



# Johnian News

Issue 13

Lent Term 2003

## St John's College gains Investors in People accreditation

*St John's College is the first of the Cambridge and Oxford Colleges to achieve recognition as an Investor in People for both the Academic and Assistant Staff.*

Investors in People is a scheme that sets national standards of good working practices, providing a framework to work within to help and enable people to improve their performance, thereby helping to improve the overall performance of the organisation.

The College made a formal commitment in February 2001 to work towards achieving the standard, setting itself a target to do so within two years. In the intervening period the College introduced a number of new initiatives, working practices and policies. These included defined communication and consultation policies, a commitment towards training and development and an annual personal development review system for all Assistant Staff.

*The Master, Professor Peter Goddard, said that achieving the standard has involved a considerable amount of hard work by a large number of people in the College.*

He is confident that Investors in People, with its focus on training and developing people to improve their performance, will allow the College as a whole to achieve practical benefits in all areas of its work.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Cambridgeshire delivers the Investors In People standard in the county as one of its many initiatives to encourage lifelong learning and foster skills development.

"We are delighted that St John's is the first Oxbridge College to achieve IiP recognition. This has involved a lot of work and is a reflection of the real benefit that organisations, particularly the education sector, can gain from the Investor in People framework. By investing in their most valuable asset, their people, organisations are seeing a real improvement in performance", said Debbie Longhurst, Business Development Adviser, LSC Cambridgeshire.



*Ruth Spellman, Chief Executive of Investors in People UK presents the plaque to The Master*

The College was presented with the plaque by Ruth Spellman, Chief Executive of Investors in People UK, at a ceremony in the Hall on Thursday 24 April. ☼

**Late News:** On 24 April the Governing Body met to receive the resignation of the Master, Peter Goddard, with effect from the beginning of January 2004. The Master has accepted appointment as President of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, USA, an independent research institute whose former faculty members include Albert Einstein, Kurt Gödel and John Von Neumann. The Master commented that, at the time of his election, he said that he expected to stay for ten years. The Fellows will elect his successor in the Michaelmas Term. ☼



## Landmark Discovery by Johnian

*Jeevan Deol, a Research Fellow in Indian History made an astonishing discovery at the British Library in London in September 2002.*

Most of the time when I tell people what I'm working on, I'm lucky to get an understanding smile. For a brief few weeks this September, the media was very interested in my work, and I found myself speaking (sometimes all at once) to the press in Britain, Canada, the USA and India.

I'm currently working on a union catalogue of all the manuscripts in the Punjabi language outside of India and Pakistan. Spoken in northwest India and in Pakistan, Punjabi ranks twelfth among the world's languages by number of speakers—and is the most widely spoken language in the UK after English. The catalogue will include some 650 texts, including such varied fare as love stories, historical documents, translations of classical Sanskrit philosophical texts, indigenous medicine and religious texts from the Hindu, Sikh and Islamic traditions. The texts are held in places as varied as Tashkent, St. Petersburg, London, Paris and Kansas. The catalogue will be published in print format and online, so that Punjabi speakers and others will be able to appreciate for the first time these forgotten treasures.

All very worthy, but hardly likely to make the papers. And so I thought when the news of what I felt to be my most exciting discovery made its way into the big wide world. Among the manuscripts at the British Library in London is a copy of the Sikh scripture, the *Adi Granth*, that dates from the middle of the seventeenth century. The manuscript is the oldest outside of India and one of the thirty oldest copies of the scripture in existence—and the only object that we know of outside India to date from the lifetimes of ten Gurus, or spiritual guides, who founded the Sikh religion.

The manuscript had always been assumed to be an ordinary nineteenth-century copy of the scriptures, and I can say with all honesty that a thrill ran through my body when I first opened it up and saw its pages. Although the final portion of the manuscript had been rewritten on new paper at some time in the nineteenth-century, the original portion of the text is quite simply one of the most important Sikh scriptural texts in existence. And at another, purely emotional level, to touch it was to connect with the period in which my faith was founded.

