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Jeremy Shearmur

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The Woking Mosque Muslims: British Islam in the Early Twentieth Century

JEREMY SHEARMUR

Abstract

This paper discusses the views and social character of the group of British Muslims, centred round the Woking Mosque in the period immediately following the First World War. It argues that this group had four distinctive characteristics. First, it formed its own cultural community, rather than joining a pre-existing ethnic community. Second, it espoused an orthodox but modernistic Islam, influenced by—while not sharing the distinctive doctrines of—the Lahore Ahmadiyya. Third, it faced a leadership problem. Other than Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (who played a key role in the group's early days, and who was a leading member of the Lahore Ahmadiyya, but had been given a specific brief not to spread their distinctive doctrines), the group was in many ways thrown upon its own resources. Here, Marmaduke Pickthall—subsequently the author of The Meaning of the Glorious Quran—played a major role. But while he had good colloquial and subsequently classical Arabic, his knowledge of Islam was largely self-taught. A final problem here was posed by the fact that the group attracted some converts—including Lord Headley—who exercised considerable influence because of their social standing, but whose knowledge of Islam was limited.

Introduction

In the period around and just after the First World War, a small number of British people, often of upper middle class or minor aristocratic backgrounds, converted to Islam. They did so not as the result of marriage to Muslims or to join a pre-existing Muslim community. Their activities were centred round a mosque at Woking and are chronicled in *The Islamic Review*¹—which has been aptly described as part parish magazine, part intellectual journal—and in several of their publications. My concern, in the present study, is to throw some light on them and their activities, and to pose and answer the question: to what were they converted? Not to leave the reader in suspense, my answer to this last question is: to an orthodox Islam, but an Islam influenced by the modernistic² tendencies (but not the distinctive views) of the Lahore Ahmadiyya.³ In the light of Eric Germain's detailed documentation of the Ahmadi role in European missions in this period, to make such a point might seem superfluous;⁴ but it is striking that, for example, K. Humayun Ansari, in his interesting comparative study of Muslims in Woking, while recognising the distinctive modernism of the Muslims with whom I am dealing, does not seem to have recognised the Lahore Ahmadiyya influence.⁵

In the case of the person who was perhaps the most intellectually distinguished member of this group, Marmaduke Pickthall, things did not rest there. Pickthall—who went on to translate the Qur'an into English—described himself as an orthodox Sunni Muslim,

subscribing to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence. He further, in an address, “Islam and Modernism”, published in 1918 wrote:

The only modernism which Islam requires is an awakening to the new conditions which prevail throughout the world ... education, social and political reform is needed, but not the slightest alternation in belief or form of worship ... we need a fair example of Islam in practice in a modern setting.⁶

His own later reflections on this theme, in *The Cultural Side of Islam*,⁷ are striking—and bear the mark of the influence of the “modernist Islamist” Said Halim Pasha.⁸ However, as I will discuss below, it seems to me a shame that Pickthall’s later ideas address a situation in which it is presumed that Muslims are present in large numbers and have freedom to order their own affairs, rather than the situation of a minority of Muslims in a Western country.

There had been earlier English Muslim activity in Britain. Henry William Quilliam, a prominent and affluent Liverpool solicitor, had converted to Islam in the 1880s as a result of a (medically advised) stay in Morocco. He was active in the setting up of a mosque and spreading of his faith.⁹ He attained international recognition and was appointed Sheikh al-Islam of the British Isles by the Caliph. He put considerable personal resources into the promotion of Islam and also undertook a great deal of legal and welfare activity on behalf of foreign Muslims in England. However, he left England in 1908 as a result of controversy relating to his falsification of evidence in a divorce case. The Liverpool-based activities declined rapidly. But some of those who had been associated with him subsequently joined up with the group based on the Woking Mosque. Quilliam himself reappeared in England as “Professor Marcel Leon” and also had some involvement with this group.

