

- **Dr Andy Gosler, Research Lecturer in Ornithology and Conservation, University of Oxford; co-convener, OxPeace**



Andy Gosler explained that he is Co-convener of OxPeace, seeing this as linked with his interests in the environment and ornithology: “one cannot live for 50 years concerned about populations of wild birds and everything else disappearing, without becoming passionate about conservation and getting involved then in the human world”. He is also a Jewish Christian convert with a perspective on the Middle East, seeing fellow human beings as human beings first, with some other label - racial or religious - as second.

In reaction to the film: A hundred years on, we are in desperate need of healing and reconciliation for this situation. For many, forgiveness requires an apology. But most people engaged in the current conflict don't realise that where the apology has to come from, initially is a third party. Not from the Palestinians; nor from the Jews. If we are going to break this cycle of tit for tat conflicts, a third party is needed, namely, the British Government's involvement in all of this.

So his reflection is of the value of an apology from the British Government to both sides as start to healing.

He also offered another insight through the story of Professor Yossi Leshem, an Israeli ornithologist who has worked tirelessly for peace for decades in Israel. One of the things that Professor Leshem does, is to take busloads of Jewish Israeli, Arab Israeli and Palestinian children bird-watching. They are sent off in threes, one from each community, with bird book, binoculars and telescope for each child, out into the marshes to see what birds they can see. They come back the best of friends.

Professor Leshem wishes that the same process could be rolled-out on a national level. His work has attracted major funding - more to do with peace-building than bird migration.