

The Rose Bowl

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOON SCHOOL OLD BOYS' SOCIETY

October, 2010

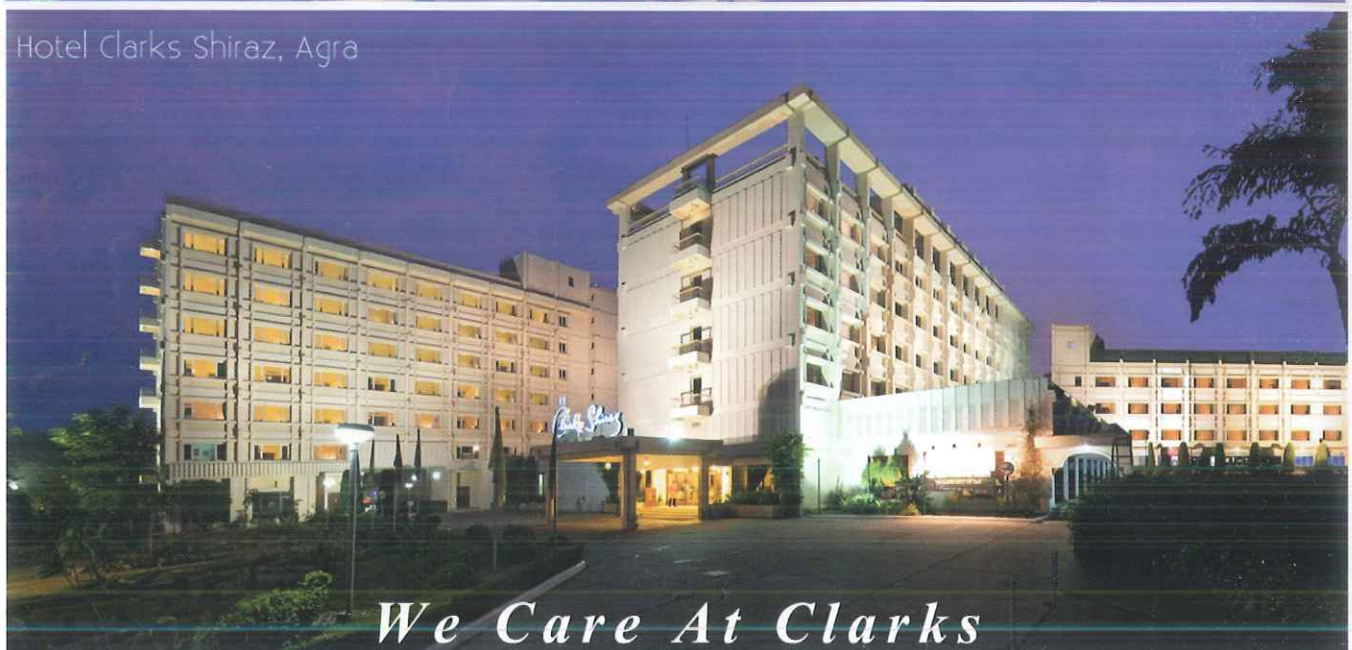
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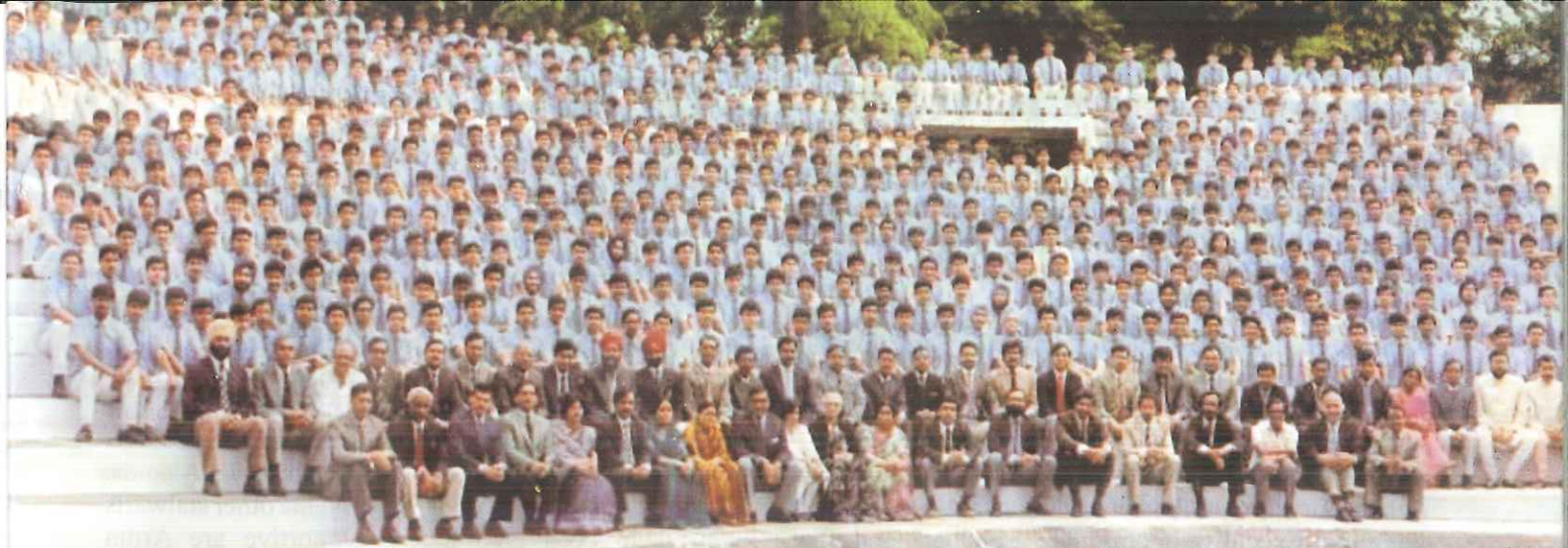
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Foreword

