



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Divinity

NEW COLLEGE

M A G A Z I N E 2 0 2 5



NEW COLLEGE NEWS

Stories from around the school

P4

HOME FOR GOOD

Alumna Tamsyn Radmall

P8

ALUMNI UPDATES

Your news

P14

EDITOR'S NOTE



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School of Divinity

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Welcome to this year's *New College* magazine—your
annual window into the intellectually and culturally vibrant
community that flourishes here on the Mound.

In this edition, you will find a feature article on Prof. Arkotong
Longkumer's Decolonising the Museum project. His work
is also reflected in our cover image—the indecipherable
notebooks of Gaidinliu, the Naga religious leader, held in
the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. We are also pleased
to include feature pieces on our School's growing Latin
American community and on our alumna Tamsyn Radmall
who leads the charity Home For Good in Scotland. We are
also delighted to highlight the ongoing success of our annual
Books and Belief festival, now going strong in its fifth year.
(Turn to p. 7 to see Belle and Sebastian's Stuart Murdoch,
as well as author Michel Faber, from last year's festival.)

As ever, it's our privilege to celebrate the successes of our
alumni community. We are always pleased to hear from
former students about developments in their own lives.

Dr James Eglinton
Editor
James.Eglinton@ed.ac.uk



C O N T E N T S

New College News	4	Latin Americans at New College	12
60 Second Interview: Selina Stone	6	Alumni Updates	14
Books and Belief	7	New Staff	18
Home for Good: Tamsyn Radmall	8	Reading Matters	19
Decolonising the Museum	10	Brightest and Best	20

3 



NEW COLLEGE NEWS



Global Top Ten Ranking

In the QS World University Rankings 2025, New College was ranked 8th in the world for Theology, Divinity, and Religious Studies. Head of School Prof. Jeremy Carrette comments: "We strive to provide students with an outstanding education as well as to produce world-leading research. We're delighted to see this recognised in the QS ranking, which places us alongside faculties like Harvard, Chicago, Oxford and Cambridge as the best in the world."



New Role for Dr Rahemtulla

Senior Lecturer in Islamic Studies Dr Shadaab Rahemtulla has taken up the role of Chair of the University's Staff BAME Network.

RSE Grant Successes

Prof. Helen Bond and Dr Linden Bicket have been awarded research grants by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In 'Crafting Lives of Jesus: Ancient and Modern Retellings,' Prof. Bond will work with Prof. Heike Omerzu (University of Copenhagen) and Prof. Catrin Williams (University of Wales) to examine constructions of the life of Jesus in early, medieval, and modern settings. Dr Bicket's project, 'Catholic Women Writers in Scotland and Beyond,' involves collaboration with academics from Cambridge, Warwick, and Maynooth, and will culminate in a symposium and exhibition at the National Library of Scotland.

New College Videos

What's it like to study at New College as an undergraduate or postgraduate student? Follow the QR codes adjacent for new videos highlighting students from across our degree programmes.





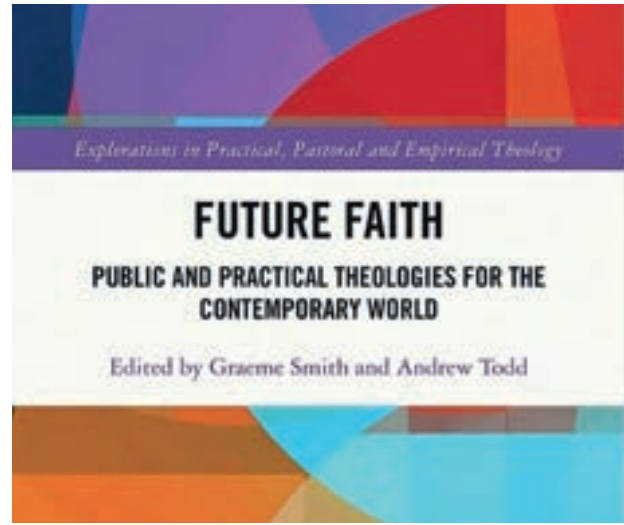
Islamic Colloquia Edinburgh

This summer, Dr Shoab Ahmed Malik, Lecturer in Science and Theology, will launch the Islamic Colloquia Edinburgh—a series of annual events dedicated to fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and research on Islamic theology, philosophy, and the relationship between Islam and science.



