



Johnian News

Issue 3

Lent Term 1998

Two Johnians gain Kennedy Scholarships

Two Johnians have been awarded Kennedy Scholarships for 1998-9; Greg Jefferis, a third year natural scientist, will be going to MIT to undertake a PhD in biology, and Polly Mallinson (BA 1995) will be a Harvard Kennedy School of Government Special Student.

A Fund was set up in Great Britain by public subscription in 1965 to commemorate President John F Kennedy and scholarships are available annually to allow British graduates to study in the US. The Scholarships are tenable at either Harvard or MIT and those who are awarded Scholarships still have to gain admission to either institution. The competition for the Scholarships this year was extremely fierce with 230 applications from 88 different institutions and the quality of the applications was said to be 'outstanding' by the Trustees of the Kennedy Memorial Trust. Only 11 Scholarships were awarded and St John's was the only institution whose members received more than one award.

Greg Jefferis is currently in his third year of his undergraduate degree at St John's. He spent his gap year studying cell suicide in worms and has considered returning to the states for a PhD ever since he arrived at College. He says 'there are two major problems with American PhDs, time and money. In a bid to solve the latter, I started looking for funding and came across the Kennedy Scholarship. The application procedure was as complex as most, with direct or indirect input from seven members of College right up to the Master. The interview by contrast was rather less trying and was presided over by a genial chairman who seemed quite unperturbed when I gave the inhibitory action of cyanide on cytochrome oxidase as an example of the great satisfaction of molecular explanations for everyday events. I can't tell what I'll be working on in a couple of years – one of the advantages of American PhDs is that you get a year to make your mind up – but one of the world's foremost worm experts is on the faculty at MIT, so maybe I'll be raising politely interested eyebrows well into the next millennium!'



Greg Jefferis working in the lab

Polly Mallinson took her BA in Archaeology and Anthropology in 1995. She writes 'when I graduated from St John's in Social Anthropology in 1995 I went to work for a documentary company in London making programmes on social, political and development issues including a series of documentaries for the UN 4th Women's Conference, Beijing, November 1995. I continued documentary making at the British Film Institute but I decided to try to become more involved in policy-making so applied for an internship at the European Commission where I went initially for 5 months and ended up staying for almost a year. After a fascinating 10 months working in the office for relations with South East Asia I was offered a job in the economic and political section of the Commission's Representation for Indonesia and Delegation for Singapore and Brunei based in Jakarta. I have been in Jakarta since October 1996 during what has been an extraordinary period for Indonesia and South East Asia as a whole and will certainly be a focus of my time at the School of Government at Harvard.' ☸



College news

Dr Andrew Macintosh, the President, was admitted to the Doctor of Divinity degree on 15 November 1997, watched by a number of senior College members.



The President receiving his degree

The old Higher Doctorates of the University in order of seniority are: the DD (Divinity), the LLD (Law), the MD (Medicine), the LittD (Letters) the ScD (Science) and the MusD (Music).

Dr Macintosh was awarded the degree for his published work, including a 600 page commentary on the prophet Hosea. His interests and contributions have been in the field of Hebrew philology, and he has achieved this by consulting medieval rabbinic authorities, most importantly Rabbi Jonah Ibn Janah, who wrote a directory in Arabic of Hebrew in the 10th Century.

Dr Macintosh said 'I am particularly grateful to the College for its support over the last twenty years which has enabled me to publish articles and the like'.

Dr Stephen Hancock, former Research Fellow at the College, has been awarded the first Royal Astronomical Society Astronomy Prize jointly with another Cambridge astronomer. The prize rewards outstanding doctoral theses completed at any UK university.

Dr Hancock's research involved looking at how the cosmic microwave background radiation can show what happened to the universe in the first fraction of a second of its existence.

In the Easter Term the entries in the **College Art Competition** will be displayed in the Library Exhibition Area. Johnians and their guests are welcome to come and view the exhibition between 9am and 7pm Mondays to Fridays and 9am to 12 noon on Saturdays. Full Term runs from 21 April to 12 June. Further information can be obtained from the Library on (0)1223 338622.

