



Johnian News

Issue 15

Lent Term 2004

Message from the new Master

I was admitted as Master in a ceremony in the College Chapel on Monday 5 January. Being elected Master is a high point of my academic life.

I have taken up the reins of the College at a particularly difficult time for higher education in the UK. We have to confront the problems of underfunding, the possible introduction of so-called 'top-up fees', questions of access, of growing international competition, and so on. However, over the last 500 years St John's College has built up an enviable reputation for getting on quietly with its business, for innovation when that seems desirable, and for defence of old values when they are needlessly challenged.

I have every hope and expectation that we shall continue in that vein, that Johnians will support us, and that St John's will grow in strength and renown. I have had the pleasure of renewing old friendships and making new acquaintances since I took up the office, most particularly at the Johnian Dinner in March and at events held in the USA (described opposite). I look forward to meeting more of you over the next few years. May I remind you that you are very welcome to visit your old College at any time.

Richard Perham



JSUSA celebrates new Master

To celebrate the admission of Professor Richard Perham as Master, the Johnian Society of the USA (JSUSA) held a number of events in the spring. The first gathering was in Los Angeles, by kind permission of Marty Kaplan (BA 1973), on Oscars' night (29 February). In spite of the competition, around 20 Johnians and their guests enjoyed a reception and the opportunity to talk to the Master.

The annual JSUSA event took place in New York on Saturday 20 March and again gave Johnians and their guests the chance to catch up with College affairs and the Master. The Society invited two Fellows of the College, Dr Jeevan Deol and Dr Emily Gowers, to speak at the event.

Dr Deol is a historian of eighteenth and nineteenth century India who works on the cultural history of the 'native states' of northwestern India. He spoke passionately about his work hunting down ancient manuscripts in far-off villages, dusty shrines, forts and royal palaces in India and Pakistan. Dr Gowers gave an entertaining talk, looking at how the names from Virgil's *Aeneid* had travelled to the US and were used even today.

The final get-together was in Philadelphia where the Master was welcomed to the Philadelphia Club for dinner by Johnians and their guests. Conversation focused on the funding issues that the College and University are facing, in light of the recent changes to higher education funding in the UK.

The visits of the Master have been part of the College's continuing efforts to strengthen its relations with Johnians in the USA and we are very grateful to the JSUSA for their advice and support in organising the various events. ☺

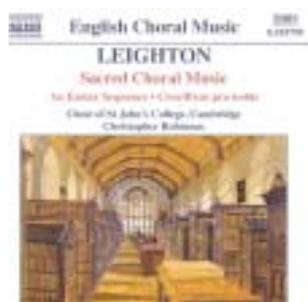
The Master (right) in New York with Iain Mackenzie (BA 1958) (left) and Sudhir Wanmali (PhD 1979) (centre)



College news

The ninth recording under the **Choir's Naxos contract** was released in February. This features the Sacred Music of Kenneth Leighton, and the Choir is joined by the renowned trumpeter Crispian Steele-Perkins (whose father was a Johnian) and the well-known tenor James Oxley.

It has been well received, with *The Guardian Review* describing the CD as 'exquisitely sung and expertly recorded in the college chapel'.



As usual, the recording is available from music stores and also direct from the Johnian Office at the College. The cost for those living in the UK is £5.50 including postage and packing. Those living overseas should contact the Johnian Office for postage details. ☼

The first **London event** took place in December last year at Gray's Inn, by kind permission of the Rt Hon Sir Anthony Evans (BA 1957). It was attended by more than 100 Johnians and their guests, who mingled over wine and canapés, and the guests of honour were the outgoing Master, Professor Peter Goddard, and his wife, Mrs Helen Goddard. We expect to hold an event in London on an annual basis, and advance information relating to a concert by the Choir at St Luke's Church is given on page 8. ☼

Professor Howard has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. To be eligible for election the candidate must be of national and international standing, based on quality of innovative contributions to their field, or professional standing and achievement in public service. They must have a connection with Scotland.

