



# Johnian News

Issue 6

Michaelmas Term 1999

## The Choir sings its way into the charts

The College Choir has signed with Naxos Records to make four recordings in the next two years. The recordings will establish a new series of 20th-century English choral music. The first compact disc features the choral music of Herbert Howells (1892-1983), and has just been released. In the week of its launch, the CD was the sixth best selling classical title in the country. This was particularly impressive due to the fact that the CD did not have a full week to achieve this status, having been launched some way into the week. Barry Holden, Head of Marketing for Naxos in the UK, said: 'I think it would be fair to say that it was the best-selling *real* classical album of the week'.

Naxos is the UK's leading classical label; one in every five classical CDs sold is a Naxos recording. The College decided to sign with Naxos due to the company's excellent distribution network and reputation for high-quality recordings. Christopher Robinson, the Organist and Director of Music, said: 'Naxos' product is very good, the producer and engineers were absolutely first-class and they have an excellent marketing team.'

It is particularly appropriate that the first CD should feature Howells' music; Herbert Howells was acting organist at the College during the Second World War and was elected into an Honorary Fellowship at the College. Christopher Robinson said: 'I remember him quite well. When I was organist at Worcester Cathedral I remember doing the Collegium Regale communion service at midnight mass on television and someone alerted him to the fact that it was on. He wrote me a very nice letter afterwards'.

The music on the CD includes the *Requiem*, which was composed for Boris Ord and King's College, and *Like as the hart*, which he wrote in the year that he became Acting Organist at St John's. A further piece, *Take him, earth,*

*for cherishing*, was written for the memorial service of President John F Kennedy. Barry Holden of Naxos writes '[Howells]' strong sense of place and unique sound-world set him apart, while his contribution to the renaissance of English choral music during the course of his long life is probably unparalleled'.

NAXOS

English Choral Music

DDD

8.554659

**HOWELLS**

**Requiem • Take Him, Earth, For Cherishing**  
and other choral works

Choir of St John's College, Cambridge  
Christopher Robinson • Iain Farrington, Organ



The cover of the new Howells CD

The cover of the Howells CD features a photograph of New Court which was taken by Catherine Twilley, the Development Officer.

A second recording, of Britten's music, has already been made and will be released next year. In the meantime, the Howells CD has sold over 5,000 copies in the first six weeks of release and is available from all good music shops at a price of £4.99. It is also available from the Johnian Office at a cost of £4.50 (postage and packing 50p for the UK and £1.50 for overseas). ☼



## College news



The Master and the Archbishop of Kenya

to give the bicentenary sermon for the Church Mission Society, one of whose founders was William Wilberforce, a Johnian. He also backed the 'Oxford to Cambridge with a Camel' walk, a project to raise money to support schools for Kenyan nomads.

This sponsored walk took place from 22 to 27 June, and Catherine Twilley, the Development Officer, joined the last day of the walk which started in Kingston village near Cambridge and ended at King's College where the walkers and the camel were met by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, the Bishop of Ely, the Provost of King's and the Master of St John's.

The money raised, £20,000 so far after expenses, has founded an endowment fund with the Church Mission Society for church primary schools in northern Kenya, in memory of Bishop Andrew Adano who was tragically killed in a helicopter crash. Most of the communities in the area follow a traditional grazing pattern and are always on the move in search of pasture and water for their animals. The Church Mission Society believes that education for the children of nomadic tribespeople is vital.

Further information, including a photo story of the walk, can be found on the world wide web at <http://www.etransfer.com/camelwalk>

**Adam Footman** of the College Office organised the College's entry for the Chariots of Fire Charity Relay Race in aid of the Papworth Trust. The race took place on 26 September and involved each member of the team completing a one and three quarter mile circuit around the Backs. The College fielded three teams. The first team finished in 13th place overall and was the fifth fastest college team, while the second and third teams came 109th and 154th respectively.

**Jimmy Moxon** (BA 1941), who died in August, was the sole white African Chief of Ghana. He will be buried in the style of a Chief in Ghana later this year.

Mr Moxon came from a family of Johnians which spans three generations.

**A Johnian Weekend** took place on 10 and 11 July 1999 for those who matriculated in 1956 to 1958, 1961 to 1966 and 1977 to 1979. These weekends take place every two years and allow members of College to bring their family and friends to various events, such as dinner in Hall, exhibitions, lectures and tea in the Master's Garden. They do not replace the eight-year dinners to which only members of College are invited but are designed to complement these occasions.

The weekend was blessed with very good weather and Johnians and their guests enjoyed the activities on offer. The highlights for many were the dinner in Hall on the Saturday night, where guests were serenaded by the Gentlemen of St John's, and the Sunday Eucharist, for which the Choir was joined by members of the Choir Association to sing Mozart's *Coronation Mass*.

