

Faculty of Divinity
AGM, 13 November, 2014
Chair's Annual Report
Professor Janet Soskice

This has been a robust year for the Faculty of Divinity and I have inherited, from my predecessor, Judy Lieu, an exciting portfolio. My thanks go out to her, especially for extending her three-year stint as Chair to four to accommodate my REF commitments.

As a prelude that the largely good news that follows, I must mention at the outset a terrible loss. In July the Faculty was rocked by the death in a traffic accident of Dr. John Hughes, Dean of Jesus and an active Faculty teacher, at graduate and undergraduate level, of students in theology, philosophy of religion and ethics. Dr. Hughes was widely regarded as one of the leading Anglican theologians of his generation and his death was felt widely across the Anglican church, the Diocese, and the community of Deans and Chaplains in the University, as well as by numberless students at Westcott House, Jesus College and in our own Faculty. A number of initiatives are in train for a lasting memorial to John.

On the personnel front the Faculty has seen the arrival last year of two new University Teaching Officers, Dr. Ankur Barua, Lecturer in Hinduism from October 2013, and Dr. Andrew Davison, who joined us in April, 2014 as the new Starbridge Lecturer in Theology and the Natural Sciences. Both have scientific backgrounds before their academic religious turn, Dr. Barua as a prize physicist from Delhi, and Dr. Davison taking an Oxford D.Phil. in biochemistry before his Cambridge doctorate in theology. Between them they have many other interests, and come with valuable teaching experience in Delhi (Dr. Barua) at St. Stephen's House, Oxford and Westcott, House, Cambridge in the case of Dr. Davison. This Michaelmas term we have two appointments in new areas: Mr. Neale in Buddhism and Dr. David Elliot in Ethics. Both hold three year Research Associateships. We are delighted to have them join.

Garth Fowden gave a well-attended and very well-received inaugural lecture as the first Sultan Qaboos Professor of Abrahamic Faiths in December, 2013 on the theme of 'Abraham or Aristotle', soon to be published by the Cambridge University Press. In Lent term Professor Richard B. Hays, George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament and Dean of the Divinity School, Duke University, gave the Hulsean Lectures on the subject of "Reading Backwards: Israel's Scripture through the Eyes of the Evangelists", and Professor Stephen Mulhall (New College, Oxford) gave the Stanton Lectures on *The Great Riddle: Wittgenstein and Nonsense, Theology and Philosophy*.

There have been a number of departures, all sad for us but with many colleagues going on to exciting new projects. Professor Duffy retired in September 2014 and has been made an Etheldreda Canon of Ely Cathedral. Dr. Chloe Reddaway, assistant to Professor Fowden, left to take up a post at the National Gallery and Dr. Frances Clemson (assistant to Professor Ford), to take up a lectureship in Theology at Durham. Dr. Turner,

Dr. Wiseman, Mrs Liz Thompson, and Dr. Lockhart have left after wonderful service to the Psychology and Religion Research Group. Dr. Bevin left the Library in November to work for the Jane Austen Library in Sussex. Ms Holden left the Faculty office and has been succeeded by Mrs. Sophia Syddall.

In the Federation, Mr. John Proctor left Westminster College to become the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church and Mrs Small was appointed Diocesan Secretary in the Diocese of Llandaff. At the end of Michaelmas Term, Dr. Seach will leave us to take up the post of Warden at Wollaston Theological College in Perth. All these people have contributed greatly to our collective life and our debt to them is substantial.

A number of internal transformations have been effected. Dr. Dell was promoted to a Readership. David Goode was appointed Pro-Proctor for 2014-15 and Dr. Jeremy Morris, from Dean of Kings, is now Master of Trinity Hall. Dr. Weiss has been awarded an early career fellowship from CRASSH and Catherine Pickstock, a Leverhulme Research Fellowship, both for 2014-5. [Dr Jane McLarty](#) and [David Goode](#) have been awarded a grant of £17,200 from the University's Teaching & Learning Innovation Fund to develop a pre-term online multimedia introduction to New Testament Greek for students (The Arachnion Project).

Professor Coakley was awarded a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship, a 3 year award, and also secured a grant from the Templeton Foundation which brings us three new post-docs in science and religion: Dr. Nataliya Deng, Dr. Peter Woodford and Dr. Daniel de Haan, all of whom are 'embedded' with other departments of the University as well as our own. We have been able to appoint Dr. Ryan Mullins as a Research Associate for one year to replace Dr. Pickstock, and Dr Jacob Sherman has returned for a fixed term lectureship of 3 years to cover for Professor Coakley. Gilles Waller has succeeded Frances Clemson as Professor Ford's Research Assistant.