Many months of checking and rereading the text ensued, as did a footnote in an obscure scholarly article. But when news of the manuscript's discovery was released on a quiet Monday in September, the response exceeded all expectations.

*Within an hour, the story was making its way around the world on the Associated Press wire service, and by evening I had done interviews for the BBC World Service in English and Hindi and for various newspapers and local radio stations in the UK.*

Amandeep Dhaliwal (Matric 1998), a Johnian working in television noticed the press release, and before I could catch my breath I was explaining the importance of the find on News 24. Substantial press coverage in Canada, the USA and local and ethnic media in the UK followed, and it was fully two weeks before my phone stopped ringing. Sikhs the world over had become excited by the discovery and had in the process learned something about their heritage.



*Dr Deol with the Adi Granth*

For me, it was a good education in the world of the media. But it was also an example of what we as academics have to do: where we can, to make our work relevant and accessible to the wider world. ☸

*Johnian News* aims to keep Johnians in touch with the College and with each other. It is published twice a year by St John's College, Cambridge.

News, articles, letters and photographs to be considered for inclusion in *Johnian News* should be sent to The Johnian Office, St John's College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP. Fax: 01223 338727



## **Global Challenge** 2004 - 2005

*Georg Ell matriculated in 2000. He is studying for a BA in Management Studies and Social and Political Sciences.*

"It's the World's Toughest Yacht Race...32,000 miles, around the world, the *wrong* way...Temperatures as low as -20°C, waves 80ft high, weeks and weeks at sea, and no more than 3 hours sleep at a time. Why would anyone want to do this – it's insane, right?"

Well, 1200 or so people around the world think it is possibly the best thing that ever has happened or will happen to them. What sets these people apart from you? Nothing – that's the beauty of it. *It's about ordinary people doing extraordinary things.*



The Global Challenge, which takes place every 4 years, is the only sailing race to circumnavigate the globe against the prevailing winds and currents, in a one-design fleet, in yachts crewed entirely by amateurs. Not highly paid and experienced professionals, but volunteers from all walks of life – rich and poor, young and old, experienced and very, very green. In fact, 70% of those who take part in the Global Challenge have never sailed before, yet they are willing to commit to years of training, fundraising, and finally 10 months away from their families risking life and limb in the most remote parts of our planet. The identical fleet ensures that only the seamanship, skill and determination of the people taking part make the difference between winning and losing.

People ask me why I want to take part in the Global Challenge – I've done some Mediterranean sailing before, but I have no blue-water racing experience. It's not an easy question to answer, and ultimately every Crew Volunteer has their own motivations. For some it is an escape from 'normal' life, others seek adventure, and there are those for whom the allure of ocean racing is too strong to resist. I have been looking for a big adventure ever since day-dreaming as a child, and this is one of the last great adventures still existing. More than 6000 people have climbed Everest – I guess fewer than half that number have sailed around the world east to west.

*There are points in the race where the fleet will be farther from land than they would be if they were orbiting the planet in space!*

There should also be no doubt that this is a race. Imagine the kind of team focus that is required to coax every last drop of speed out of the yachts, when the crews are exhausted, wet, cold and fighting against the worst that fate and the elements conspire to throw against them. This is existence at its rawest, where the survival instinct kicks in and all the senses are switched on in overdrive. Nobody who contemplates an endeavour of this nature should delude themselves of the many dangers involved. These do not only consist of the physical – the storms, icebergs, and injuries – but also the psychological dangers. Any ocean racer will tell you that the hardest challenge is a mental one, to remain positive and focused in the face of hardship. It is impossible to do this all the time, and conflicts will inevitably arise where 18 people must live in such close proximity under stress.

The first of many challenges ahead is fundraising. The race itself is a charitable event, and *raised over £1m for Save The Children* (the official race charity) in 2000. In addition to the £27,000 each Crew Volunteer must raise to cover his/her berth fees, we all hope to raise equivalent amounts for Save The Children throughout the race. In 2000, it was estimated that *2 billion people* were aware of the BT Global Challenge, through the newspaper, television, and internet media. Clearly this is an outstanding platform for business partnerships and sponsorship opportunities, and both the Crew Volunteers and Save The Children hope to benefit from this exposure.