Professor Howard is an architectural historian and is Head of Department of the University's History of Art Department. She has a particular interest in Italian architecture and has also published on Scottish architecture. She was a member of the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland 1987-1995 and a member

of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland 1990-1999. ☼

Dr Martin Richards, Senior Lecturer in Computer Science and Fellow of the College, is being presented with the 2003 Computer Pioneer Award by the IEEE Computer Society to acknowledge his seminal contributions to Computer Science. The citation reads: 'For pioneering system software portability through the programming language BCPL, widely influential and used in academia and industry for a variety of prominent system software applications.' Dr Richards and his wife will be visiting New Orleans in November for the presentation of the bronze medal that represents the award. ☼

The **Winfield Society** Dinner took place in February. The Dinner is an annual event, but this is the second year in which all Old Johnian lawyers have been invited. The speaker was Lord Mustill (BA 1954), an Honorary Fellow of the College who is currently the Arthur Goodhart Professor of Legal Science at the University. The event was attended by current students and Johnian lawyers and is now well established in the College calendar.

Next year's dinner takes place on 12 February and invitations will be sent to those members of College who studied Law or who are now in the legal profession. The dinner provides a way of developing links between current students and those in the legal profession and it is helpful for our students to hear how their careers might develop and what might be expected of them in legal practice. ☼

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



College news

Stan Moorhouse, Superintendent of Buildings, has retired from his post after service of more than thirteen years. Stan was responsible for numerous refurbishment projects in College, not least the programme of ensuing College rooms. Many Johnians have benefited from these improved facilities when they have stayed in College for Johnian Dinners and other events. Steve Beeby has been promoted to the post of Superintendent of Buildings and Mike Finch replaces him as Deputy Superintendent of Buildings. ☼



The College is in the process of redesigning its **website** (www.joh.cam.ac.uk) to make it more eye-catching and to improve the accessibility and the quality of the information. There will be sections relating to admissions, alumni, catering and conferences, the Library, the Chapel and Choir, College life (including various clubs and societies), the history of the College, and news and events. It is anticipated that the new site will go live towards the end of May. In the meantime, much of the information is currently available on the existing website so please continue using it. If there is any information that you would like to see on our website, please let us know. ☼

College notices

Johnians are reminded that *The Sermons of John Boys Smith*, edited by Malcolm Torry (BA 1976) and with a foreword by Dr Andrew Macintosh, Fellow of the College, is available to purchase from the Johnian Office for £12.50 (postage & packing extra). Please contact the Johnian Office for further details. ☼

The Johnian Office stocks a range of **College merchandise**, including Christmas cards, rugby shirts and cufflinks. These can be purchased throughout the year and an up-to-date order form can be obtained from the Johnian Office. Items can be ordered by telephone or fax and posted to you. Callers to the Johnian Office during office hours are welcome. ☼

As reported in the Michaelmas Term 2003 edition of *Johnian News*, the first edition of the *Register of Twentieth Century Johnians*, Volume 1, 1900-1949, will be published towards the end of this year. Many people have already requested a copy, by filling in the blue form that was sent out with *The Eagle* 2003, but if you have not done so yet it is not too late. For further details, please contact Fiona Colbert, Biographical Assistant, in the Johnian Office (Telephone: +44 (0)1223 338772, Email: f.colbert@joh.cam.ac.uk). ☼

The Douglas Adams Prize for humorous writing

Johnians will wish to be aware of a new initiative in memory of Douglas Adams, author of, most famously, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Douglas Adams attended St John's between 1971 and 1974 and, following his death in 2001, it was suggested that a prize in his name be established for a piece of humorous writing by a current student of the College.

This initiative has received the support of his widow and his agent and we have received donations of more than £5,000 so far from Douglas Adams' friends and colleagues. We hope that this initiative will be supported by Johnians and our aim is to raise £10,000 to allow the prize to be awarded annually in perpetuity. The prize will be awarded for the first time in the Lent Term 2005 and it is anticipated that the winning entry will be published in that year's *Eagle*.

If you would like more information about the prize or wish to make a gift to help endow the Douglas Adams Prize Fund, please contact Clare Laight, Associate Development Officer, in the Johnian Office (Email: c.l.laight@joh.cam.ac.uk). ☼



Hidden treasures



Apart from infrequent visits to show proud parents around the Upper Library, or to consult obscure papyrus fragments from the Ptolemaic period (naturally!) current students might not have many direct dealings with the College's Old Library. Tucked away behind the new Working Library it is all too easy to forget the ongoing work that ensures the future survival of our irreplaceable collections; collections that our cataloguing project will open up to the wider world.

Of particular interest are our 265 medieval manuscripts, which include some of our most important and beautiful holdings. A 15th Century Book of Hours (MS N.24) that once belonged to Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of King Henry VII and foundress of St John's, has especially pretty miniatures by a French artist known as the 'Fastolf Master'. In addition we have many splendid items from the library of William Crashaw, a Fellow of St John's and devoted bibliophile, such as an early 13th Century Psalter with Gloss and Hours of the Virgin (MS D.6).