CTPI Conference

In January 2025, the Centre for Theology and Public Issues hosted a two-day conference, 'Whose Christianity Anyway? Theological Contestations in the Public and Political'. Featuring public lectures from Prof. Jan-Werner Müller (Princeton University, pictured above) and Dr Marietta van der Tol (Cambridge), the conference explored Christian nationalism, law, constitutional intolerance, and politics.



Festschrifts

Two distinguished members of the New College community have been honoured with Festschrifts—books produced by colleagues in recognition of sustained outstanding academic achievements. Professor Emeritus Stewart J. Brown received *Social Christianity in Scotland and Beyond, 1800-2000* (Edinburgh University Press), edited by New College alumni Dr Laura Mair and Dr Andrew Kloes. Another alumnus, Prof. Stephen Pattison (PhD 1982, DLitt 2001), received *Future Faith: Public and Practical Theologies for the Contemporary World* (Routledge).



Cornel West

The School was delighted to host Prof. Cornel West (Union Theological Seminary, New York), one of America's leading public intellectuals, during his Gifford Lectures: 'A Jazz-soaked Philosophy for our Catastrophic Times: From Socrates to Coltrane.'

60 SECONDS

INTERVIEW



*Dr Selina Stone is Lecturer in Theology and Ethics. She is the author of **The Spirit and The Body: Towards a Womanist Pentecostal Social Justice Ethic** (Brill, 2023) and **Tarry Awhile: Wisdom from Black Spirituality for People of Faith** (SPCK, 2023).*

Where did you grow up and how did it shape you?

Handsworth, in Birmingham. I loved it. It gave me an appreciation of people from different cultures and religions.

What kind of undergraduate were you?

Quite nerdy. I sat towards the back of the lecture hall. I went to the library a lot.

What's the biggest misconception about your field?

That if you have faith, it clouds your ability to think critically about theology.

Why did you move to the University of Edinburgh?

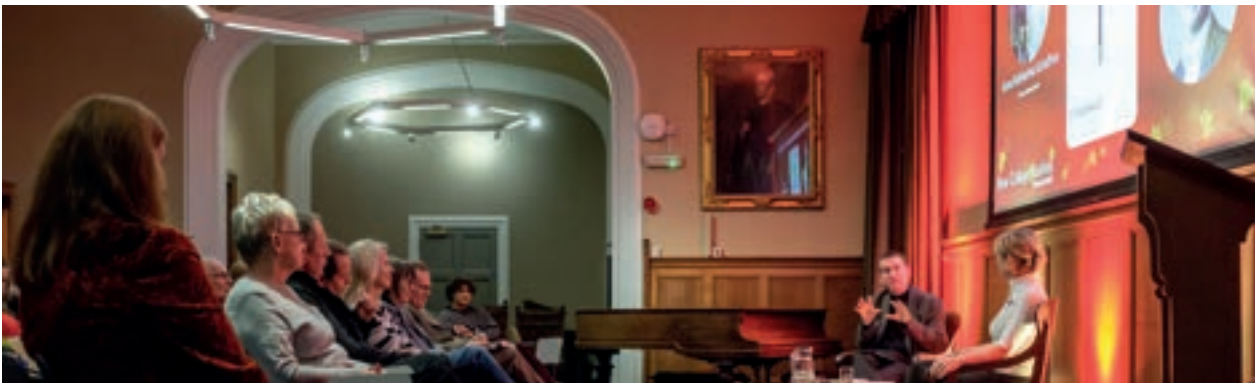
Everyone in the field knows it's an excellent department. I wanted to be in a community of theologians to help my own development, and to teach thoughtful students.

What do you read outside of your academic work?

Murder mysteries and spy novels. In another life, I would have been a spy.

Who is someone who inspired you to become an academic?

My dad. He taught me to bring my brain to church.



BOOKS AND BELIEF

The 2024 New College Festival of Books and Belief brought together acclaimed writers, musicians, historians, and thinkers in our fourth annual celebration of creative, spiritual and intellectual curiosity.

