



Dear Woolf Friends,

‘Coming here has changed how I see the world. It has taught me to listen to different voices, to make friends with people from entirely different cultures and beliefs. It’s been awesome.’

The summer school student who told me this might have been the first to express these feelings but she was far from the last. My questions to the students who gamely volunteered to be interviewed as part of our 25th anniversary project were the same; what brought you here, what has struck you the most, that kind of thing. I also asked what they thought they would take back to their home country with them. The responses were powerful testimonies to the impact of the summer school, and to the underlying mission of the Institute. ‘I come from a pretty homogeneous place,’ said one student from Salt Lake City’s Brigham Young University. ‘It’s great but I hadn’t had much opportunity to get to know people from different cultures and religions. Here,’ she went on, ‘I’ve made friends with people from places I’d only ever seen on the news. It has changed what I want to do. Now I want to work on something that brings about wider understanding and tolerance of different faiths and cultures.’

There were many personal anecdotes too, about people who had influenced a particular student, impressions of Cambridge (‘it’s so OLD and so beautiful’), reasons for coming, wide-eyed admiration of St John’s College where they stayed, and friendships made that bridged cultures and preconceived expectations. We interviewed for two days and although the questions were the same the answers never paled. The impact of hearing the same

Upcoming Events

30 September -
1 October

Symposium:
Searching for the
Sacred in South Asia



11 October

Reading Group:
Qur'an and Bible



13 - 15 October

Musicians and
Artists in Exile:
Preserving, Creating
or Eulogizing Syrian
Culture?



19 October
@18:00

The Islamic
Movement in Israel
by Tilde Rosmer



15 - 16
November

Woolf Institute
Conference



16 November

Woolf Institute
Research Afternoon



desire expressed in a variety of ways but always coming to the same point; to change a culture of intolerance and prejudice in whatever society they lived, never diminished.

If after a quarter of a century the mission of the Institute ever needed a reality check, this surely is it. For me, a relative newcomer to the Woolf Institute (I started in April this year), the project was an opportunity to meet some summer school students and alumni and discuss their experiences. On a more personal note, it was a fascinating and often very moving sojourn among the voices of different faiths, cultures and nationalities. I found it stimulating, extremely interesting and most of all, optimistic. Thank you to all the students and alumni who took part in this anniversary project.

Best wishes,

Liz Winter
Development Consultant, Woolf Institute

Liz is the development consultant to the Woolf Institute. She is working on the 25th anniversary plans among other projects. She was Fellow and development director at Corpus Christi College for 20 years and before that, a financial journalist in London.



REWATCH: Bees in the Medieval Mediterranean: Economic, environmental and cultural perspectives

Bees and bee products were of tremendous cultural significance in the later Middle Ages. Wax was necessary for many aspects of Christian religious

devotion, while honey held a particular importance in medieval Islam. In this session we will examine how these cultural preferences drove a lucrative and far-reaching trade in beeswax, combining the products of domestic apiculture and large-scale imports to support increasingly costly and spectacular forms of Christian devotion, demonstrating interconnections of economy, environment and culture in the pre-modern world.

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SUMMER SPECIAL: QANON AND SEX

Naked Reflections Podcast x The Woolf Institute

EXTRACTS FROM TWO OF OUR FAVOURITE
EPISODES, COMBINED INTO A SUMMER
SPECIAL COVERING QANON AND SEX...



PODCAST SUMMER SPECIAL: QANON AND SEX

Extracts from two of our favourite episodes, combined into a Summer Special covering QAnon and Sex...

We've taken extracts from two of our favourite episodes, and combined them into a Summer Special episode covering QAnon and Sex. So settle down and listen in. QAnon, the idea that a pizza joint in Washington is a centre for child abuse, has become close to being a mainstream proposition for conspiracy obsessed radio jocks in the USA. Ruth Lawlor and Alfred Moore explain. And when it comes to sex, the relatively new phenomenon of gender dysphoria presents another problem for religious traditionalists. Sonia Leach and Shanon Shah survey the territory...

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COMING SOON

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BLASPHEMY ON THE BIG SCREEN

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