The group, while it initially flourished, did not prosper for all that long: some of the leading figures moved overseas, others died. The Woking Mosque continued, but it did not flourish. Immigrants from Pakistan moved to Britain in growing numbers, and a number of them moved to the Woking area. This led to tensions, as both branches of the Ahmadiyya are typically viewed as heretical by Sunni Muslims in Pakistan.¹⁰ At any rate, local Muslims claimed that the then Imam of the Woking Mosque had links with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and there was a tussle for control of the mosque, which ended up in the hands of local Muslims, predominantly from the Subcontinent.¹¹ A group of Lahore Ahmadiyya, with links to the people who were originally involved with the mosque still meets in North London, and maintains a useful Internet archive relating to the early days of the Woking Mosque.¹²

But how was it that there was a mosque in Woking, in the first place—Woking being a small town, some 23 miles South West of Central London?

A Woking Mosque?

Our story here goes back to an Orientalist, Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840–1899).¹³ He came from a Hungarian Jewish background, studied in Cambridge and Freiberg, was a Professor at Kings College, London and subsequently headed the Government College, Lahore. After his retirement, he founded a centre for the study of oriental languages, culture and history. He acquired the site of a disused “college” (or a retirement home for actors) in Woking, and with funding from Shah Jahan, Begum of Bhopal, had the mosque constructed; it opened in 1889. It would appear as if Lietner

had planned there to be several different places of worship, of which the Mosque was the only one for which he received funding.

It is not clear who was making use of the Mosque while Leitner was alive, although I have seen one reference to its being used by what were presumably Indian students from his institute.¹⁴ Geaves, in his book on Quilliam, has also documented that there was disagreement between Quilliam and Leitner over its use—Quilliam wishing for it to be used as a basis for the propagation of Islam, with Leitner favouring its use simply by visitors to England.¹⁵ But over the period 1899–1912 it fell into disuse.¹⁶ It was about to be sold to a property developer in 1913, when an Indian lawyer, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, who had come to London to fight a case at the Privy Council, and also to engage in da'wah, argued that the building should be treated as would be a consecrated Church—and should be used for religious purposes.¹⁷ He was successful, and the building was secured for what became the Woking Muslim Mission, run by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

Kamal-ud-Din gave talks about Islam, and also—with funds from India—was able to publish a journal, which became *The Islamic Review*. Initially, Kamal-ud-Din wrote the entire content of the journal. But gradually he received contributions from English converts to Islam—in some cases, people who had been associated with Quilliam. It is from this that we can gain an impression of who some of the people associated with the Mosque were, and of their beliefs.

Woking Mosque Muslims

As distinct from the group that formed round Quilliam, the people associated with the Woking Mosque—and with related activities in London, where there was a prayer room¹⁸—seem to have been drawn from an upper middle-class group, and also included members of the minor aristocracy. There are a number of statements about why Western people converted to Islam in the pages of *The Islamic Review*. (They are perhaps most easily investigated by way of the publication *Islam—Our Choice*.¹⁹) The statements are not all that illuminating, and there seem to be some differences between the views of later converts, and the group with whom I am concerned. There, three things seem to have played a significant role. First, there were the experiences of individuals in the Middle East—this was significant for Quilliam, Pickthall, and also Lady Evelyn Cobbold (who surprised the Pope by informing him, in the course of a personal audience, that she was a Muslim).²⁰ In other cases, an impression seems to have been made on people serving in the British Armed Forces, in various reaches of the Empire, by the piety and character of individual Muslims who served with them. Third, there were people who were led to Islam as a result of their own thoughts and studies—their conversion often having been crystallised by their coming into contact with Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din or Pickthall.

Among those associated with the Mosque was Rowland Allanson-Winn (Lord Headley). He was a Cambridge-educated civil engineer. As a young man, he wrote books on self-defence. He inherited an Irish peerage and also converted to Islam in 1913. He married the Australian author Barbara Baynton in 1921, became bankrupt in 1922, and was offered the throne of Albania in 1925 (together with a large sum of money). When he did not accept the offer, his wife returned to Australia. Headley seems to have been brought to his religious views by his own thoughts. On meeting Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, he came to the conclusion that they were essentially the same as Islam. He seems to have become an earnest if eccentric Muslim. He founded the

British Muslim Society, twice made the Hajj and wrote various books about Islam. At the same time, he had a taste for writing his own poetry and prayers.²¹ From a report on a meeting in London, he seems to have kept his boots on when saying prayers.