**Robin Orr** (Organist and Director of Studies in Music 1938-1951 and Honorary Fellow of the College) celebrated his ninetieth birthday on 2 June. The occasion was marked both by an Evensong of his music and a lunch in the Master's Lodge in his honour.



Left to right: Jeremy Huw Williams (BA 1990, Opera Singer), Geraint Lewis (BA 1980, Music Director of Nimbus Records), Robin Orr

**Professor Wyllie**, Fellow of the College, has been awarded the William Bate Hardy Prize by the Cambridge Philosophical Society, jointly with Professor T Clutton-Brook. The award to Professor Wyllie was for his discovery of the phenomenon of apoptosis, otherwise termed programmed cell death, in mammalian cells.



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## A shooting star

*Chris Haley came to St John's in 1993 to read Natural Sciences. He took his BA in 1996 and is currently studying for a PhD in the history of science. He began small-bore and full-bore shooting in 1995 and was awarded his first half-blue the following year. Since then he has shot for the British Universities and Great Britain under-25 teams, as well as representing England. This summer he was placed fourth in the National Rifle Association's 'Grand Aggregate' ranking of 1100 international competitors.*

I started shooting in my third year at St John's, after finding that I was not particularly suited to rowing. Two of my younger brothers have shot successfully for a number of years, so that was one reason for my interest. One brother, Nick, is at Trinity Hall, so we often shoot alongside each other. Due to a Welsh grandmother, however, we had the choice of declaring ourselves Welsh or English and since Nick chose the former and I chose the latter, we have actually found ourselves competing on opposing teams at times!

There are actually quite a few different disciplines in rifle shooting, though the sport can roughly be divided into *small-bore* and *full-bore*. The former involves a small-calibre round, usually shot indoors at short range, whilst the latter refers to a larger calibre and is shot outdoors over several hundred yards (there are university clubs for both). In addition, there are variations where different positions or aids like telescopic sights are used. The majority of competitions do not allow such aids, however, which can occasionally be daunting when you are peering through the mist at a target a thousand yards away!

One of the main difficulties in long range shooting (apart from simply pointing the rifle straight!) is taking the wind into account. Even a mild breeze may deflect a bullet from the bull's-eye, and it is not uncommon for stronger gusts to blow your shots onto the target

next-door if you do not compensate for them!

Unfortunately the sport is a politically sensitive one, even though it has a distinguished history. Rather than the macho, aggressive activity that it is occasionally depicted as being, it has been better described as a 'thinker's sport'. Of course, any sport has psychological elements, but good technique in shooting is very much about mental control - certainly the shooters I know are more Rousseau than Rambo!

Possibly because of its image, there are still fewer women than men within the sport, but that is changing quite rapidly. It is, after all, one of the few activities in which both sexes can compete on entirely equal grounds, as can many disabled people. That said, although shooting doesn't require physical strength, the recoil from a full-bore round is roughly equivalent to a brick dropped from a second-floor window. With some of the longer competitions stretching into weeks, this, coupled with continual concentration, can become both physically and mentally draining.

It is also one of the country's most successful sports - certainly in terms of Commonwealth Games medallists, for example. I believe, too, that Cambridge's string of nineteen consecutive Varsity victories is the longest in any sport - though saying that is probably tempting fate, isn't it? ☘

**Chris Haley (BA 1996)**







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## External property and internal politics

*George Reid (BA 1962) was appointed Senior Bursar of the College in 1991. This is an extract from an article which was first published in Country Life in October 1999.*

George Reid is in overall charge of the College's extensive external assets, including land, property and investments. But in typically unassuming fashion, he conducts most of his work from a small side-room, piled high with papers. This is, after all, a man who believes that 'the image of Cambridge as a finishing school for the élite is a complete fiction'. A former mayor of Cambridge, he once spent a night sleeping on the steps of the town's Guildhall to highlight the plight of the homeless. 'It may have been June, but it was extremely chilly. Luckily, I was well supplied with blankets.'

Formerly a university lecturer in mathematics and senior tutor, Dr Reid has spent 40 years at St John's after arriving as a 17-year old undergraduate fresh from Dulwich College, to which he won a scholarship at the age of 11. It is unusual for an academic to be appointed to the pragmatic and worldly post of senior bursar, even though John Bradfield, a former research fellow and retired senior bursar of Trinity College, is credited with amassing that college's huge wealth through shrewd acquisitions. Most senior bursars come from the services and are practised administrators; others are accountants or bankers.

Dr Reid took up his post in 1991, after being approached by the college authorities. 'There is no special training,' he remembers, 'not even a medical check. It took me six months to work out whether I was coming or going.' This may be unduly modest: a member of the Bar, although he has never practised, Dr Reid has what he terms 'a reasonable understanding of land and a grasp of the principles of accounting'. Most importantly, he knows how the college works, and understands its internal politics. 'It's the best advantage in this job - it is easier for me to learn about the real world than it is for an outsider to learn about the college.'