Sujadevi Sivadasan (MEng 1997) was awarded the second prize in the INA '1997 Engineering Student of the Year' competition, Southern region. She won the prize for her Part IIB project which involved experiments on the puncturing of pipes by low-velocity impact.

The **College credit card** has now been launched. The scheme is being run in conjunction with MBNA International Bank Limited. There is no fee for the card and various benefits, such as free insurances, are available. Income from the scheme will be added to the 'Tutors' Praeter Fund for student hardship.

The standard card features a photograph of the Bridge of Sighs, while the gold card has a picture of the eagle.



The card can be obtained by telephoning 0800 731 2262 and quoting reference TH19. The College receives £20 for each account

opened as a result of its own advertising, as opposed to the standard royalty of £4. The College also receives £2 each year the card is still active and a percentage of the amount spent on the card.

Full details of the benefits of the card can be obtained from MBNA International Bank Limited, who are based in Chester Business Park, at the above number. MBNA International has asked us to state that credit is available, subject to status, to UK residents aged 18 or over. Further information can be obtained from the Development Officer on 01223 338700.

Professor Robert Hinde, the former Master, is to be awarded the Doctor of Science *honoris causa* by the University of Oxford at a ceremony on 24 June. After a Cambridge BA, Professor Hinde did a DPhil at Oxford where he was a member of Balliol College. He became an Honorary Fellow of Balliol in 1986.



College news

The two new **Choir CDs** are now available from the Johnian Office at a special price for members of College of £9.50 (postage and packing 50p for UK and £1.50 for overseas addresses).



Mendelssohn Church Music is released on the Nimbus label and includes 'For He shall give his angels' and 'Hear my prayer..... O for the wings of a dove'. *Ave Verum*, Popular Choral Music, is a collection of works from composers such as Haydn, Mozart and Byrd.

Members of the Choir have won scholarships to prestigious music academies; **Alex Ashworth** (matriculation 1995), **Dan Jordan** (BA 1997) and **James Gower** (BA 1996) have been awarded scholarships to both the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, while **Adam Green** (BA 1997) has won a place at the Royal Academy. **Andrew Hewitt** (matriculation 1995) has won a place at the Guildhall.

The **College Maintenance Department** continues to be very busy. The SBR has been refurbished and a new art room has been created next to the squash courts in a disused garage. The SBR is particularly grateful for the donation of a stereo system by an anonymous Johnian.

Work on refurbishing Third Court was completed at the beginning of the Lent Term and the new occupants were in place as term began. The rooms have all been provided with bathroom facilities.

The current major building project is the building of a **fitness centre** in New Court. This will provide all members of College with access to fitness equipment and the design and the machines to be installed have been recommended by the University's Head of Physical Education.

The centre of New Court will revert to its original style with a passageway running straight through from New Court to River Court. As well as providing space

for the Fitness Centre, the work will allow the College to add two residential sets. The cost of the building work is being met by the College as part of its contribution to the sports appeal. It is hoped that sponsorship will be found for the equipment, which will cost a total of around £32,000.

A party was held to celebrate the launch of the College's **sports appeal** in late November. Former captains, current captains, Fellows and members of the Old Johnian Henley Fund, met to discuss the appeal.



Members of College at the Sports Appeal launch party

So far, current captains, former captains and Fellows have been asked for their support in this appeal whose target is £750,000. There are separate funds for the Field Clubs and the Boat Club due to the intense rivalry that has existed between the two since the early days of sports clubs in the College.

The College will be asking all known sportsmen and women to help preserve the sporting facilities in College. St John's prides itself on being able to offer opportunities for everyone but needs your help to ensure that this access remains the same in the future. If you can help with the appeal, by making your own donation or by asking your contemporaries for support, please let us know.

(College News is continued on page 7)

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.

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



Beating the boys!

Megan Jeffries came up to St John's in October 1997 to read Natural Sciences. Here she tells of her love of ski-ing.

Some children horse ride, some play chess or play computer games, but I joined our local ski club and I've just finished my 30th week skiing in 1997-8.