So why do I want to do the Global Challenge? Why not run the Marathon or climb Everest? The answer is this is tougher, I love sailing, and fewer people have done it. It's about everything I've written above, the good and the bad together. It's the experience I'm after, to have done it, to have survived it, and to have learned from it (maybe even to have won it!).



*Georg Ell*

Georg Ell is a third year undergraduate studying Management Studies. Fifteen months after graduating in summer 2003 he will set off on the Global Challenge in September 2004. He is currently considering careers in consultancy or the Army. For more information on Crew Volunteers, the Global Challenge, business and sponsorship opportunities, please check out [www.challengebusiness.com](http://www.challengebusiness.com) ☺





---

## One Johnian and a Trapeze

*Alastair Pilgrim matriculated in 2001; he is studying for a BA in Natural Sciences but has a unique hobby.*

The woman 10ft below me has stopped climbing and has wrapped both arms around the ladder; she's determined to make it. She eventually makes it to my narrow platform, and shakes uncontrollably as I hook her into the safety lines. Two minutes of persuasion later, I have lifted her off her perch, and swept her feet into the void. She's one of the 30 adults who have arrived this afternoon for my trapeze class whilst on holiday in France.

There are several different types of trapeze of which the flying trapeze is the most famous. Most people have only experienced this in a circus, but it is a fast growing sport. I started when I was twelve years old on holiday in Florida and there has been no going back; I even wrote my A-Level Physics project on 'The Physics of the Flying Trapeze'. Club Med offer it as an activity at around twenty of their resorts worldwide and children from as young as 4 years old can have a go.

On leaving school, I applied for a job as a circus instructor in Club Med's resort of Opio, France, a village in the heart of Provence. As an instructor a large proportion of the time is spent on encouragement, since flying 20ft in the air is not an easy thing for most people. From the heaviest man to the lightest child, all have to be gently encouraged to do that most unnatural thing of jumping into a void supported by a thin metal bar in your hands. Whilst in the air, they are constantly supported by safety lines and an operator who will shout commands and control the safety lines. Every afternoon, we would catch the best flyers of the day. This involves one of us swinging upside down from another trapeze and plucking flyers out of the air and swinging with them in your arms.

A catch is one of the most satisfying and exhilarating things you can do on a trapeze. Falling through the air and placing your complete trust in someone supporting your weight is very hard and the timing is crucial. I have to call all the timings, judge the height of the flyer and adjust my own, catch the flyer if they're on time, protect my face if they're not...and all whilst swinging upside down 20ft up! Trapeze is both physically and mentally demanding and even the simplest swing places tremendous strain on the shoulders and mentally requires high levels of concentration.

Safety is a major issue. It always amuses me that people are quite happy to bounce on the trampoline, but are turned to a quivering wreck by the thought of the trapeze - when the former is far more dangerous! From the moment you reach the board, you have an enormous net below you, and safety lines that slow any dangerous descent. However the risks involved should not be underestimated. I train without safety lines and have had to learn to fall correctly into the net and to judge timings whilst falling. A good spacial awareness in the air is particularly important (as on the trampoline). However, the feeling of flying through the air without safety lines, and the advantages this extra freedom gives to technique are well worth the risks.

*For me, the most rewarding moments are watching other people achieve something that they have never thought possible before. I will remember for the rest of my life catching a 74-year-old man for the first time, and carrying a paralysed teenager up to the platform so he could have a swing.*



Trapeze doesn't exist in the same way in England, and I have to get my fix from trampolining. I coach for the University club, and competed in the Varsity A team. I have also started a high diving group. Despite all this, circus will remain a hobby for me; I have no aspirations to join a professional circus in the near future. Circus for me is a great way of keeping fit, stretching my limits, and meeting new people. For me, that makes waking up in the morning and aching all worth it. ☺



## Notices

Members of the Johnian Society will be sad to hear that **Dr Roger Morgan (BA 1950)**, Chairman of the Johnian Society from 1992 to 1999 died on 1 March 2003. An obituary notice will be included in *The Eagle*. ☼