Other marks of esteem include a CUSU teaching award for Dr. Cabrita, an honorary DD from St. Andrews for Professor Coakley and election to a Fellowship in the British Academy for Professor Lieu. Professor Soskice was on the national REF panel for Theology and Religious Studies. In the Federation, Westfield House obtained letters patent and the Henry Martyn Centre became the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide.

In research, the Faculty continues to be vigorous (too vigorous to detail here), as many of the comments above suggest. Those who helped with the Faculty's REF submission, and especially Dr. Pickstock, are greatly to be thanked for that terrific labour.

The Divinity Library remains a well-used resource, with figures for those working in it on sample days once again considerably higher. Mr Matthew Patmore began work as the new Senior Library Assistant in January 2014 and had already made a considerable contribution to the Library's work.

Negotiations for the affiliation of Arts & Humanities to the University Library were ongoing through 2013-14 with our Librarian, Dr Dunstan, very involved in them on behalf of the School as well as the Faculty. Agreement was reached and four Arts & Humanities libraries affiliated on 1 August 2014. The other four, including Divinity, are scheduled to follow suit on 1 August 2015.

CIP has enjoyed an active year beginning in October 2013 with a dinner for 200 guests from many religions and spheres of society at the Mansion House hosted by the Lord Mayor of the City of London. This launched the vision for Coexist House - a London centre for public education on the world's faiths. The Cambridge Coexist Leadership Programme for senior UK Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders completed its second year and there is now also an alumni programme in place. Miss Nadiya Takolia joined the CIP team in March 2014 as Scriptural Reasoning Coordinator and has been active in coordinating various events, including one at the Greenbelt Festival attended by over 500 people. In partnership with the Omani Government CIP hosted a conference on 'Today's Perspectives on Ibadi History and the Historical Sources'. The annual International Summer School for emerging Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders took place successfully at Madingley Hall, with participants from Austria, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Kenya, USA, Nigeria, Singapore, Indonesia, Romania and Oman. On the public education side, CIP continued to present a well-attended series of lectures and events at Cheltenham Literature Festival. On behalf of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office the Cambridge Coexist Partnership has been delivering a series of lunch-time workshops and seminars on subjects such as, "Religion and the Law," and "Keeping God in the mix - Making Sense of Israel Palestine from a Faith Perspective," to a range of audiences including banks, businesses, law firms and diplomats. There is also a partnership with Goldsmiths to create a Religion and Media Centre in order to provide a high quality resource for journalists and media professionals.

Undergraduate numbers are still below what we would wish, with a fall in applicants last year mirrored by many other Arts subjects. This year numbers of applicants are slightly up. However, the quality of applicants is very high indeed, and higher than that of our major competitors. The website is being updated and our outreach officer, Laura Jeffrey, continues to do excellent work.

Graduate recruitment is strong and we continue to be highly selective. There were 159 undergraduates last year, 3 Diploma students, 101 Ph.D students and 19 M.Phils. The Faculty is taking active measures to recruit undergraduates and raise money for supporting graduate students. Newly up on the website is the recently secured [Cambridge-Langham Award](#) which will support an outstanding doctoral student from the Majority World (Two-Thirds World). This is the result of the initiative of the Dixie Professor, David Maxwell and Dr. Gathercole. New requests for benefactions will involve elements of student support.

The Graduate community has been particularly active with reading groups, day conferences and the extremely welcome provision of morning coffee in the Foyer on weekdays of term (and sometimes out of term) for all comers. Dr. James Gardom is an

anchor of this happy provision. Seminars and events which are substantially run by Divinity grads, though with some college and Faculty support, include the Merleau-Ponty reading group (which gave rise to a very successful interdisciplinary conference on the philosopher with speakers including Rowan Williams), the Aquinas reading group (supported by Andrew Davison and John Hughes), the F.D. Maurice Society (Trinity Hall), the Coleridge Society (Jesus), the Whichcote Society (Emmanuel), the Children's Literature and Theology Reading Group, and the Vertical Realities reading group which also hosted an interdisciplinary event in Robinson with an art installation. *Noesis*, the faculty's 'Graduate Society for the Study of Philosophical Theology and Systematics', ran seminars on Friendship, on John Hughes' book *The End of Work* as a memorial meeting, and hosted a poetry reading in conjunction with the production of the first issue of its journal, also called *Noesis*, at the Faculty garden party in Easter term.

This paints a picture of a growing and exciting Faculty that it is an honour to serve now in my capacity as Chair of the Faculty Board. We are very much the beneficiaries of a stable and competent support team in the form of Karen Webb, Katy Williams, Don Stebbings, Gill Burrows, Dave Goode and Sophia Syddall and, of course, our unflappable Administrator, Dr. Peter Harland, to all of whom my special thanks are due.