The broad framework of The Rose Bowl for the 75th anniversary celebrations was not hard to determine. There were the (i) articles of a general character by the old boys, masters and headmasters which dwelt on the values and principles that the school stood for; several Old Boys pondered on the need to change in order to take on the challenges of the times, (ii) regional news from countries ranging from Singapore and the Gulf to the US, where Old Boys are pursuing significant, on occasion dazzling, careers, (iii) class accounts describing revelry and elbow-bending exercises, (iv) jubilee celebrations of which we had silver to diamond; Old Boys from the first few batches to join the school, and others, returned to re-live a youth in the Chand Bagh that they cannot forget, and (v) letters to the editor.

The surprise was the articles of a general nature. As we pored over them in The Rose Bowl spread over 25 years, the strong feelings of the writers were evident. Their concern for the school, wondering if it was adjusting to the ever-evolving larger society, was palpable even as they insisted that it ensure that the product continued to remain superior, a leader of his time. There were articles on the professions the Doscocs had chosen. By far the largest number have either gone into business or joined the corporate sector. Others have become members of the government. We had write-ups on those who were in the armed services; these have been re-produced.

We felt that Doscocs who had chosen paths less trodden, ought to be brought to the fore: hence we have articles specially written for the anniversary issue on journalists, writers, poets (Of Quills and Columns), and another on those who have chosen the social sector, now better known as the NGO sector (The Road Less Travelled). Among them are those of whom it can be said "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen / And waste its sweetness....." They have not been ignored by us.

Memories of masters, understandably, were recounted by many old boys. Predictably, the English trio of Foot, Martyn, Holdy dominated, but we made sure that those written on the many other stalwarts who shaped our

lives, were retrieved for the silver anniversary issue of The Rose Bowl.

The Old Boys of the 40s and 50s, and to a limited extent of the 60s, have been the major contributors to The Rose Bowl. Our effort has been to obtain the views of the younger lot, and we have included the contributions of those who have responded to our request.

It is not as if the batches of the 70s and 80s, and to some extent of the 90s, have been inactive. Not so. The class write-ups indicate that they meet often. If we have not re-printed these, it is because the process of getting together and the celebrations have a similarity that we are all familiar with. So we felt the purpose would be better served if we published group photos of the class. These should enable the class gang to recapture the bonhomie, warmth, shared memories of breaking bounds, old jokes, old follies rehashed.....

To an extent the regional news had similarities with class reminiscences, as indeed do the jubilee celebrations. But we have incorporated one because these were tales of Old Boys settled not only in various parts of India but in the far flung corners of the world, sometimes capturing the unique ambience of their adopted countries. And the second because Old Boys had survived decades to re-gather in the salubrious environs of the Chand Bagh. They share their pleasure at the welcome they received from their old masters and the HM of the time; they also describe some of the adventures they were able to re-visit by rafting down the river, or the hiking trips they dared to undertake, climbing Nag Tibba and other peaks.

