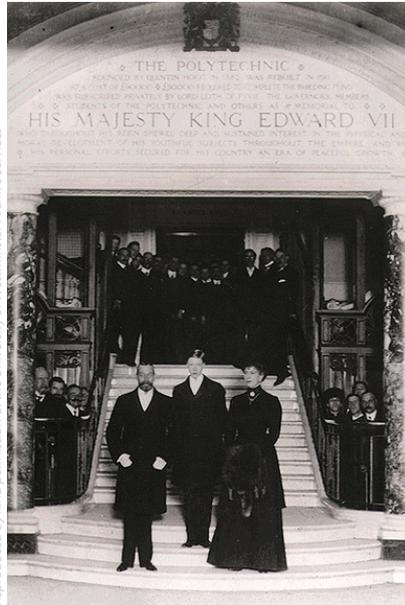
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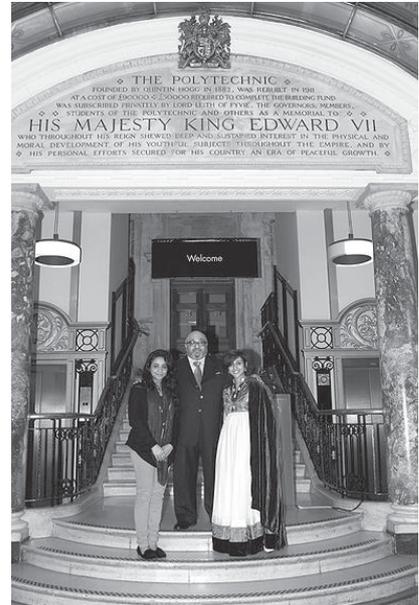
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## MBI Al Jaber Grand Hall Officially Opened in Naming Ceremony



*King George V, Queen Mary and the Prince of Wales at the official opening of the new Polytechnic building on 11 March 1912.*



*His Excellency Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber and his daughters, Mashaal and Bashayer at the opening of the MBI Al Jaber Grand Hall on 12 March 2012.*

***A project to revive the birthplace of British cinema has reached a milestone with the official unveiling of the University of Westminster's MBI Al Jaber Grand Hall following a careful restoration.***

The historic Grade II listed Grand Hall, at the University's Regent Street headquarters in London's West End, has been named after philanthropist and businessman Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber. Its restoration was made possible through a £1 million donation through Sheikh Mohamed's MBI Al Jaber Foundation, a continuation of the charity's long-term relationship with the University.

The MBI Al Jaber Grand Hall is the University's only listed building. The adjoining cinema gained its place in history when it became the setting for the first ever public film show in Britain.

The re-opening of the entrance hall and foyer coincides with the 100th anniversary of the March 1912 completion of the re-construction of the building's existing façade. The Prince of Wales who became Edward VIII, was photographed at the re-opening ceremony.

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## Message from the Chairman

I am delighted to welcome you to a new edition of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation Newsletter, in which we highlight some of our recent activity.

March 12th 2012 saw another landmark event for the Foundation with the official opening of the MBI Al Jaber Grand Hall at Westminster University. Westminster is one of our longest standing partners – we have worked with them on Scholarship Programmes since the 1990s and continue to build our relationship through collaborative projects.

These are some of the aspects of the work of our Foundation that are most important to us – continuity and strength of relationship. You can read more about other programmes that have benefitted from our long term support, like the Seminar for Arabian Studies, in this Review. For other news on our activities, and regular updates from our Alumni, you can visit our website at [www.mbfoundation.com](http://www.mbfoundation.com).

**Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber**  
*Chairman*

# Conferences

## MBI Al Jaber Lecture at The British Museum Seminar for Arabian Studies

*The MBI Al Jaber Foundation once again sponsored the Seminar for Arabian Studies which was held at The British Museum in London from Thursday 28th – Saturday 30th July 2011.*



*Guests mingle at the reception following the MBI Al Jaber Lecture on 28 July 2011*

The Seminar is the only international forum which meets annually for the presentation of the latest academic research in the humanities on the Arabian Peninsula (including archaeology, epigraphy, ethnography, language, history, art etc.) from the earliest times to the present day; or in the case of political and social history, to the end of the Ottoman Empire (1922).