Trinity may be the richest college in Oxford and Cambridge, but St John's still has the largest land holdings. Its 17,500 acres of primarily agricultural land are concentrated in Kent, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire; it has lucrative outposts in Sunningdale, Berkshire and Ospringe, Kent, given to the college at its foundation in 1511. The college

appointed its first senior bursar in 1535, and the notes and books of Dr Reid's predecessors line the walls of his rooms, together with a prized rowing trophy, a blade from the 1973 Bumps.

Dr Reid's post is by no means a sinecure. St John's is a charity that survives on the flow of income from its assets: his objective is to maximise the college's gain. He is reappointed from year to year - 'unless I bring a smile to the face of the college's governing body, they get someone else in' - and the appointment comes up for renewal in November. He is responsible for 'sums of money which would be inconceivable in daily life,' and could not operate unless his colleagues had complete faith in him.

Much of the college's income comes from its investments in the stock market, in which Dr Reid is guided by a capable team of advisers drawn from the college's alumni. It is a talented pool: the current investment committee includes the financial director of British Land, the chief economist at Lehman Brothers and a retired director of Morgan Grenfell. 'No organisation can afford to stand still,' Dr Reid says. We have to come up with new expansion schemes and set aside our natural conservatism.'

Although his characteristically understated aim is 'to leave my successor as well resourced as I was', it seems that the next senior bursar of St John's will have a lot to draw on and even more to live up to. ☸





## Notices

We are pleased to include the following message from **Jim Williams**, formerly Head Groundsman, who retired in August:

'Jim Williams, the former Head Groundsman to the College, would like to thank everyone who contributed money and kind words on his retirement. If the playing fields were part of your life for a few years, they were part of mine for a long time and I too have memories. Thank you so very much.

Jim and Rita Williams.' ❀

## Dates for your diary

An exhibition to celebrate the achievements of **Sir Charles Parsons** (BA 1877) opened on 1 November in the Library Exhibition Area. The exhibition, entitled 'Parsons and Power', includes displays relating to Parsons' early life and his time at St John's, the invention of the steam turbine for electricity generators, the turbinia, the application of the steam turbine to military and merchant boats, the development of Engineering in the University and his other achievements. The exhibition is open when the Library is staffed. Please contact the Library on (01223) 338622 for details. ❀

The **Johnian Society Annual Meeting and Dinner** will take place on Saturday 11 December 1999. Sir Michael Scholar, Permanent Secretary, Department of Trade & Industry, Honorary Fellow of the College, and President of the Society will be in the Chair.

The cost of the dinner is £32 for those over 25 and £22 for those under 25. Accommodation in College is also available at a cost of £20 including breakfast.

Application forms were sent out with *The Eagle*. If you have not already replied and would like to attend the Dinner, please telephone the Johnian Office on (01223) 338700. ❀

The **College Choir** will be singing at the English Chamber Orchestra Christmas Concert at the Barbican in London on Friday 15 December. The concert begins at 7.30pm and includes Bach's Magnificat and seasonal works. Further information and tickets can be obtained from the Barbican Centre (telephone 0171 6388891 or world wide web: <http://www.barbican.org.uk>).

The Choir will also be undertaking a concert tour of Belgium just before Christmas. Concerts will be held at Hasselt Holy Heart Church on Sunday 19 December, at St Paul's Church in Antwerp on Monday 20 December and at St Peter and St Paul Church in Mol on Tuesday 21 December. Further information is available from the Johnian Office. ❀

The annual **Linacre Lecture** will take place on 5 May 2000 in the Physiology Lecture Theatre 1 at 5pm. Salvador Moncada, FRCP, FRS, Director of the Wolfson Institute for Biomedical Research, University College London, will give a lecture entitled 'Nitric Oxide: from atmospheric pollutant to universal biological mediator'.

Members of College are welcome to attend. Further information will be available from Catherine Twilley, Development Officer, nearer the time. ❀

Next year's **Johnian Dinners** will take place on Saturday 1 April 2000 and Saturday 1 July 2000. Johnians who matriculated in 1952, 1953, 1983 and 1984 will be invited to the dinner on 1 April. Invitations will be sent out shortly. Johnians who matriculated in the years up to and including 1940, and in 1988, 1989 and 1990 will be invited to the dinner on 1 July. Invitations will be sent out in December. ❀

The **Lady Margaret Boat Club** will be celebrating its 175th anniversary in the year 2000. The Officers of the Club propose to hold a dinner to mark this occasion on Saturday 30 September 2000 in College. It is expected that invitations will be sent out in the spring, but members of the LMBC are asked to put the date in their diaries. ❀

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