Highlights included Stuart Murdoch (Belle and Sebastian) discussing his new novel *Nobody's Empire*, ending with a surprise rendition of his haunting 'Fox in the Snow'. The prize-winning novelist Ayanna Lloyd Banwo read from her lyrically crafted and haunting debut novel *When We Were Birds* and spoke about the power of storytelling to preserve and redefine our sense of belonging,

our connections to each other, and our intertwined histories. Author of fiction and nonfiction, Michel Faber, brought the festival to a close with an exploration of his genre-defying oeuvre, from the beauty of the everyday connections and losses between people, to the implications and opportunities presented by belief and nonbelief.

Keep an eye on our website (www.divinity.ed.ac.uk/new-college-festival) and social media for news and updates on 2025's Festival of Books and Belief, which will be held at New College on the 7-8 November. Confirmed speakers include Abi Millar (*The Spirituality Gap: Searching for Meaning in a Secular Age*) and Shannon Vallor (*The AI Mirror*).



T A M M Y N R A D M A L L
H O M E F O R G O O D



When Tamsyn Radmall (MA Hons 2016) first visited Edinburgh, her mind was quickly made up: this is where she wanted to study. “I grew up in North London, in High Barnet. It’s a diverse area with large Jewish, Jamaican, and Muslim communities. About 10% of leavers from my school would go on to further education. Coming from there, Scotland felt like an adventure. I came to visit in sixth form and loved it—the castle in the middle of the city, Scottish culture, the warmth of the people. I applied but didn’t think I would get in!

“At school I looked at a range of subjects for university. From a young age I’d always been fascinated by questions of truth and faith. I was a questioner and wanted to be around people like that. Being from a diverse place where there were different understandings of religion, I wanted to understand that and learn how to delve into people’s stories.

“Joint honours in philosophy and theology was often amazing and sometimes challenging. I did philosophy of logic and time, looking at big concepts of reality. In theology, I focused on Christian views of faith. Combining those was helpful in giving me a wider perspective in exploring different schools of thought.

“After graduation, I stayed on in Edinburgh and wanted to apply my own faith in the world. I spent a few years combining different roles: as a carer for a child with complex needs, working in a prison, supporting women in the red light district, working for my church, and with a schools-based charity. Eventually, I was keen to move into a full-time role and joined Home For Good.

“Home For Good is a Christian charity that mobilises churches to support children in the care system through fostering, supported lodging, or adoption, or getting trauma-informed training. My work is very varied. I oversee our networks in Scotland and Northern Ireland and engage with a range of people — church leaders, care experienced children, foster carers (and those considering fostering), and MSPs. Seeing children come into family is a joy. That doesn’t mean you solve everything, but seeing children feel safe in a home environment is a privilege.

“*In my job I need to pivot quickly between different people, thoughts, and religious traditions. My degree gave me the tools to do that. I’m grateful for it.*”

DECOLONISING THE MUSEUM

ARKOTONG
LONGKUMER

“When I was growing up in Kohima, Nagaland, in Northeast India, I heard stories about Rani (queen) Gaidinliu, a woman who lived nearby. People said that she was powerful, a prophet, and a leader.” So speaks Arkotong Longkumer, Professor of Anthropology and Modern

Asia, of childhood memories of Gaidinliu (1915-1993), a Naga resistance leader arrested by the British as a teenager in the 1930s. From 2022-26, Prof. Longkumer is leading a major research grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to explore a collection

of Gaidinliu’s possessions (and some belonging to her close associate, Haipou Jadonang) held in the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford. He is supported by a postdoctoral fellow Dr. Gaurav Rajkhowa and co-investigator Prof. Clare Harris (Oxford).

