



CONSERVATION, MUSIC & ART



■ HISTORIC BATH-HOUSES

Building on the experience gained during 2005/6 in the rehabilitation of a communal bath-house or *hammam* in the Asheqan wa Arefan neighbourhood (see AKTC Newsletter #11), surveys were undertaken of other historic facilities in the old cities of Kabul and Herat.

In early 2008, agreement was reached with the owner of the *Shanansazi hammam* in the old city of Kabul to reconstruct and re-commission the derelict property. Excavations revealed two brick domed spaces surrounded by smaller rooms for private bathing and services. Once cleared of waste and rubble, the system of under-floor ducts for heating the *hammam* was found to be largely intact. Along with ancillary spaces, the main brick domes (above) have now been reconstructed. The complex, which will be operated as a community enterprise whose revenue is invested in further upgrading works, will re-open to the public by early spring 2009.



At the core of the *Qand o Nabat hammam* in the densely-populated Momandha quarter in the old city of Herat was a traditional brick-domed space, around which efforts had in the past been made - unsuccessfully - to extend and modernize the facility. In addition to upgrading the historic part of the *hammam* complex, the focus of investments has been on completion of part-finished spaces (above) and improvements in the system for heating water. The aim is to ensure that the expanded facility is able to meet the anticipated demand from families in the area, few of whom have adequate spaces for bathing at home. 145 metres of drain have been repaired, linking the *hammam* to the underground drainage system in this quarter.

The restoration of the Shansazi and Qand o Nabat *hammams* is co-funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

■ CONFERENCE ON BOWED INSTRUMENTS

Between 21st and 28th September, members of the the Aga Khan Music Initiative for Central Asia (AKMICA) attended an international conference and workshop on bowed instruments organised by Académie Musicale de Villecroze, France. The event, entitled *Fiddles of Central and Inner Asia, Siberia, China and the Middle East* brought together professional musicians and ethnomusicologists from some 24 countries. Supported by the AKMICA Coordinator Mirwaiss Siddiqi, *Ustad Abdul Qader* (below) demonstrated to the participants the traditional Afghan *sarenda* as part of a master-class, and gave a well-attended recital. The event provided an opportunity for musicians and scholars to interact and learn more about the diverse range of bowed musical instruments that are played across the region.



■ LIVING TRADITIONS, BAGHE BABUR

On 10th October 2008, the opening took place in the Queen's Palace in Baghe Babur of an exhibition that brings together work by artists from Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Organised by the Turquoise Mountain Foundation, the exhibition is the latest in a series of cultural events to take place in the restored garden. Since its opening, the exhibition has seen more than 2,000 visitors, many of whom were students from local schools.



