Abstract:

This talk explains the identification and attribution of a notebook containing previously unknown writings by Isaac Newton (1642-1727). The notebook was mentioned in correspondence in the 1720s but had not been seen since then. Its contents throw light on Newton’s life in Cambridge in the 1670s and the development of his work on the telescope. They also help to explain the origins of his interest in theology and the reading that underpinned it. Since the notebook is not written by Newton, the talk will also consider how we can be confident that its contents were indeed composed by him.