The highlight of the conference was the MBI Al Jaber Lecture on Thursday 28th of July organised by the Seminar as part of The British Museum's public programme. It was the sixth of the Seminar's Annual Special Lectures, which are now entitled the MBI Al Jaber Lectures in honour of the Foundation's sponsorship. The 2011 MBI Al Jaber Lecture 'From the Nabataean capital of Petra to the provincial city of Hegra: new insights on the Nabataeans' presented by Dr Laila Nehmé (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Orient et Méditerranée), focused on the significant intensification of archaeological activity by the environs of Petra.

The Seminar meets for three days - Thursday to Saturday - in the third week of July each year and is attended by over 180 people from all over the Middle East, Europe, and North America, as well as India, Pakistan, Australia and Japan. Up to 50 papers are presented, and these are published annually in the Proceedings of the Seminar.

The fascinating and informative lecture was followed by a buzzing reception hosted by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation. Admission to the Seminar is free and is part of The British Museum's public programme.

The MBI Al Jaber Foundation is very proud of its support for the Seminar for Arabian Studies and looks forward to the upcoming Seminar in 2012, which will be held on the 13th – 15th of July with the MBI Al Jaber Lecture being held on the 14th of July.

For further information, visit:  
[www.arabianseminar.org.uk](http://www.arabianseminar.org.uk)

# Projects Update

## Events in the MBI Al Jaber Building, Corpus Christi Oxford

*The MBI Al Jaber Building at Corpus Christi, Oxford opened to wide acclaim in October of 2009.*



Corpus Christi College, founded in 1517 is one of the most prestigious colleges at Oxford University, and is home to 360

students. The College, in need of a building in which it could host lectures and seminars of international standing, decided in May

2004 to build a new auditorium – the most important building to be constructed on the site in over 300 years. The Foundation's grant of £1,000,000 helped make this possible. Events such as lectures and string orchestra concerts are regularly held in the MBI Al Jaber Building; and recent events include the Sunday Times Oxford Literary Festival 2012. Throughout the week, 36 events were held in the architecturally acclaimed MBI Al Jaber Building, including lectures and discussions.

We hope you will be able to join us at an event there in the future.

## Connecting Cultures: Journey Updates

*The focus of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation's project department is on educational and cultural projects, and we concentrate on forging partnerships rather than simply giving grants. We strive to create an environment in which we can bring people together in the name of greater understanding and awareness of one another's cultures.*



*Participants from the January 2012 journey take a break from dialogue to pose in the desert in Oman*

In December 2011 18 young women came from as far afield as the UK, Oman, Poland, Iraq, Spain, Morocco, Finland, Jordan, Germany, Lebanon, Slovenia, Singapore and Yemen, to become the latest participants in the Connecting Cultures desert debates held in Oman...

Whilst in February 2011, an 18-strong male team of future community leaders – aged between 17 – 24 completed a Connecting Cultures journey in Jebel Akhdar, Oman.

In partnership with the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, this Connecting Cultures group, - including two from Oman, two from UK, and the remainder from a variety of Euro-Arab nations - finished their five day journey through the mountains, on foot, following ancient donkey trails between small mountain villages.

Their journey followed the successful girls' journey held January 18th - January 24th 2011, in the Sharqiya Sands in Oman. This

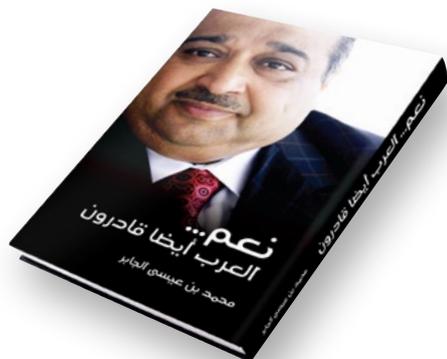
team of 18 girls aged between 17-24 years old, included two from Oman, two from UK, and the remainder from a variety of Euro Arab nations, including Germany, Finland, Jordan, Netherlands, Palestine and Spain. The girls also completed a five day journey through the desert, on foot, with camels to support. Daily updates on the journey were posted on the Connecting Cultures website by the participants. On completion of the journey, the girls addressed the opening ceremony of the UNESCO conference with Irina Bukova at the Al Bustan Palace.