Headley had been brought up as a Protestant but had been put off Christianity, because of the conflicts between Protestants and Catholics that he had come across in Ireland. He was attracted to Islam because of what he perceived to be its non-sectarian character, and the absence of “bigotry and intolerance”. (Islam he saw as united, other than in respect of some “minor disputes as to the descendants of Mahomet”). He was also attracted to its simplicity and freedom from “weird dogmas”. He also stressed freedom from any kind of idolatry, its theme of racial harmony and its continuity with earlier revelations.

While Headley did not sit in the House of Lords, it was clearly important for this small group that a person with such a title had become a Muslim. It is striking that while he and Evelyn Cobbold embraced Muslim notions of equality, in the British society of the day they were far from socially equal. This was even clearer when they travelled abroad: the fact that they were Muslim had created a lot of interest overseas. Evelyn Cobbold’s account of her hajj brings out the extent to which, while she in some ways participated on a par with other Muslims, she was also accorded particularly favoured treatment when in Saudi Arabia. All this led to oddities, in the sense that Headley had considerable prominence, although he was not particularly well informed about Islam. The Mosque was also attended by, and its activities were participated in by, foreign students. But socially, distinguished British converts seem to have played a key role. The Mosque had a programme of social activities on Sunday afternoons, and the British converts also met for dinners in London hotels. Other members of the group of social distinction included Sir Archibald Hamilton and Deputy Surgeon-General Charles William Buchanan-Hamilton, while another member, who had also been associated with Quilliam, was Khalid Sheldrake, the son of a successful pickle manufacturer. He shifted to identification with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and was briefly the King of Sinkiang in 1934.²² He also published several articles about Islam in Esperanto, in *The Islamic Review*. All this may, to say the least, seem rather eccentric. But it is worth bearing in mind that the group in question were, as I mentioned earlier, British converts who were not joining a pre-existing community with roots in an established Muslim culture. While they were sincere in their Islam, culturally they were British and thus faced the challenge of developing a cultural form of Islam that made sense in the setting in which they were operating.²³

For considerable periods, they seem to have had to depend heavily on their own resources, when Kamal-ud-Din was unwell or away. Pickthall, who had fluent colloquial Arabic and who had also taught himself classical Arabic, sometimes had to take a leadership role. We have a number of his sermons which were published in *The Islamic Review* and subsequently reprinted as a small book.²⁴

What of Pickthall himself?²⁵ He came from a middle-class background—his father and grandfather had been clergymen—and he was briefly at Harrow with Winston Churchill. As a result of various contingencies relating to his health, he was able to spend a couple of years in Syria and Palestine in his late teens, travelling around with local people. He there picked up his fluent colloquial Arabic and wished to convert to Islam but was dissuaded from doing so by the Shaykh of the Great Mosque in Damascus, “until he had consulted his mother and was older”.²⁶ On returning to England, he made his living as a novelist and writer—some of his most successful works drawing on his experience in the Middle East. He was to return there—to Egypt—in 1907, and he subsequently spent time in Istanbul. There, he got to know some of the leading figures in the Young Turk

movement and sympathised with their ideas about reform of the Ottoman Empire. He became increasingly critical of British attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire, and to what he thought was an unduly sympathetic attitude towards Christian nationalists wishing to break away from it. These concerns he explored in journalism and in books, and his opposition to British foreign policy attracted the attention of the security services.²⁷

Pickthall eventually converted to Islam. He played a significant role in the small London- and Woking-based Muslim community. But—as, unlike Quilliam, he did not have private means or a lucrative profession behind him—he found things financially tight. He worked for a time for an Indian-funded Islamic Information Bureau in London (which does not seem to have been an altogether happy arrangement²⁸). While in London he became a supporter of the Khilafat movement—an organisation based on the Indian subcontinent, which rallied Muslims in support of the Ottoman Caliphate. He was delighted to receive an offer to edit the *Bombay Chronicle*—which presumably offered him both the chance of reasonably paid work and a way of escaping from his employment in London. The rest of his active career was based in India.