Members of the Johnian Society will be delighted to hear that a baby daughter, Isabel Catherine was born to Catherine Twilley and her husband Richard on 22 March 2003. ☼

## Dates for your Diary

The **May Bumps** take place from 11-14 June 2003; support for the LMBC is very welcome. ☼

**Henley Royal Regatta** takes place from 2-6 July. As usual, John Durack (BA 1970) will generously provide a picnic lunch on each day (except for Sunday) for members of the LMBC in the Cricket Club car park. We would like to encourage members of the Club to attend on the Thursday for a 'Club Day'. ☼

St John's College, Cambridge Disability Forum and Cambridge Disability Resource Centre are pleased to announce the **1st Annual Lecture on Disability Issues: Developmental Dyslexia: A Cross Language Approach**. The speaker is Professor Usha Goswami (Professor of Education and Fellow of St John's College). The lecture will take place on Monday 19 May 2003 at 5pm in the Palmerston Room, Fisher Building, St John's College. ☼

On **Saturday 20 September 2003**, St John's College will host an alumni dinner at St John's College, Oxford by kind invitation of Sir Michael Scholar (Matriic 1960). Invitations to 'local' Johnians will be sent out in due course. Please contact the Johnian Office for more details. ☼

The **University Alumni Weekend** takes place from 27 to 28 September this year and any member of College is welcome to attend, together with their family and friends. An information pack and booking form can be obtained from the University Development Office, 10 Trumpington Street, Cambridge, CB2 1QA and can also be viewed on the internet at [http://www.foundation.cam.ac.uk/pages/page02\\_1.cfm](http://www.foundation.cam.ac.uk/pages/page02_1.cfm) limited accommodation will be available for Johnians and their guests attending the weekend. There will be a dinner on Friday 26 September for Johnians in the Wordsworth Room; please contact the Johnian Office for more details. ☼

## Dates for your Diary

On **Friday 26 September at 4pm** in Lady Mitchell Hall, Sidgewick Avenue Dr Robert Jordan will give a lecture as part of the University Alumni Weekend.

The title of the lecture is 'Sir Edmund Hilary's Schoolhouses in the Clouds: their first inspection in 1968.' 2003 is the 50th anniversary of Hilary climbing Everest and since then Sir Edmund has raised millions of pounds to help the Sherpas, by building schools and hospitals. Dr Jordan worked for the British Council in Kathmandu, Nepal from 1965 to 1969, training teachers of English, and was involved in the first inspection of Sir Edmund Hilary's Schools. ☼

This year's **Johnian Society golf competition** will take place on Friday 25 July at Gog Magog. Any member of the Society wishing to be added to the mailing list for the golf competition should contact John Loosley [John@loosleyj.freemove.co.uk](mailto:John@loosleyj.freemove.co.uk). ☼

A **Johnian Dinner** is due to take place on Saturday 28 June 2003. Invitations have been sent out to those who matriculated up to and including 1943, 1961, 1962 and 1963, but if you have not received one, please contact the Steward's Secretary at the College. ☼

The **Open Weekend** for Johnians and their guests takes place on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 July 2003. Those who matriculated in 1952, 1953, 1967-1968, 1974-1976, 1983-1984, or 1988-1990 have been invited. The Weekend offers an opportunity to come back to College for a number of exhibitions, lectures, open rooms, dinner in Hall and other events. ☼

Johnians from other matriculation years who are resident overseas and who expect to be in the UK at the time, are welcome to join us. Please contact the Johnian Office to receive an invitation. ☼

### General Contact Details

Telephone enquiries: +44 (0)1223 338600

Fax enquiries: +44 (0)1223 337720

Email enquiries: [enquiries@joh.cam.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@joh.cam.ac.uk)

Website: <http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk>

### Johnian Office Contact Details

Telephone: +44 (0)1223 338700

Fax: +44 (0)1223 338727

E-mail: [development-officer@joh.cam.ac.uk](mailto:development-officer@joh.cam.ac.uk)