I've been ski racing on artificial slopes since the age of about 11. It was a hobby then and still is, only now I can do it a little better!

By the time of my knuckle biting interview at St John's in December 1995, I had a series of titles to my name including British Champion for my age (twice), Scottish Champion (twice), and Irish and Welsh Champion too. But all these were on artificial slopes, and the real sport of snow ski racing was another world to me. My only reply in my interview when I was asked why I wasn't taking a gap year to improve on snow, was that my limitation was money. It is the limitation for most British skiers, sponsorship is very limited and almost always parent related. This question caused me to think again, which culminated in me taking a gap year and working in two jobs to gather the funds.

I spent the winter in the US at Waterville Valley Academy with 13 other Brits. Everyone was so much better than me to start with, but before the 4 months were finished I was a lot nearer to most of them and beating some of them. In my final week in the States, my 25th place (after the 1st run) in the junior Olympics (US Junior Nationals to non Americans!) stood me in good stead for my forthcoming trip to France for the British and English Championships. I came 5th overall in the British Giant Slalom and received a huge trophy for being the 1st female who was not a member of the British Team. I skied well in the English Championships and won the Super-event overall. I



Megan Jeffries racing in the Varsity Match

was winning the GS overall convincingly but a second run blunder cost me the title and a small injury in the process!

I find racing very emotional; everything happens so quickly that delight and anger seem to occur simultaneously. Winning, I find, is as emotionally draining as losing.

Last summer was spent training and racing in beautiful New Zealand. The training and facilities were excellent and I returned with a bronze medal from the New Zealand Nationals.

I would like to ski whenever possible while at St John's. I've just returned from the Varsity trip in Tignes where I won both events (slalom and GS (beating the men!)), a jacket, a pair of skis and a half blue.

In the future I'd like to go to the Olympics, but obtaining financial support seems almost impossible. In the meantime, though, I am enjoying participating in other activities which are much closer to home. ✿



An Innovative Success

Jon Tuckwell is a second year undergraduate student in engineering. He spent a 'year out' with British Aerospace before coming to St John's and lead a team of seven undergraduate apprentices in a Design and Make Project.

The task of my team of undergraduates at British Aerospace was to design and build something that would benefit either the company or the local community. We were given a time limit of three months and had a healthy budget.

I have a friend who suffers from cerebral palsy and it was through spending time with her that I first came up with the idea of building something for children with learning difficulties to stimulate learning. I contacted a designer to investigate what was already available and what was needed.

In the end, my team chose to design a Sensory Stimulation Desk for children with learning difficulties. This desk encourages children to learn about and use their senses. It contains four different types of activity and uses flashing lights and musical notes to stimulate reactions.

The four separate stimuli are: an infra red musical organ which plays notes according to the child's movements;

a pressure pad which illuminates an LED board with the shape of the object being pushed onto the mat; a light response game that gives a musical reward for the correct response; and a drawing turtle which draws lines as it is operated remotely.

We worked with a local school, Briarwood School in Bristol, to develop the product and donated the prototype to the school once it was completed.

The desk was completed and presented to the school at the end of August 1996. A year later we obtained protected design status for the desk and contacted a company which markets such products to see if they would consider selling our design. We were successful, and Rompa International will begin selling our product in more than 20 countries later this year.

British Aerospace was extremely pleased with the way our project progressed and we were nominated for a prestigious Chairman's Innovation Award. In May 1997 we were given a bronze award, in September 1997 we obtained the silver award and last November I collected a Chairman's special Gold Award on behalf of the team, for services to the community and company through innovation.

It has been an extremely interesting project and we are all delighted that it has been so successful and that children all round the world will soon be able to benefit from our idea. ✿



The picture shows Jon Tuckwell and the rest of his team from British Aerospace with the desk they designed. Jon is third from the right.



First Professor of General Practice

Professor Ann Louise Kinmonth is Cambridge University's first Professor of General Practice. She was admitted into a Fellowship at St John's earlier this year. She spoke to Treeva Fenwick (matriculation 1995) about her career:

How did you come to choose medicine?