The other surprise was the letters to the editor. They capture the nostalgia, anger, even disgust on a spectrum of issues. By giving them headings we have identified the subject matter that the Old Boy was taken up with – much as in mainstream press – and thus made the letter more immediately accessible to the readers.

Valentina Trivedi
Gautam Vohra

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is indeed my privilege to be the Editor-in-Chief of the Rose Bowl at this historic point in time when not only does our School turn 75 but our newsletter, the Rosebowl, turns 25.

This message, however, is not about the Rosebowl but about all those who have made this newsletter what it is today.

Conceived of under the Presidentship of Lalit Nirula (when our current President, Vipin Malhotra was a fledgling Executive Committee Member) and first published under the Presidentship of Arun Bharat Ram coinciding with School's 50th year celebrations (Golden Jubilee) in 1985, the Rose Bowl has had a long and eventful 25 years journey. The history of the Rose Bowl has been briefly (though separately narrated by me in this issue so that it is recorded for posterity.

It is my duty, however, to thank and acknowledge the efforts of all those who have made the Rose Bowl the successful newsletter it is today. I must begin by thanking former President, Anoop Bishnoi who on the eve of assuming charge as President of the DSOBS in October 2004, invited me to join the Executive Committee and thereafter entrusted the Rose Bowl to my care. Past Presidents, Nitán Kapoor and Gautam Chadha have also been pillars of support. However, like Anoop the other President who has been a great source of strength and encouragement has been my current President, Vipin Malhotra. To them my heartfelt thanks.

On the Editorial Board the three pillars on which the edifice of the Rose Bowl has stood are Valentina Trivedi, Nalin Khanna and Gautam Vohra. Valentina for taking over all the drudgery and doing a wonderful job with the editing apart from writing pieces herself. Nalin Khanna for covering all sports events with a professional sports commentator's eloquence and Gautam Vohra, a professional journalist for being our senior mentor and guide through my eventful journey as Editor over the last six years. Thank you – Valentina, Nalin and Gautam. Thanks also to my Editorial Board – Rahul Kohli, Donny Singh, Vivek Seth, Mohit Jayal, Kunal Sharma, Rajiv Sarin and Govind Dhar – for always standing by me and chipping in with their inputs.

No publication is possible without either the paper or the funding. For the former, our heartfelt gratitude to Gautam Thapar and Balarpur Industries Limited for supplying paper free of cost through these six years. Gautam has not only contributed paper free of cost for the Rose Bowl but has also supplied paper free of cost for all other DSOBS ventures, be they dinner invitations, play brochure, Bolshoi ballet brochure or

what have you.

When it comes to funding the Rose Bowl, the solitary avenue was through advertisements. The first name which comes to mind when I think of ads is that of my dear friend, Apurv Kumar who has over the last six years unfailingly given an advertisement for every issue of the Rose Bowl. Infact, his full page advertisement finds place in the inner front cover of this Silver Jubilee edition which you hold in your hands. Thank you Apurv. While on funding, the other stalwarts who have been enormously supportive are Arjun Malhotra, Sandeep Sahai and Amrendra Singh who have financed half cost of the Rose Bowl through 2010 and will continue to do so through 2011 and 2012. Regular advertisers who have always risen to the occasion and unfailingly supported me are Anoop Bishnoi, Ajay Swarup, Moin Qureshi, Gautam Chadha, Vipin Malhotra, Jaswinder Singh Bull, Indrave Singh Mann, Rajesh Wadhwa, Rajat Banerji, Hemant Sharma, Pradip Narain, Analjit Singh, Jaivir Singh, Sunil Munjal, Ajay Shriram, Nitán Kapoor and many others who I may have inadvertently omitted. Thank you all for your continuous support.

Today, the second source of funding is the interest from the Rose Bowl Corpus to which many of you have so generously contributed. Thank you dear donors.