Each journey has the aim of promoting intercultural dialogue between young opinion formers from the Euro-Arab region. Supported by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, there have now been seven Connecting Cultures journeys in Oman.

Please visit their new website, [www.connectingcultures.co.uk](http://www.connectingcultures.co.uk) which young people can update live from the desert via satellite phone.

*The MBI Al Jaber Foundation is a long standing partner of the Connecting Cultures initiative.*

## News from our Chairman



### *“Yes, the Arabs can too”*

In 2009 the first book by Foundation chairman Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber was published. At present available only in Arabic, “Yes, the Arabs can too” (a nod to Obama’s ‘Yes we can’) encourages Arabs to draw on the cultural, social and economic achievements in their historic past and look forwards toward a genuine Arab renaissance made possible through such things as good governance, reform, sustainable development, and a free economy. For those who cannot read Arabic, the book is now being translated into English and will be available later this year.

## International Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO on Euro-Arab Dialogue

### *Ten Years of Euro-Arab Dialogue: Contribution to a New Humanism*



Chairman of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber has pledged support as the main sponsor for the International Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO on Euro-Arab Dialogue in May 2012 in Vienna, Austria. The conference aims to strengthen the Euro-Arab Dialogue in fostering tolerance and mutual respect and related projects include the comparative study of history textbooks, the production of the educational toolkit on Identity, the encouragement of twinning among ASP Schools, UNESCO Clubs and Chairs, and the engagement of university students and teachers in the Euro-Arab Dialogue project. On behalf of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, MBI Al Jaber will be hosting a Gala Dinner to honour UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, Heads of State, Ministers and diplomats attending the Conference at the Grand Wien Hotel in Vienna on the 31st of May. Representatives from 48 European and 20 Arab States are expected to attend.

The Euro-Arab Dialogue project was launched in 2001 in Geneva as a framework for interregional cooperation among National Commissions to promote the values of “learning to live together”.

#### *From page one*

The MBI Al Jaber Grand Hall and adjoining spaces highlight the University’s activities and the building’s historical importance. The space provides an intellectual exhibition space for students, industry partners and the public alike and is a landmark venue at the heart of London life.

Its renovation is part of a wider £5 million campaign to restore the cinema as a working cinema for the first time since 1980 and to nurture the best of filmmaking talent in keeping with the site’s history.

The on-going arts project will include a Middle Eastern Film Series showcasing the best of the region’s talent to audiences in the UK as part of MBI Al Jaber Foundation’s work to forge links between the Middle East and the rest of the world.

## Trustee Spotlight

***The MBI Al Jaber Foundation is a UK Registered charity and is governed by a Board of Trustees, each one chosen for their interest in education and development in the Middle East.***

Since we concentrate on forging partnerships rather than simply giving grants, we view our Chairman, Trustees and Director as resources in themselves, in that they all possess specialist areas of knowledge that are used to assess applications for projects and to reach out to a network of like minded institutions.

Here, we highlight the work of our Trustee Sir Tim Lankester:



“I was born in Cairo where my father was a teacher at the English Mission College, and I have always had a strong interest in the Arab world and in countries further to the east. I am currently a member of the joint advisory board of the Georgetown School of Foreign

Studies in Doha. I am an adviser to the consulting firm, Oxford Analytica, on South East Asia, and I have written and lectured on the political economy of Indonesia. I am currently completing a book on British aid to Malaysia which will be published towards the end of 2012.

Early in my career I spent three fascinating years working with World Bank in India. I am now a member of the UK-India Roundtable. I am a trustee of the Karachi Education Initiative, which is developing a new business school in Karachi with an emphasis on ethical leadership. I am also a member of the management committee of the Aga Khan UK Development Network which funds projects in Pakistan, Afghanistan and other countries with Ismaeli populations.”

Please visit our website for more on Sir Tim’s interests...