Medicine competed with other subjects and won when I was about 18. Within medicine general practice really appealed to me as it is a good area of medicine to go into if you are interested in life and people as well as organs and disease. Medicine has allowed me to do so many different things. There aren't many courses that would have enabled me to go off for a year to study the giant tortoise in the galapagos islands, learn how to breed excellent milking water buffalo, and work in famine relief in Ethiopia and Somalia!

Tell me about your time in Somalia.

I wanted to be freelance for a while so I led a team for Oxfam to Somalia. It was quite frightening and I remember wondering whether I could really go through with it. I spent six months there, immunising children which was more difficult than it sounds as vaccines have to be kept cold at all times. As there is no stable electricity in Somalia we had to use a generator to keep everything refrigerated. We organised for the children's parents to maintain the 'cold chain' and administer the vaccines because we knew that they would do their utmost to ensure that the project worked effectively. I loved working closely with the community in this way, and I was conscious of having to use all my resources in order to complete the project. In some ways, working with a community like this is very similar to general practice work back here.

What are you working on at the moment?

We are trying to understand how non-insulin dependent diabetes (Type 2) can be prevented in practice. There is evidence that even if people are susceptible to Type 2 diabetes they may delay or avoid it by increasing their energy turnover and keeping their weight down. I am working with psychologists and anthropologists as well as epidemiologists and physiologists because the physiological changes on which diabetes prevention depends cannot take place without cultural, behavioural and attitudinal changes.

What is your opinion of the position of women in medicine?

While there are more women embarking on medical



careers, they are still in the minority in leadership positions, but I don't believe that medicine is intentionally sexist. There is a possibility that, for example, because selection committees have often consisted mostly of men, with a male perspective, they have criteria that do not necessarily correspond to what women have to offer. It is also difficult to balance a full time medical career with having children. I have friends who manage very well and I admire them enormously, but I don't think that I could have done it - I am far too single-minded. I think that if you are focused on a goal and have enough self-belief you can achieve almost anything, but raising a family is at least as demanding as heading a department.

What do you think about medicine as a profession?

I think it is tough. Doctors show an excess of personal premature deaths through drugs, alcoholism and traffic accidents. Technologically medicine is advancing fast, but there seems less time to give patients much individual nursing attention. I remember when the nurses used to go round the wards rubbing patients' backs and give them a bottle of Guinness every evening - things are changing quickly and staff are under much more pressure. In many ways, I think that young doctors are now undervalued. When I was training at St



Professor Kinmonth (continued)

Thomas' we used to be served steak and chips at midnight and it was nice to feel that our hard work was recognised. I think medicine is one of the most rewarding careers, but we must be able to care for members of the profession, as well as patients.

Why did you decide to come to Cambridge?

I did my first degree at New Hall, so I already knew Cambridge, and after working in Southampton University for a while I realised how much I missed the collegiate system. In Cambridge I work and socialise with people from a range of subject areas and I find that extremely stimulating. I accepted a Fellowship at St John's because I wanted to be in an old, mixed College and in one where there are lots of pre-clinical undergraduates so that I could talk to them about the clinical relevance of their studies, and what general practice might be like as a career. I hope some might choose to follow it in the future. ☼

College news

The College has received notification that all four **Professors of French at Reading University** are Johnians. Professors W D Redfern (PhD 1961), G H Tucker (PhD 1987) and P S Noble (BA 1963) were all undergraduates at St John's, while Professor Naomi Segal is a former Fellow, Tutor and Director of Studies. ☼

The **College Choir** has a very busy time ahead with a tour to South Africa in August and a tour to Japan in December.

The South Africa tour is able to go ahead due to the generous donations from the Oppenheimer Trust, Mrs Ruth Daniel, the Choir Association, the Barrère Fund and the Ince Fund. The hard work of Mr Martin Denny of the Choir's Agents should also be acknowledged.



The Choir during a recording session in the Chapel

The tour to Japan is being organised by Mr Tim Minton (BA 1980). Tim Minton was a Choral Student at St John's and his son is now a Chorister in the Choir. Plans for the tour are well advanced and those interested in obtaining further details of

the tour are asked to contact the Johnian Office in the first instance.