One other regular contributor to *The Islamic Review*, John (Yehya-en-Nasr) Parkinson, came from an Irish background, but had been brought up in Scotland by his grandparents, whom he supported by working in a factory. He had strong scientific interests and was an enthusiastic reader of writers such as Thomas Huxley and Ernst Haeckel. He undertook a comparative study of religion, was impressed by Islam, and converted, attending when he could the mosque in Liverpool, with which he was in touch from 1901.²⁹ He had previously written in newspapers, etc. on scientific subjects, but thereafter wrote extensively on Muslim themes, including poetry. He moved to Rangoon in 1908 but contributed to *The Islamic Review*. His writings, however, had a strong “rationalistic” spirit to them.

To What Were the British Muslims Converted?

All this points to one of the central concerns of this piece (albeit only one which I can address in an impressionistic manner in the space available to me here). While there is no question about these people’s concern for Islam, from what was highlighted in *The Islamic Review* it seems to me that one can pick out the following characteristics:

- (1) It was rationalistic in spirit
- (2) While it stressed continuities with Christianity, it was prepared also to offer criticisms
- (3) It stressed practice not complex theology, was critical of sectarian strife and was critical of the idea that people needed intermediaries between themselves and God

The following points were highlighted in an early edition (Vol. 2, No. 1) of *The Islamic Review* (alongside much other substantive material):

Islam forbids drinking and gambling
 Recognises no priesthood, no doctrine of original sin, atonement or redemption
 Each soul must work out its own salvation
 Islam holds out a hope of salvation to all
 The soul that worships the Almighty but not the Son; the Light but not the Lamp
 Strives after the true and acts aright
 Shall have everlasting life.

All of this was combined by these people with observance (although to what degree is not easy to discover: clearly in this they must have faced considerable practical difficulties). However, Sherif, in his recent book on Pickthall and Philby, quotes Pickthall pressing on the small band of English Muslims the importance of the observance of Ramadan. What this amounted to, it seems to me, was an interpretation of Islam that one could well see as appealing to people who were attracted to practice over theory, and who thus favoured a religion which came over as clear and practical, and who were attracted to the elements of egalitarianism, social and racial, that they understood to be part of Islam. Muslim festivals were celebrated—but sometimes in London hotels. There were also social activities which were drawn from the kinds of things that would be common among English people of their class, some of which took place in the grounds of the Mosque, on Sunday afternoons. At the same time, they were sympathetic to wider aspects of Muslim culture, and a number of the British converts took on Muslim names.

The package, this far, could clearly appeal to middle class, religiously inclined people of a practical, “muscular Christianity” temper, who, however, had an aversion to complex theology, credulous supernaturalism and Christian sectarian divisions. In addition, there was a certain continuity with Protestant themes—Quilliam, for example, having been active in the temperance movement, from his early youth. On social issues, stress was placed on racial equality and liberal interpretations of Islamic social teachings. For example, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din lectured on Islam and the rights of women, while his contributions to *The Islamic Review* might be described as “modernist” in their character (in the sense of offering interpretations of Muslim themes which would be acceptable to modern, liberal sensibilities).

The Woking Mosque and the Lahore Ahmadiyya

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din was not just any Muslim Indian lawyer. He was, in fact, one of the inner circle in the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. His move to England was in line with their emphasis on the need to spread Islam. But he was given the specific brief of not introducing anything of a sectarian character, to which he stuck.

The result, it seems to me, was that what the people with whom I was dealing had propagated to them, and converted to, an orthodox—if minimalist and distinctively modernist—version of Islam. They followed the view, stressed by the Ahmadiyya, of accepting as Muslim someone who made the confession of faith, taking the view that their orthodoxy was an issue for God. Pickthall, for example, was critical of Sunni/Shi’ite conflict; while Headley, as we have seen, downplayed internal divisions within Islam as of minor significance. These were among the themes stressed strongly by the Lahore Ahmadiyya. However, they were not influenced by doctrines, which were specific to the Lahore Ahmadiyya (and Pickthall was, as I have mentioned, to describe himself as an orthodox Sunni Muslim, who favoured Hanafi jurisprudence).