10



Annual Pilgrimage to Bhuban Cave, Assam
Photo: Gaurav Rajkhowa



Gaidinliu's home and a memorial bust at Lungkao village, Manipur.
Photo: Gaurav Rajkhowa



Community members handling notebook replicas.
Photo: Tarun Bhartiya

“She was accused of threatening the British Raj because she tried to reform and revitalise the traditions and religion of her people. The British were suspicious of her, so she was pursued and arrested. Twenty seven personal items are in the Collection in Oxford. There are 12 notebooks, 1 stick with a monkey skull and ginger, 3 short wooden clubs, 1 basket, 2 spiral bracelets, 1 spiked bracelet, 7 shawls. We’re digitising that collection and showing it to people in the community that she came from and beyond. We started with the physical originals in Oxford and made 3D photogrammetry and photographs for

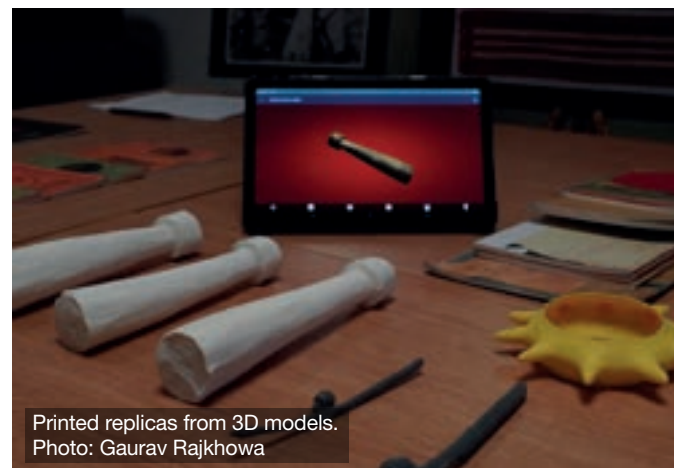
community-curated exhibitions and interactions in the Naga homelands (Nagaland, Assam and Manipur), especially among the Zeliangrong Nagas. Her immediate family and various communities hadn’t seen those objects for 80 years. How do they connect with people in the Naga homelands today in memories and practices?

“In order to consolidate all that we have learnt from the communities over the last 4 years, we’re running a 1-year exhibition at the Pitt Rivers Museum starting in October 2026 and creating a digital museum to enable indigenous communities

to access the collection. The exhibition focuses on what the collection tells us about Gaidinliu’s life, what people remember of her, and what kind of practices associated with the objects are still alive. I want the Naga people to learn more about this period of history. I hope that people in the UK will learn about this indigenous resistance, led by a 16-year-old girl, and appreciate the diversity of voices within colonial struggles. Working on such a powerful story, and with a complex group of stakeholders, has been humbling. Everyone brings something to the table. It’s a group endeavour, not an individual project.”



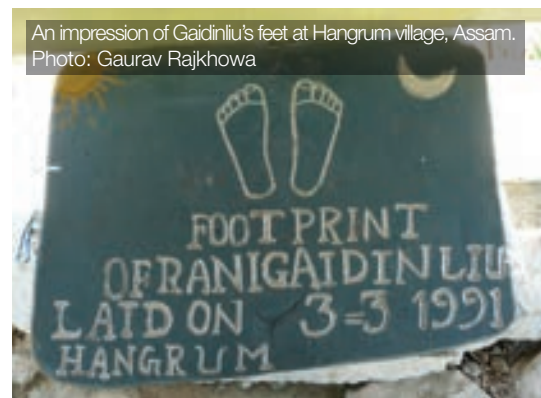
A participant at a pop-up exhibition of artefact images.
Photo: Gaurav Rajkhowa