Closer to home, the Choir will be singing at the Spitalfields Festival on 11 June 1998. The programme will include works by Byrd, Mendelssohn and Parry and the concert takes place at Christ Church, Commercial Street, London. This is one of the few occasions that the College Choir sings in London and tickets are available from the Festival Hotline on 0171 3771362.

Details of all Choir engagements and soundbites from recent recordings are available on the WWW at <http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/Choir/choir.html> ☼

Professor Richard Perham has been awarded the Novartis Medal and Prize for 1998 by the Biochemical Society, the most senior of the research awards made by the Society. ☼

The **Cambridge University Alumni Weekend** took place in September last year and was attended by a number of Johnians and their guests. The weekend is organised by the University Development Office and involved tours, lectures and workshops at departments throughout the University.

The Master held a tea-party in the Lodge for those attending and there was a dinner in the Wordsworth Room on the Saturday night. It is intended to repeat the College's involvement this year when the weekend will run from 25 to 27 September. Further information on events in St John's can be obtained from the Johnian Office by telephoning (0)1223 338700. ☼



College events

The College is very sad to have to announce the death of **Professor Sir Harry Hinsley**, former Master, on 16 February 1998. A memorial service will be held in the College Chapel at 12 noon on Saturday 2 May 1998. All are welcome to attend. ☼

Traditionally, **John Durack** (BA 1970) has organised a picnic at Henley Royal Regatta for all Lady Margaret men and women. This year the picnic will be held on 1, 2, 3 and 4 July and all members of the Club, past and present, are invited to attend. On the Wednesday of Henley, the Old Johnian Henley Fund has, in recent years, asked members of the Steward's Enclosure to send in any spare tickets they might have to allow current members of the Club to enter the Enclosure. If you can help with this, please contact Nick Geddes, Captain of the LMBC, in the first instance. ☼

The Dinner for members of the **Lady Margaret Boat Club** takes place on 18 April in the Hall. It will be preceded by a regatta in the afternoon and will give all Boatclub members a chance to revisit the Boathouse, catch up with news and find out about the plans for modernisation and extension of the Boathouse. If you have not received an invitation and would like to attend please contact the Johnian Office or the Captain of the LMBC. ☼

The Dinner for present and former cricketers takes place on 9 May in the Wordsworth Room. There will be a cricket match on the Playing Fields starting at 11.30am and the Cricket Club will be running a barbecue and bar all day. You are most welcome to bring your family to watch the match. Details have been sent to known cricketers so if you would like to come, but have not received an invitation, please

contact the Johnian Office or the Captain of the Cricket Club. ☼

A dinner to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the **Purchas Society** will be held in the Senior Combination Room, by kind permission of the College Council, on Saturday 2 May 1998. Please contact Dr Bayliss-Smith at the College if you have not received your invitation and would like to attend. ☼

The **College Choir** will be touring South Africa in August 1998. The tour will include a concert in the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg and an Outreach project with a black choir from Soweto. It is hoped to arrange receptions for Johnians and their guests in conjunction with the concerts. Further details will be available shortly from the Johnian Office and will also be available on the College's World Wide Web pages. ☼

Can you help?

Are you or your company able to offer work experience (paid or unpaid) to students at St John's during the vacation? In this day and age, work experience is essential for all young people when seeking careers and it has been suggested that members of College might be able to help in this way.

If you would like to discuss further the possibility of offering work experience to current students, please contact Catherine Twilley, Development Officer. ☼

Dr Timothy Insoll, a Research Fellow of the College since 1995, is putting on a exhibition at the British Museum called 'Medieval Trading Cities of the Niger'. The exhibition will run from October 1998 to April 1999.

The exhibition is of material excavated by Dr Insoll in Mali, showing the extensive trans-Saharan and other trade networks of Gao and Timbuktu. It will illustrate the impact and spread of Islam in West Africa.

The College is supporting the mounting of the exhibition, but sponsorship for the booklet is required, a cost in the region of £2,200. If anyone is able to help, please contact Dr Insoll directly at the College. ☼

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