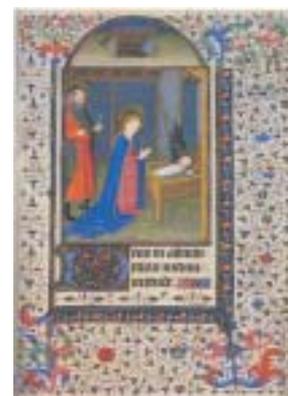
Three scenes from these works have been used to produce notecards with which Johnians will already be familiar. These are 'The Nativity', 'The Adoration of the Magi' (both from Lady Margaret's Book of Hours), and 'The Shepherds and King Herod' (from the 13th Century Psalter).

The Adoration of the Magi, from MS N.24



The annunciation to the shepherds and the Magi before Herod, from MS D.6, produced in London c.1210-20 (above)

Scenes of the nativity and the adoration of the Magi, from MS N.24 by the Fastolf Master, an illuminator active in France and England c.1420-60 (below)



Descriptions of our medieval, post-medieval and oriental manuscripts are available to view on the Library's web pages (www.joh.cam.ac.uk/Library).

In addition, descriptions of our modern papers, including those of alumni such as Sir Fred Hoyle, are being added to JANUS (a union catalogue of Cambridge archives). The work to record and preserve our manuscript collections is charging ahead full pace to ensure that our wonderful resources remain available for students in many years to come.☺

The cards (pictured above and left) are all left blank for your own message, so that they can be used all year round, and are sold in packs of five. As part of a special promotion, they can now be purchased, while stocks last, for £1.00 per pack (plus 50p per pack for UK postage; credit/debit card orders only for overseas orders – postage to be determined at time of despatch).

If you would like to place an order, please telephone the Johnian Office (tel: 01223 338700), email Amanda George (a.l.george@joh.cam.ac.uk), or send a written order with a cheque for the correct amount, payable to St John's College, or credit card details to: The Johnian Office, St John's College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP.



Fossil-hunting in the Urals

Tom Mustill matriculated at St John's in 2002 and is reading for a BA and MNatSci in Natural Sciences. In the summer of 2003 he spent some time in the Urals looking for fossils. Here he writes about the experience.

Ediacaran fossils are weird. Many believe they could represent the origin of modern metazoan life (which includes us), while others claim they are part of an extinct kingdom, an early, doomed attempt at multicellularity. These strange formations, dating back more than 550 million years, predate the Cambrian 'explosion' and are the subject of fierce controversy. They are found globally from the mines of Southern Australia to the deserts of Namibia, the coasts of Newfoundland and the Russian White Sea where the rocks, laid down over half a billion years ago, remain intact. A member of the Cambridge Department of Earth Sciences, Dmitri (Dima) Grazhdankin, realised that fossils found in the Urals may also be Ediacaran and a vital piece of this evolutionary puzzle. He decided to go and see for himself and offered me a place on the expedition.

The air in Ekaterinburg is painful to breathe; the dust is harder than glass.



We calmed our sore throats with Kvas, a beery, bread-like drink distributed by an old woman who asked if everyone in Britain hated the Russians. Having grabbed our inflatable canoes, tents and provisions from the Ekaterinburg Institute of Geology and Geochemistry we loaded them into

our bizarre all-terrain vehicle. We stopped briefly at a bullet-pocked plinth marking the boundary between Europe and Asia, surrounded by broken vodka bottles. The concrete was topped with a modified hammer and sickle featuring a space rocket, celebrating the glory of the Soviet Space program and 50 years of communism.

Before nightfall we arrived at a small tributary of the Sylvitsa and settled down to make camp. We woke to the sounds of peasants swearing as two farmers and their dogs bathed on the opposite bank. When they'd

gone we inflated the canoes, plastic wrapped our gear and pushed off to raft for the next two weeks. Arriving at exposed areas of rock, we would inspect the outcrop; if it was promising we'd make camp and excavate for a few days, looking for layers with an 'elephant skin' texture, an indicator of ancient microbial mat – what our fossilised animals lived on. If we found any fossils we'd excavate further, stripping down to boxers in the heat. Worse than the constant mosquitoes and horseflies were the Maska, tiny undetectable flies that arrive towards the early afternoon and leave a bleeding sore that itches for weeks.