However, the success of a publication is equally dependent on the quality of its content. For this my thanks to all Members of my Editorial Board for writing and to the Dosco fraternity and our former teachers. My thanks specially to Mr. Gurdial Singh, the late Sheel Vohra (who left us a few days ago on October 13, 2010), Dr. H.D. Bhatt, Nalni Jayal, Aamir Ali, Arijit Banerji, Mihir Das, Ashim Mukherjee, Saroj Kumar Mehera, Lalit Mathur, Darshan Singh, Vikram Lal, Ranjan Bhalla, Arjun Mahey, Bharat Mahey, Surender Singh, Abhay Prakash Singh, Bipin Bhatia, Yatish Aron, Ashu Goyal, Sameer Dhingra, Lt. Col. A.K. Khanna, Lt. Gen. T.B. Nanda, Anirudh Chowdhry, R. Vijit Singh, Abhinav Bhushan, Khush Ahmad Mulk, Rajnish Bahl, Sati Puri, Dr. Kanti Bajpai, Rohit Bhalla, Manuj Ailawadi, Jagvinder (Binny) Singh, Ashok Mehta, Vikram Kalia, Sumant (Stumbo) Dewan, Rohit Badhwar, and others for their writing.

This note of acknowledgements would be incomplete without expressing our heartfelt thanks to former Editors – Samir Kuckreja, Bhaskara Vira, Rahul Badhwar, late Col. P.C. Khanna, Ratan Kapoor as also former co-Editors – Saradhi Rajan, Nikhil Deogun, Vir Singh, Mohit Jayal, Vikramjit Singh Chopra, Rathin Mathur and Jagat Singh. Thank you gentlemen for having shouldered the burden of the Rose Bowl at

various stages during the 25 years of its journey. Thanks are also due to former Secretaries of the DSOBS and members of earlier Rose Bowl Sub-Committees including Lalit Mathur, Sharad (Sheroo) Sharma, Geeta Bhaskaran, Sheel Sharma and Assistant Secretary, A.P. Narayanan. Thanks also to past Presidents – S.S. Bery, Vijai Kapur, Bhai Manjit Singh, Darshan Singh, Lalit Nirula, Arun Bharat Ram, Rohit Handa, Pushpinder Singh Chopra, Dhruv Sawhney, Harpal Singh, Sunil Kant Munjal, Sumanjit Chaudhry, Deepak Nirula, Ajay Shriram, Nitan Kapoor, Anoop Bishnoi, Gautam Chadha and Vipin Malhotra. Our heartfelt thanks to them all for having kept the Rose Bowl going from strength to strength.

I know I may have missed out on many names who I should have thanked specifically and I do apologize for any omissions. Do remember that even if I have inadvertently missed out your name (I am only human), my thanks and gratitude are always with you.

As far as this Silver Jubilee edition is concerned, it is entirely the handiwork of Gautam Vohra, Valentina Trivedi and Mohit Jayal. To them, my thanks.

The fine printing you have been seeing over the last few issues, including this Silver Jubilee edition, has been the handiwork of Sunil 'Melly' Gupta who has come onboard for the first time as a Dosco publisher and

printer. Prior to the April 2010 issue, all printing was given to outside agencies. Thank you, Melly.