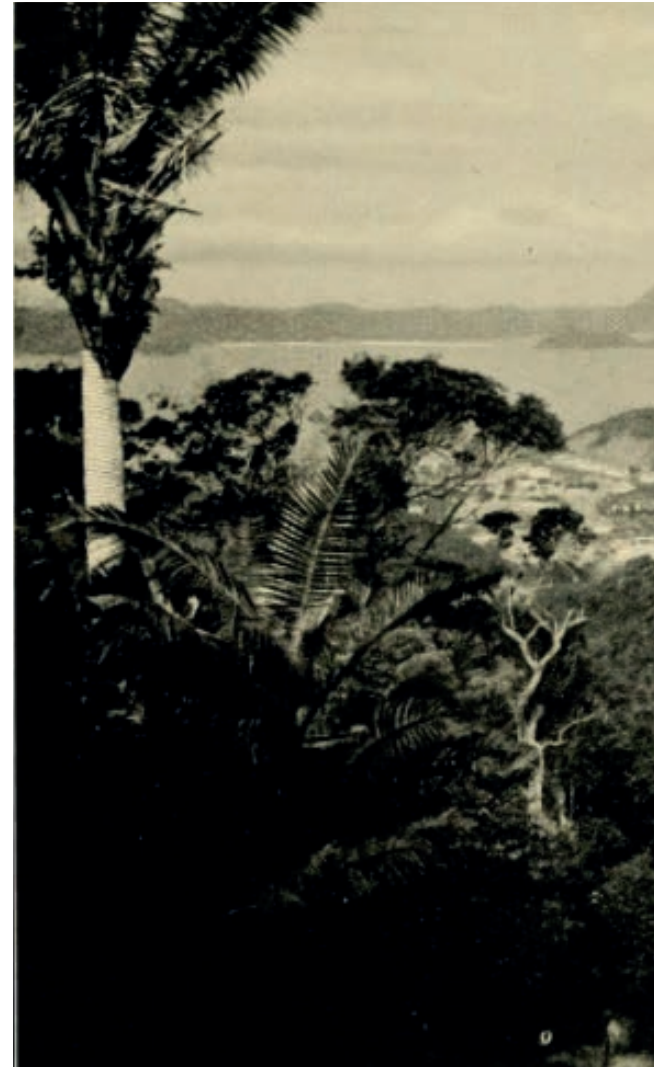
Printed replicas from 3D models.
Photo: Gaurav Rajkhowa



Viewing 3D models during a community-curated workshop.
Photo: Tarun Bhartiya



An impression of Gaidinliu's feet at Hangrum village, Assam.
Photo: Gaurav Rajkhowa



L A T I N A M E R I C A N S

A T N E W C O L L E G E



In the 1990s, the historian Andrew Ross described the New College student body of his day as increasingly cosmopolitan. “Now,” he wrote, “the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe and North America are evenly balanced in numbers, with the occasional and very welcome student from South America and Oceania.” Fast forward to 2025, when students (and faculty) from South and Central America remain equally welcome but have become less occasional.

The late Marcella Althaus-Reid, appointed to a chair in contextual theology in 2006—the first woman professor in our School’s history—was Argentinian. In more recent times, Dr Pedro Feitoza, Lecturer in Latin



American Christianity, has taken up residence here. “I work on the history of Christianity in Latin America. I came to Edinburgh because of the Centre for the Study of World Christianity. It’s an outstanding centre and holds important archives for Brazilian church history. As well as giving me access to that material, studying Latin America from Edinburgh has the benefit of giving me insider and outsider perspectives. Learning about Latin America is important for students here too. It shows them familiar things and texts in perhaps an unfamiliar location. That can make you a better global citizen.”

“Being a Brazilian in Edinburgh means the challenge of learning

a new culture. Latin American social interactions are extroverted and spontaneous, and our weather is different! That brings Latin Americans together at New College. For most of the 20th century Latin America was left out of the conversation on world Christianity. Today, we’re trying to bring Latin America into that conversation. We now have postgraduate students from Brazil, Mexico, Chile, and Argentina, and they’re spread across different fields of study. That’s a good start—and we’re all very festive.”

Before coming to Edinburgh, PhD students Walter Jasem de la Cruz Que and Miriam Garcia Jimenez studied in their native Mexico,

before taking postgraduate degrees in South Korea. Miriam: “In Korea we studied at Yonsei University under Samuel Pang, who had studied in Edinburgh. In Mexico, we also had a professor who studied here, Abel Clemente. The Presbyterian Church in Mexico appreciates the academic freedom we enjoy at New College.” Walter:

“In Mexico, we don’t have schools like this in our universities. The freedom of theological inquiry here is wonderful. It makes you grow. It’s important for Mexico that we go back there to teach. I look forward to that.”



Dr Jaekook Lee
(PhD 2023)

is pastor at Seegwang Presbyterian Church, and recently received an award from the National Research Foundation of Korea to explore Franciscus Junius' irenicism.