The excavation should have been tedious but it was actually rather exciting. The thrill of finding a fossil (gleaming fingerprint-sized formations made up of intricate interlocking segments) was further amplified hours later round the fire as we munched biscuits with boiled milk and discussed these strange creatures. Along the river we passed much life including eagles and elk but mainly we saw nothing but more river and a few feet into the surrounding forest, which concealed the bears that silently watched our passing.

Two weeks and some valuable finds later we joined the Sylvitsa river proper and after a long hard stretch of rowing we were reunited with our truck. The data from Russia has proved so interesting that a number of papers are passing through submission. Dima and I return to the Urals this summer to look for more, and hopefully we'll come closer to cracking the riddle of the Ediacara. ☺



Snickers bars for sale in an Old Believer Village, with an abacus as a cash register



From coal ship to gallery

Moored near the entrance to West India Quay, at the heart of London's Docklands, rests the world's oldest complete steam coaster, the SS Robin, a former coal ship. Tristan Smith (MEng 2003) and James Bichard (BA 2002) write about their involvement in a project to turn the ship into a dedicated digital media centre. Tristan read Engineering and is now a Naval Architect-in-training at UCL, while James read Architecture and now works for Allies and Morrison Architects, running his own design partnership alongside.

Bought by her current owners for £1 to save her from the scrapyard, the *Robin's* engine is still intact and her hull remarkably sturdy. The intention is to turn the ship into Britain's first dedicated digital media centre for photojournalism, boasting an interactive learning zone, flexible gallery space and facilities for corporate events. We got involved during 2003 and soon discovered that the SS *Robin* is in a unique situation and presents a peculiar set of problems, unlike anything we were familiar with.

The restoration of the SS *Robin* will come in two stages. The early stage simply requires the interior of the ship to be made habitable, so that classes of school children can use the space to learn digital media skills. The second phase will require a more substantial structural overhaul of the ship, and more extensive remodelling, once funding has been secured. This is where we are most involved: the project manager's concept of mixing energetic and creative individuals with experienced and highly respected figures has exposed us to responsibilities we would not normally obtain at these stages of our careers.

Given the tight budget constraints of this first stage, and the short timescale, Archidog Design, the firm run by James, has designed a simple white ply skin which responds directly with this first stage requirement. By applying a very artificial 'veneer' to the interior of the hull, it does not intend to interfere in any



The proposed interior

way with the existing structure below deck. Wrapping only 3 of the 6 interior surfaces, it allows the remaining 3 hold walls to be read in stark contrast to the new insertion: its characteristic dark and scarred metal ribbed structure is still clearly visible.

The raised floor keeps visitors off the currently cold and dirty bottom of the hull, providing a 'warm' surface on which children can sit and learn comfortably. At the edges, the ply form wraps up into a bench against which to lean or sit or to use as a desk. Where the floor wraps up to form the ceiling at the end wall, a large blank canvas for digital projection is created. The ceiling skin hides lighting and other services, with further drop-down projection screens and hidden speakers. This dynamic form is exaggerated by its white colour.

With a working scheme and prepared business plan, the SS *Robin* refurbishment is ready to steam into action. The team of organisers and volunteers is now busy fundraising and looking for possible business and corporate sponsors, so that larger scale work can begin. Once finished, the SS *Robin* promises to be one of London's most individual venues, while knitting together hugely affluent international firms with local schools and communities. We feel privileged to be involved in such an unusual venture. ☺

More information about the project can be found at www.ssrobin.com



The ship as it stands in West India Quay



Attracting audiences of 1,000 people!

Lester Lardenoye (BA 2003) was a Choral Student at St John's while an undergraduate. Since graduating, he has been a Volunteer in the Choir and will sing again in the year 2004-2005 as a Lay Clerk. Lester was born in the Netherlands and when the opportunity arose for the Choir to go on tour there in December 2003, he jumped at the chance to organise the series of concerts on behalf of the College.

For many years the Choir of St John's College has been a regular visitor in the Netherlands; chances are that every single Choral Student from the last few decades could tell you first hand about their experiences with the Dutch and their fascination with ham and cheese sandwiches. Thus the fame of the Choir is firmly established in the Low Countries.



