

# Jack Straw was right says Muslim cleric

A CLERIC campaigning for a new mosque in Camden has said religion should not be used to justify Muslim women wearing the veil.

Leader of the Commons Jack Straw prompted a nationwide debate by revealing that he asks women to remove the veil at his constituency surgeries.

Other politicians, including Tony Blair and Communities and Local Government Minister Phil

Woolas, have since claimed the veil has a divisive effect on society.

Many Muslims viewed the debate as an attack on their religion but Joynal Uddin believes some of their arguments are misinformed.

He said: "The veil is not mentioned in the Qur'an, what is mentioned is the hijab [which covers the head but not the face] and to dress modestly and wear loose garments. If someone

wants to wear it they should wear it but they should not say Islam has made them use it - it's actually a tribal thing."

There were just under 23,000 Muslims in Camden at the time of the 2001 census.

Mr Uddin has been working with Lib Dem Councillor Faruque Ansari to persuade Camden Council to support a mosque for the borough in the King's Cross development.

Mr Uddin said: "I think all imams and moderate Muslims should educate this community on religious issues. There are many people taking religious issues into their own hands by reading books. You have to go to a specific institute to learn. It's like saying I can learn to be a doctor by reading a book."

"In Arab countries many women wear the veil to keep sand out of their face and that is

why you also see many men with their faces covered."

He said: "As a minister Jack Straw is saying the right thing but at the wrong time of year [during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan]. If I am a councillor or MP obviously I need to see your face before I open discussions. I can see why he made his comments. His heart was in the right place but people have understood his comments differently."



Cleric Joynal Uddin.

Katie Davies

WORLD famous actress Elizabeth Taylor has pledged her personal support for the Hampstead Garden Suburb centenary celebrations next year.

Dame Elizabeth has written a personal note to residents about her childhood when she lived in Wildwood Road in the Suburb and said she would be happy to be a patron for next year's celebrations.

She recalled her time in Turners Wood - a private nature reserve shared by the homes on her road and Ingram Avenue.

She said: "The happiest days of my youth were when my brother and I would run through the woods and feel quite safe. I wonder whether the Suburb is still like that now. I do hope so. It was heaven for this child and her brother."

It is unsure whether she will actually jet in to celebrate the anniversary and visit her former home on one of the area's most exclusive roads, but a letter from her executive assistant said the actress would be happy to "loan her name" to the event.

Dame Elizabeth was just one of many celebrities invited to be patron.

Jonathan Ross, who lives with his family in the Suburb, has pledged to record a message for the re-release of an old film on the area.

And others who have signed up to help on the day include scientist and broadcaster Professor Heinz Woolf, who used to live in the Suburb, and violinist Erich Gruenberg, who still does.

Will Lewis, the new editor of the Daily Telegraph, and David McCallum, who played Illya Kuryakin, The Man from U.N.C.L.E and is now in channel 5's N.C.I.S. (Naval Criminal Investigative Service) have also pledged their services.

David Lewis, chairman of the HGS residents' association, said: "We are delighted to have such a long list of well-known individuals who have agreed to be patrons of the forthcoming centenary celebrations of Hampstead Garden Suburb in 2007."

"The residents' association is organising an ambitious programme of events for the 100th

# Legend Liz to lead Suburb centenary



Hollywood superstar writes a personal note pledging her support



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## Lightning strippers turn car into shell

A BELSIZE Park man was stunned after finding his car stripped bare by thieves yesterday morning.

James Ward, of Eton Road, returned from a run at around 8am to find the leather seats had been removed from his VW Golf, parked in neighbouring Provost Road.

Mr Ward said: "It's been turned into this complete shell. I am a bit stunned. It hasn't sunk in yet, it's so shocking that they've gone through all my personal things."

"Quite a lot of cars have been broken into around here but not like this."

"They must have been doing their work for about an hour to take all that stuff - they're quite big chunky leather seats and they've removed all the side panels as well."



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