Sonnie Carlebach
(MA Hons 2022)

completed an MA in Information Experience Design at the Royal College of Art. He now teaches media and arts in London, where he is an artist in residence at Brompton Cemetery.



Miles Jupp
(MA 2005)

is an actor, singer, and comedian. In 2024, his On I Bang tour took him to venues across the UK and Ireland. He also published a debut novel, the satirical tragicomedy History.



Rev Dr Swarup Bar (PhD 2017)

is Professor of Theology and Dean of Doctoral Studies at Bishop's College in Kolkata, India. He recently published *Spirit as Womb: An Asian Perspective – Embodiment, Femininity and Marginality* (ISPK).

Jamilla Mohammed (MA Hons 2022)

is a Global Executive Communications and Employee Engagement Trainee at Syngenta Group.



Dr Beatrice Ang (PhD 2023)

is Director of the Center for Theological Inquiry in Asia.

Dr Anja Pogacnik (MTh 2014, PhD 2018)

is a Research Administrator at the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, University of Edinburgh.



Dr David Robinson (PhD 2017)

is R. Paul Stevens Assistant Professor of Marketplace Theology and Leadership at Regent College, Vancouver.

Dr Daniel Lam (Phd 2024)

is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary.

Ruth Elizabeth Davies (MA Hons 2020)

is a marketing manager at UKTV (BBC Studios).



Avweroswo Akpojero (MTh 2024)

is a PhD student at Cambridge University, where he is the recipient of a Gates scholarship.



Rev Eilidh Proudfoot (MDiv 2024)

is now a Curate at St Paul's and St George's Church, Edinburgh.



Dr Sophie Bayer Blears
(PhD 2022)

is Personal Speaker of the President at the Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder).

Antonia Church
(MA Hons 2021)

is a solicitor at Expatriate Law.



Dr Daniel Daley
(MTh 2014, MSc 2015)

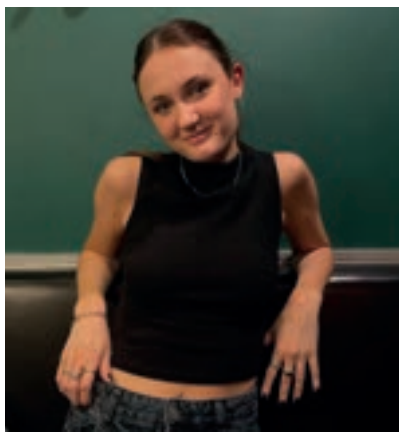
is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dr George Walters-Sleyon
(PhD 2019)

recently published *The Rush for Black Diamonds, Vol. 2, Chattel Slavery to Penal Slavery in the US and the UK 1865- to Post-1970* (Cascade Books).

Rev Dr Jeremy-Joe Tan
(MTh 2018, PhD 2022)

is a Faculty Lecturer at Trinity Theological College, Singapore.



Eliza Light
(MA Hons 2024)

is Production Coordinator at Daydreamer, a creative visual effects studio in Shoreditch.

Dr Nathanael Vette
(PhD 2019)

has been appointed Lecturer in Bible, Gender and the Arts at King's College London.



Rev Dr Israel Guerrero
(PhD 2023)

has been ordained as a Free Church of Scotland minister and serves Spanish speakers at Cornerstone Free Church, Edinburgh.



Beth Jones
(MA Hons 2023)

is co-director of LEAD, a national charity that delivers expert leadership coaching to secondary school students.

Dr Áine Ní Bharáin
(PhD 2022)

is Teaching and Learning Librarian
at Maynooth University Library.

Dr Nomi Pritz-Bennett
(PhD 2023)

is a Career Development Fellow
at Durham University.



Dr Sophia Magallanes-Tsang
(PhD 2011)

is Assistant Professor of Old
Testament at North Park
University, Chicago.

Prof. Lydia Schumacher
(PhD 2009)

has been promoted to full professor
at King's College London.



Rev Dr Hunter Nicholson
(PhD 2023)

is pastor of Columbia
Presbyterian Church in Columbia,
Mississippi.



