

Faculty of Divinity
AGM, 10 November, 2016
Chair's Annual Report
Professor Janet Soskice

The Faculty continues to be a vibrant and interesting place of work and study for students, faculty and visitors alike. We were ranked top department of TRS in all three of the 'league' tables this year: The Times' Good University Guide, the Guardian University Guide, and the Complete University Guide. Even more gratifying, we received a satisfaction rate of 97% from undergraduates in the NUS undergraduate survey, and 100% from the graduates. Cambridge scored higher than most universities, and our Faculty scored higher than most other faculties in Cambridge.

We have much reason to rejoice in four well-deserved promotions in the last Senior Academic Promotion round. Richard Rex was made Professor of Reformation History, and Readerships were awarded to Dr. Carleton-Paget, Dr. Aitken and Dr. McDonald. This is an exceptional outcome, and not paralleled in other Faculties in the School.

In the spring the Faculty appointed a new lecturer in Late Antiquity/Early Church, Dr. Sophie Lunn-Rockcliffe, who came to us from Kings' College, London where she was a Senior Lecturer in the Classics Department. She is no stranger to Cambridge, having done a doctorate here in Late Antiquity, and held a Research Fellowship and College Lectureship at Peterhouse before moving to Kings. Her current academic interest is, excitingly, on demons. Dr. Lunn-Rockcliffe has just had her first baby and we are delighted to welcome her to a new life, in many respects, as a member of our Faculty.

There were several departures this year. Miriam Lorie, who has done ground-breaking work for CIP and Coexist House (including masterminding the feasibility study for the latter) has left her post as External Relations Officer to further her own studies in Jerusalem. Dr. Naures Atto finished the tenure of her post-doc and has secured a new position in FAMES. Dr. Jane Horgan, who did Tripos in

our Faculty before a doctorate in the Institute of Criminology, did sterling work as a job share with Miriam Lorie before moving to a full-time post.

New arrivals include Dr. Elizabeth Powell, who started this term as temporary Teaching Associate in Christian Theology, and Ms Fatimah Mohammed-Ashrif (again a graduate of our Tripos who then took a Diploma in law) who is newly appointed as the Project Leader at Coexist House, and Dr. Simone Kotva who took up a Research Fellowship at Emmanuel College.

Several of these appointments, and others as well, are the result of success by UTOs in securing grants, appointments or research appointments. Dr. Hedley was awarded a major AHRC grant for a project on the Cambridge Platonists, to be run jointly with the University of Bristol. Two post-doctoral appointments have recently been made to this team: Dr Hengstermann and Dr. Hawkins. Dr Graumann is seconded to a ERC project in Bamberg on the Councils of the Church, and Drs. Jenkins and Davison were both selected by a prestigious project, co-funded by NASA and the Templeton Foundation on the 'Societal Implications of Astrobiology' (life on other planets), at the Centre for Theological Inquiry in Princeton. Dr. David Elliott, a post-doc in Ethics, was appointed to a full-time post at Catholic University of America, and will take up his position in January, 2017. Dr. Macdonald and Dr. Mein have secured an AHRC grant to study the use of the Bible in World War I and have already hosted several successful meetings

The Divinity Library remains a well-used resource; however, borrowing statistics and figures for readers working in the Library, on sample days, are again lower in 2015-2016 than in previous years. Dr. Clemens Gresser began work as the new Divinity Librarian in October 2015, Mrs. Jane Thorpe and Mrs. Jillian Wilkinson retired during the last academic year. Ms. Amanda Hawkes has started working the 20 hours in term, since May 2016.

This was the first year of the Divinity Library as an affiliated library of the University Library. Overall, it is "business as usual", but the Library is very grateful for the strong support of the Faculty: paying invigilators (5-6pm in term time), supporting financially a trial of opening during lunch time (Easter and Summer Vacations), the Faculty taking on the running costs of the multi-

functional device in the Library (with the hope to make a profit), and the provision of furniture in the Lightfoot Room (to house volumes of the Lightfoot Collection).

The growth of the number of post-docs and their integration in the Research and Teaching of the Faculty has added immensely to our offerings, particularly on the M.Phil. side. We are moving forward with a diverse M.Phil. portfolio, as discussed in my last report, offering a new stream in 'Anglican Studies' and new modules on 'Anthropology of Islam in Contemporary Europe'. 'Theology and Literature' and 'Theology and the Natural Sciences: Materiality and Embodiment'. We believe there is room for growth and interdisciplinarity in our M.Phil. provision and next year hope to run a module jointly with MML. Professor Lord Williams delivered the Hulsean Lectures to packed audiences and Dr. Marilyn Robinson has agreed to do the next series in 2018.

Student numbers are up this year but, regrettably, applications for next year are down. This is affecting all TRS faculties in the country but it is clear applicants are attracted to joint degrees. The School of Arts and Humanities is working to move this possibility forward, with the first joint degrees offered for application this year (MML and History) receiving a surge of applications. Laura Jeffrey continues to do excellent work on Outreach, and she will be assisted by Dr. Elizabeth Powell who will also liaise with the School's new 'Communications Officer'.

M.Phil. numbers are up with 27 in the current cohort, well spread across all the subject areas.

On the fund-raising and new post side, all the hurdles have been passed for our promised post in Chinese Buddhism and we await only the transfer of funds, which should take place in the next six months. The promise of a large benefaction in Christian Ethics is still on the cards but further away. However, it does appear that we will soon be able to advertise a post in Rabbinic Judaism. This is crucial to our strategic development, and that of the School, and will not only assist Dr. Weiss in building up Jewish Studies in the Faculty, but be crucial in our work with FAMES, Classics and History. We are currently advertising for a Templeton- funded post-doc in science and religion.

Morning coffee, facilitated by Dr. Gardom and a string of students, continues to be a much-loved institution and a good chance to catch up with people and meet new students. The building is in good repair, with alterations to the vexing front doors, a successful new reception window to the Faculty Office, and a de-bugged back lawn.

The team at CIP has excelled itself in coming up with interesting initiatives in the year including: working with the British Museum on presentations at the 'Faith After the Pharaohs' exhibition, and a follow up forum with the Curators and Faculty academics in Cambridge; partnering an inter-disciplinary conference on 'Reconsidering Religious Radicalism', a special lecture on the Syrian refugee crisis, and supporting a conference of migration and mobility in Islam. The Director, Dr. Barua has spoken at the World Congress of Faiths on recent Hindu developments and religious pluralism. We continue to seek new income streams for CIP and are hopeful of branching out in new directions.

This is just a fraction of the Faculty's activity, a snapshot at the beginning of my final year as Chair. Professor McFarland has agreed to be my successor and I trust he will find it as rewarding as I have done. My thanks go out, as always, to the Facilities Management Team, the staff in the Library, Karen Webb, Katy Williams, Sophia Sydall Gill Burrows and especially Dr Peter Harland who jointly make life possible for me, as do all of you.