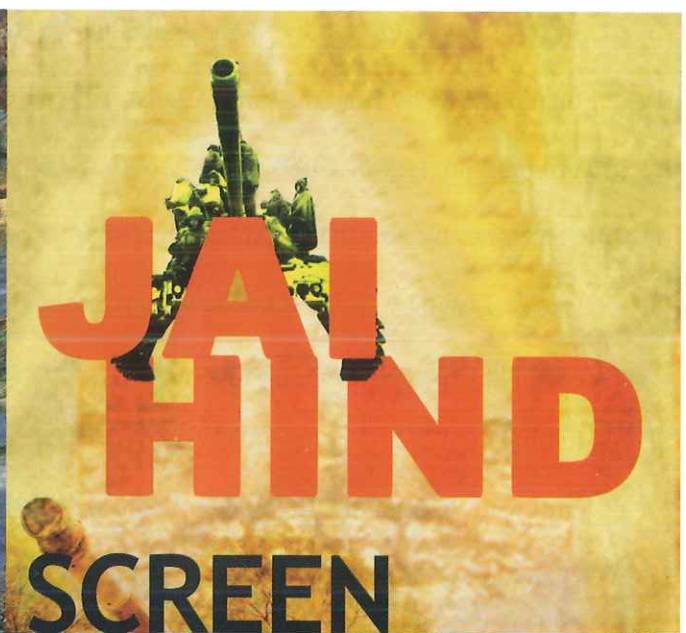
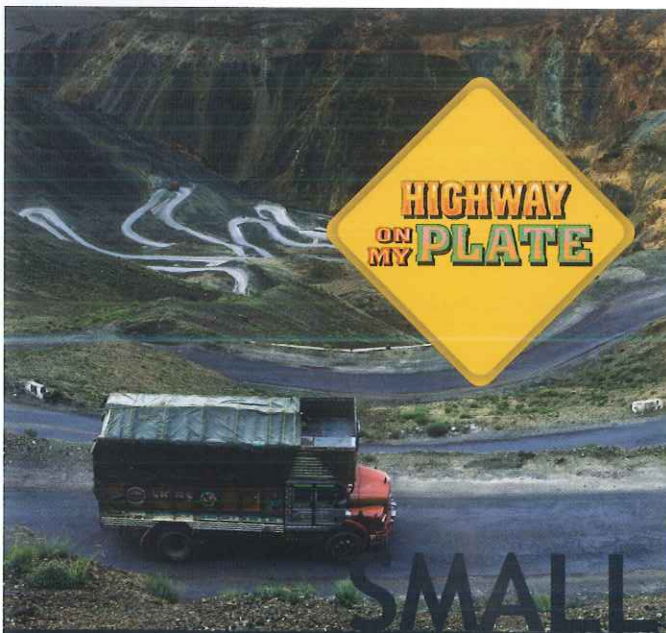
Last but not the least are those stalwarts from my office without whom I could never have performed my task as the Editor of the Rose Bowl over the last six years. Rajiv Rekhi who has throughout done all the feeding, typing, lay out, correspondence, etc. for the last six years including doing all the grunt work for Gautam and Valentina for this Silver Jubilee edition. To Rajiv my heartfelt thanks. Thanks also to Vinod Kumar Sharma and Kalika Prasad Shukla from my office for their continued support.

Last but not the least, ladies and gentlemen, thank you, the readership, for all your encouragement over the last six years in making the Rose Bowl the success it is today.

I hope you enjoy reading this Silver Jubilee edition and I am sure all successive Editors will take this publication to greater heights in the years to come.