At the same time, the approach of the Lahore Ahmadiyya is itself liberal and modernist in its interpretation of Islam. And this, seems to me, left its mark on these British Muslims as it was Islam seen in such terms which was a key influence on them. It is striking that Quilliam, in Liverpool, also took a modernist view of Islam, although Geaves reports him drawing on the Egyptian writer Muhammad Abduh and the Indian Sayyid Ahmad Khan.³⁰ This doctrinal modernism was complemented by the fact that, in social terms, these British Muslims were concerned to develop their own arrangements, rather than joining an existing non-British Muslim social community (which at the time did not exist in any substantive manner in the UK³¹).

Pickthall and the Missed Opportunity

As I have mentioned earlier, Pickthall moved from Britain to India. He was there as the editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, participated in the Khalifat movement, and, with some other Muslim figures, was an ally of Gandhi in the movement for Indian independence. This led to a disagreement with the owners of the *Chronicle*, and Pickthall resigned—taking up employment with the Nizam of Hyderabad. He became Head Master of a school and was also engaged in the education of people who wished to join the Civil Service. In addition, he founded and edited the journal, *Islamic Culture* and—continuing what had been a part-time preoccupation of his from when he was in England—worked on a translation of the Qur'an, which he was able to complete when the Nizam gave him paid leave. (It is also striking that Pickthall had a hand in what he had clearly hoped to be a significant dynastic marriage between the daughter of the former Ottoman Caliph and Azam Jah, the eldest son of the Nizam.³²)

Pickthall, while he had not had a formal training in Muslim scholarship, was an intelligent and scholarly man and gave considerable thought to issues relating to Islam. His *Islamic Culture*—based on lectures delivered in Madras—was interesting in its endorsement of a modernist Islamism. He was critical of what he saw as various cultural accretions—e.g. purdah—and of a view of Islam which treated small issues of ritual compliance as on a par with more serious matters. At the same time, he argued strongly for a view of Islam, in line with the ideas of Said Halim, which combined taking shariah law seriously (e.g. in respect of the abolition of interest), with a stress on education. Pickthall's ideas were sketchy—which is not surprising, given how busy he was—and they were also developed with an eye to the situation in India. It seems to me a real shame that he was never in a situation in which he could have given detailed thought to what an orthodox but modernist Sunni Islam could amount to, in a minority situation in Britain. For there is clearly a sense in which an explication of such ideas would be relevant not just to converts but also to the second and subsequent generation descendants of Muslim immigrants, as they grew up in a British setting. A powerful picture of a conservative yet modernist Islam has been developed in the Gülen movement in Turkey.³³ But the background of this is Sufi rather than the kind of Islamism which Pickthall might have offered, and from which, I believe, we could still benefit.

Conclusion

In this piece, I have provided a brief account—drawing on a wide range of sources—of the group of British Muslim converts who gathered round the Woking Mosque during and in the years immediately following the First World War. I have argued that the character of the group was distinctive. In part, this was because they were left to their own devices, culturally, rather than joining a pre-established Muslim community. In part, it was because while they were orthodox Muslims, their reading of Islam was modernistic, influenced by this aspect of the views of the Lahore Ahmadiyya, although they did not subscribe to their distinctive and problematic ideas. The character of the group was also affected by two distinctive, but inter-related, issues. On the one hand, they in many ways had to depend upon their own intellectual resources. Here, while Pickthall was a scholarly man with a good knowledge of Arabic and of the Qur'an, he was largely self-taught. On the other, a certain oddity was given to the group, by virtue of the social prominence of some of its members—not least Lord Headley, whose membership of the group, and writings, attracted attention, but whose substantive views and behav-

iour were somewhat idiosyncratic. While the group dissipated, and Pickthall's concerns became centred upon the Subcontinent and on his *Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, I suggest that it was a shame that he did not have the opportunity to write on *The Cultural Side of Islam* in a British context, as it would have been interesting to see what he would have made of the task of interpreting a liberal Islamism within such a setting.