Dr Heather Major
(MTh 2016)

is Research Fellow in New
Places for New People,
Evangelism and Growth at Cliff
College.

Rev Dr Fran Henderson
(PhD 2010)

is now minister of the Church
of Scotland in Lochmaben and
Lockerbie.



NEW STAFF



Dr Lois McFarland

is Lecturer in Religion and Literature. An Edinburgh alumna (MA 2013, MScR 2018, PhD 2023), her research interests include biblical themes in speculative fiction, feminist re-vision, affect theory, and ecocriticism.



Prof. Gordon Lynch

is Professor of Religion, Society and Ethics. He previously held the Michael Ramsay Chair in Modern Theology at the University of Kent.



Dr Caitriana Nicholson

is Gaelic Research Assistant on the project 'Multilingualism and Religious Belief,' funded by the John Templeton Foundation. She holds degrees in particle physics (Glasgow) and science and religion (Edinburgh, 2020).



Dr Matthew Baines

is Early Career Teaching and Research Fellow in Christian Theology, funded by the John Templeton Foundation. A native of Sydney, Australia, he holds two postgraduate degrees from the University of Edinburgh (MTh 2019, PhD 2023).



Dr Shoaib Ahmed Malik

is Lecturer in Science and Religion. Holding PhDs in chemical engineering and theology, he works in the field of Islam and science.



Dr Nuam Hatzaw

is Research Development Fellow at the Centre for Theology and Public Issues. A double Edinburgh graduate (MTh 2018, PhD 2024), she is also Lecturer in Asian Christianity at the Church Mission Society.



Dr Selina Stone

is Lecturer in Theology and Ethics, and joins the School from the University of Durham. She is a scholar of womanist ethics and Pentecostal spirituality.

READING MATTERS



Alexander Chow (ed.), Chinese Heritage in British Christianity: More Than Foreigners (SCM Press, 2025).

David Grumett, The Bible and Farm Animal Welfare (Cascade Books, 2024).

Pedro Feitoza, Propagandists of the Book: Protestant Missions, Christian Literacy, and the Makings of Brazilian Evangelicalism (Cambridge University Press, 2024).

Hannah Holtschneider, Peter Davies, Sheila E. Jelen, and Christoph Thonfeld, Olga Lengyel (1908-2001), Auschwitz Survivor: Interdisciplinary Explorations (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025).

Michael Fuller and Anne Runehov (eds.), Science, Religion, the Humanities, and Hope: Essays in Honour of Willem B. Drees (Springer, 2024).

Suzanna Millar and Arthur W. Walker-Jones (eds.), Ask the Animals: Developing a Biblical Animal Hermeneutic (SBL Press, 2024).

Paul Fuller and Indaka Weerasekera (eds.), Mind, Text, and Reality in Buddhist Studies: Engaging the Scholarship of Rupert Gethin (Bloomsbury, 2024).

Bethany Sollereder, Christopher Southgate, Paul S. Fiddes, Neil Messer, and Mark Wynn, God, Struggle, and Suffering in the Evolution of Life (Bloomsbury, 2025).

ATTRACTING THE BRIGHTEST AND BEST

On average around 50% of Divinity postgraduate students are awarded some level of scholarship funding, all based on academic merit.



Lily Reed

A double graduate of the University of Birmingham, Lily was awarded a School of Divinity scholarship for a PhD on the emotional state of women in Mark's Gospel.



Tafadzwa Kasere

A minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, Zimbabwean student Tafadzwa received the Desmond Tutu/Church of Scotland scholarship for the MTh in Biblical Studies.



Arthur Rankin

A graduate of Texas A&M, Reformed Theological Seminary, and the University of Edinburgh (MTh 2023), Arthur was awarded a College of Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences Research Award for a PhD on John Calvin's use of the Book of Hebrews.

Thank you for your support

We are grateful to alumni and friends who support our scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships, and to all whose donations support the scholarship funds set up in memory of Larry Hurtado, Lloyd John Ogilvie, and John McIntyre. We also welcome approaches from those who wish to sponsor events at the Books and Belief festival. Donations can be made at www.divinity.ed.ac.uk/alumni/support-us or by contacting the Head of School.

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