Photo by Liz Hammond

Dr David Hill, Director of Music, and the Choristers prepare to go on stage

As the current resident Dutchman in the Choir I have already taken the Gentlemen of St John's on tour to my home country twice, and in 2001 the Chapel Choir gave two concerts in the Netherlands as part of a Belgium based tour. So when plans for a Christmas tour to Belgium in 2003 fell through, the Netherlands seemed the perfect alternative.

Working closely with the Breda Music Institute, we were able to organise four concerts in sizeable churches in Delft, Haarlem, Nijmegen and my home town Breda. The Choir also sang at a Eucharist in the

Johnians are reminded that they are very welcome to come to Evensong in the College Chapel during Full Term. A list of services can be found on the College's website at www.joh.cam.ac.uk/choir/services.html

Sacramentskerk in Breda and the Chaplain, Father Clive Hillman, acted as co-celebrant. At the concert in Delft we were pleased to welcome the Ambassador to the Netherlands, Sir Colin Budd, along with nearly 300 employees of Delft University of Technology. After the concert the Gentlemen entertained the employees of the University at a private reception, singing such classics as *Jingle Bells* and *Goodnight, sweetheart*.



Photo by Mark Crick

The Gentlemen of St John's in Cambridge

Three out of the four concerts were sold-out, with the audiences averaging a thousand per concert. The well balanced concert programme met invariably with a very appreciative response, which was also reflected in the CD sales in the intervals and after the concerts. The tour can be considered a great success, and above all a very pleasant experience for everyone involved. Not only has the choir consolidated its reputation on the continent, but it has also found once again that it can always count on a very warm welcome in the Netherlands. ☺



Photo by Liz Hammond

The Choristers enjoying some free time



Dates for your Diary

The annual **Linacre Lecture** takes place on Friday 7 May 2004. The lecture will be given by Professor Stephen O'Rahilly and will be entitled 'Obesity and the hard-wiring of human appetite'. ☼

An event for **Johnians living near York** has been arranged for Monday 24 May at York St John College. Invitations have been sent out, but if you have not received one and would like to attend, please contact the Johnian Office for details. ☼

The **May Bumps** take place from Wednesday 9 to Saturday 12 June and support for the LMBC is most welcome. ☼

The first **Johnian Dinner** for 2004 has already taken place, and invitations have been sent out to those in matriculation years up to and including 1944, 1985, 1986 and 1987 for the dinner on Saturday 26 June 2004. ☼

Henley Royal Regatta takes place from Wednesday 30 June to Sunday 4 July this year. As usual, John Durack (BA 1970) will be generously providing 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 Friday for a 'Club Day' and for the opportunity to meet the President of the LMBC, Professor Richard Perham.

If you have any Stewards' Enclosure tickets that you do not intend to use for this, or another day, please send them to Catherine Twilley, Senior Treasurer of the LMBC, St John's College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP, so that we can provide entry to current students and recent graduates. ☼

General Contact Details

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The **Johnian Society Golf competition** takes place on Friday 30 July at the Gog Magog Golf Club, Cambridge, where members of the Society will compete for the Marshall Hall Cup. Further details can be obtained from John Loosley (Email: john@loosleyj.freemove.co.uk). ☼

As part of our regional reunions programme we are aiming to organise an event for **Johnians living in the Edinburgh area** in September 2004. Once a venue and date have been finalised invitations will be sent to members of College living in the area. ☼

The annual **University Alumni Weekend** takes place from 24 to 26 September 2004. Detailed information can be found on the University Development Office's website at www.foundation.cam.ac.uk. The College is holding a dinner for Johnians and their guests on the Saturday night and a drinks party on the Sunday. Bookings for the College events should be made with the Johnian Office, while bookings for the weekend as a whole should be made with the University Development Office. ☼

The College is organising a **concert in London** by the College Choir, especially for Johnians and their guests. The concert will take place on Tuesday 9 November 2004 at St Luke's Church in Old Street. Tickets will be available for purchase from the College in September and application forms will be sent out at that time. Tickets may also be purchased for a reception after the concert at which the Master and Director of Music will be guests of honour. ☼

Advance notice is given that the annual **Johnian Society Dinner** will take place on Saturday 11 December 2004. Application forms will be sent out with this year's **Eagle** in the summer. ☼

A concert by the Choir will be held in the College Chapel on 14 December 2004 to raise funds for the **George Guest Memorial Fund**. This Fund has been set up by the family of Dr George Guest, Organist and Director of Music at the College for many years. ☼

Further details about all these events can be obtained from the Johnian Office