NOTES

1. Most of the issues of this are available on the Internet (<http://www.wokingmuslim.org/work/islamic-review/index.htm>). I have consulted issues not so available, in the SOAS Library in London. It was initially entitled *Muslim India and Islamic Review*.
2. By "modernistic", I here mean attempts to reform the practice of Islam and interpret its doctrines, in ways that would fit the lives of people living within, or influenced by, conditions in Western societies from the end of the nineteenth century up to the present day. This contrasts with the kind of modernisation which took place under the impact of colonial-style education, in which a shift to more formal instruction in a classroom was combined with conservatism in the interpretation of religious doctrine (see, on this John R. Bowen, *A New Anthropology of Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, Chapter 2).
3. See Eric Germain, "The First Muslim Missions on a European Scale: Ahmadi-Lahori Networks in the Inter-War Period", in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, eds. Nathalie Clayner and Eric Germain, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, pp. 89–128. In the light of Germain's first-rate documentation of the Lahore Ahmadiyya background of the mission based at Woking, it is worth stressing that: (a) as he notes (p. 103) until the 1930s, the Lahore Ahmadiyya were considered "by many as a modernist, atypical but orthodox Sunni group"; (b) Kamal-ud-Din had explicitly been given the brief of not promulgating anything that could be considered to be of a sectarian character. Cf. <http://www.wokingmuslim.org/history/kh-beg/1912.htm>; and for his own view of "sects" in Islam, <http://aaail.org/text/biog/auto/kkintrvw.shtml>. See also, for a full discussion of Ahmadi religious thought (and of Kamal-ud-Din's role in the Ahmadi movement), Yohanan Freidmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.
4. Eric Germain, "The First Muslim Missions on a European Scale", *op. cit.*
5. K. Humayun Ansari, "The Woking Mosque: A Case Study of Muslim Engagement with British Society Since 1889", *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2002, pp. 1–24. (He simply refers to a disavowal that Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din took Ahmad to be a prophet.)
6. I am quoting from the version available in *Writings of Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall*, ed. Muhammad Haneef Shahid, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 2003, p. 200.
7. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Cultural Side of Islam*, New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan [1927] 1990.
8. Pickthall refers to him in *The Cultural Side of Islam*, Chapter 8; and his *Les Institutions politiques dans la société musulmane* was translated by Pickthall as "The Reform of Islamic Society", and published in the journal that Pickthall was editing, *Islamic Culture*, in Hyderabad January 1927, pp. 111–135 (it has been reprinted more recently in *Islamic Studies* 2008, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 379–404). See also Sayid Tanvir Wasti, "Said Halim Pasha—Philosopher Prince", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2008, pp. 85–104, and Ahmet Seyhun, *Said Halim Pasha*, Istanbul: Isis, 2003.
9. See, on this G. Breckerlegge, "Followers of 'Mohammed, Kalee and Dada Nanuk': the Presence of Islam and South Asian Religions in Victorian Britain", in *Religion in Victorian Britain: Volume V Culture and Empire*, ed. John Wolffe, Manchester: Manchester University Press and The Open University Press, 1997, pp. 222–267, and Ron Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain*, Markfield: Kube, 2010.
10. See also Germain, "The First Muslim Missions on a European Scale", *op. cit.*, pp. 103ff for the development of hostility towards the Ahmadiyya and the success of their outreach in Europe.
11. See, for a history of the Woking Mosque, Muslim P. Salamat, *A Miracle at Woking*, Chichester: Phillimore, 2008.
12. See <http://www.wokingmuslim.org/>
13. On whom, see http://www.wokingmuslim.org/pers/dr_leitner.htm; the entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and also Salamat's discussion in *A Miracle at Woking*.
14. See also the brief account of the history of Islam in England, by Mushir Hosein Kidwai, available at: <http://www.wokingmuslim.org/history/kidwai/ise-1.htm>. Breckerlegge refers to a report in the *Illustrated London News*, 9 November 1889, pp. 590 f., according to which Muslim members of Queen Victoria's household attended the mosque for the celebration of festivals.

15. See text to notes 19 and 20 in Chapter 8 of Ron Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain*, *op. cit.*
16. It was used occasionally, including for a visit by the Baha'i Abdul Baha in January 1913: see Eric Germain, "The First Muslim Missions on a European Scale", p. 94.
17. See, for a slightly different but not necessarily incompatible story, Salamat's *A Miracle at Woking*, *op. cit.*
18. Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain*, *op. cit.*, refers to another group in London, the Anjuman-i Islamia, of South African Muslims of Indian ethnicity, who met in the area of Regents Park. They had an association with Quilliam, but I do not know if they had links with the Woking-based group.
19. This volume, compiled by Dr S. A. Khulusi, was published by the Woking Mosque and reprinted in May 1963; a pdf version is available at <http://aaail.org/text/books/kk/islamourchoicemuslimconvertstories/islamourchoicemuslimconvertstories.shtml>. There are other editions, but those available from other sources have typically had references to the Lahore Ahmadiyya removed from them; cf. <http://www.muslim.org/light/97-2.htm>
20. Quilliam does not seem to have offered any systematic account of his conversion, and the fullest account seems to have been given when he wrote in the persona of De Leon, in *The Islamic Review*, January 1915, pp. 4–7 (see Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain*, Chapter 8, text to note 34). Pickthall wished to become a Muslim during the course of his travels as a young man in the Middle East; he subsequently wished to convert while he was in Turkey, and eventually did so in 1917 (see Muhammad Haneef Shahid's "Introduction" to *Writings of Pickthall*, p. x). In the case of Evelyn Cobbold, it is not clear just when she became a Muslim—see her *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, London: Arabian Publishing, 2008.
21. British converts to Islam seem to have had a marked proclivity for writing poetry; see, for a recent collection, Brent D. Singleton (ed.) *The Convert's Passion*, Rockville, MD: Borgo Press, 2009. The material in the anthology was taken from those associated with Quilliam.
22. See, for an informative but heavily sarcastic treatment, with reproductions of contemporary newspaper accounts, <http://china.otspecial.org/archives/2008/02/index.html>. It is interesting, however, that Sheldrake subsequently broke with the Woking Mosque—cf. Germain, "The First Muslim Missions on a European Scale", pp. 106–107.
23. It is striking that Quilliam's group also developed their own outreach activities to fit the expectations of a British community. See also, for a brief account of British Muslim organisations, http://aobm.org.uk/main/?page_id=30
24. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *Friday Sermons*, The Mosque, Woking: Basheer Muslim Library, n.d. Available at: <http://aaail.org/text/books/others/muhammadmarmadukepickthall/fridaysermons/fridaysermons.shtml>
25. Useful studies include: Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, London: Hutchinson, 1938; Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, London: Quartet, 1986 and M. A. Sherif, *Brave Hearts: Pickthall and Philby—Two English Muslims in a Changing World*, Selangor: Islamic Book Trust, 2011. (It is interesting to note that Fremantle, who became a distinguished Catholic woman of letters, was as a young woman briefly converted to Islam, under the influence of Pickthall. See her contribution, "All this, and Heaven Too", to John Anthony O'Brien (ed.) *Roads to Rome*, New York: Macmillan, 1954, pp. 166–184.)
26. See Sherif, *Brave Hearts*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
27. For a brief account of this, see the chapter on Pickthall in Jonathan Schnerer's brilliant *The Balfour Declaration*, New York: Random House, 2010.
28. See, on this, the discussion in *Brave Hearts*, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–30.
29. See his "The Liverpool Muslim Movement", *Islamic Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4, May 1914, pp. 166–168; see p. 166.
30. See Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 1, text following note 21.
31. There has been some controversy about the extent to which there was the practice of Islam among Muslim settlers in port districts in England; but it would seem as if there was nothing of an organised character. There was also the South African Muslim group in London with whom Quilliam was in contact.
32. See, on this, John Zubrzycki, *The Last Nizam*, London: Pan Macmillan, 2006.
33. On which see, for example, Helen Rose Ebaugh, *The Gülen Movement*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2010; Muhammed Çetin, *The Gülen Movement*, New York: Blue Dome, 2010 and John L. Esposito and Ihsan Yilmaz (eds.), *Islam and Peacebuilding*, New York: Blue Dome, 2010.