Yours sincerely

Kishore K. Lahiri
30-K '74
Editor-in-Chief



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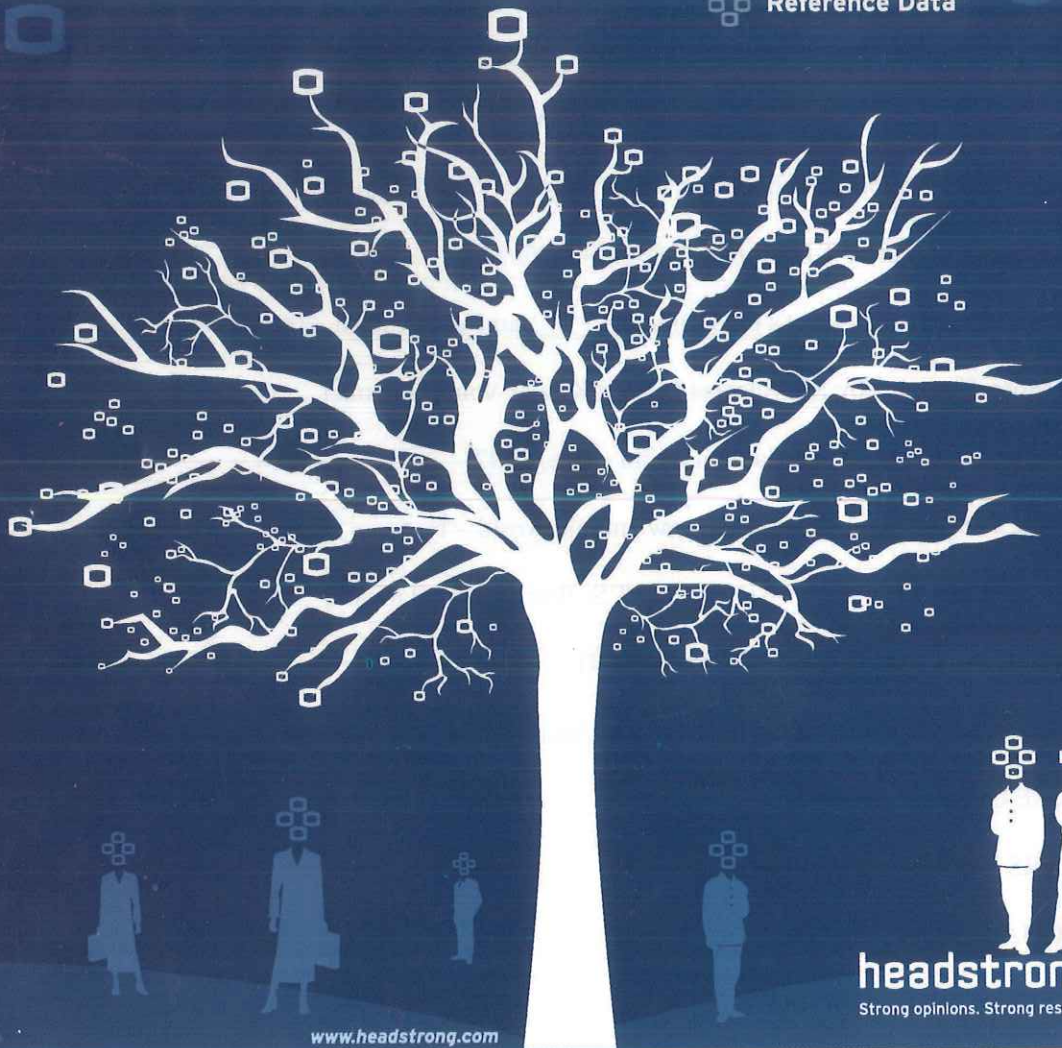
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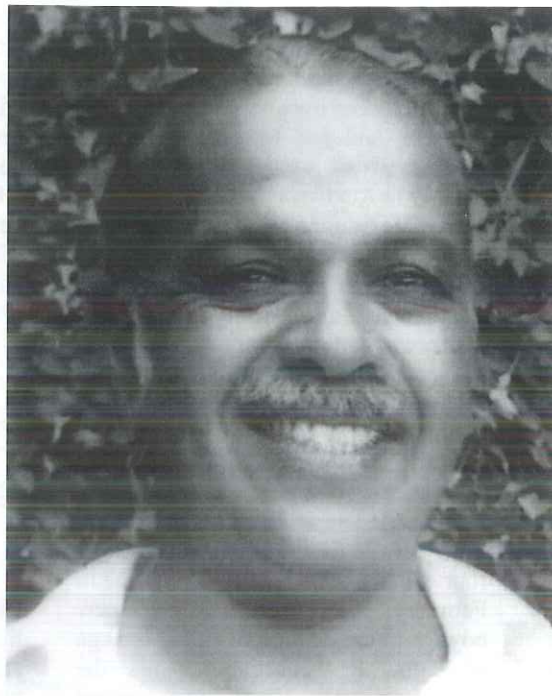
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Mr. Susheel Kumar Vohra

May 29, 1936 to October 13, 2010

Sheel Vohra or 'Bond' to all those who knew him, who he taught or coached or whose lives he touched – Mr. Vohra straddled almost four decades of The Doon School's history from 1959 to 1998 like a colossus. He was truly an iconic figure and will always share Doon's hall of fame with the greats of yesteryears such as Foot, Holdsworth, Martyn, etc. and living legends such as Gurdial Singh and others. He taught maths and groomed the boys in cricket. He was a prominent fixture at every important cricket match as an umpire and wrote on the matches for the Doon School Weekly. His love for School, its boys (both past and present) and cricket ensured that even after retirement he was always at Chandbagh or Delhi on most important occasions and always attended cricket matches particularly Old Boys' matches. Infact, he would also frequently do the write ups for the Old Boys' cricket matches and his last such write up will be published in the January 2011 issue of the Rosebowl which was on the Old Boys versus School cricket match for the AMQ Cup played in Dehra Dun on April 10, 2010. His memory was legendary. He could connect a face even decades after a boy left School and remember his School number, if not his name. Having joined School just before Doon turned 25 in 1960, he officially remained as a teacher in School through School's 25th, 50th and 60th year celebrations. It is therefore, a pity that this legend who lived almost through the entire 75th year of The Doon School's existence had to leave us for that great maths class and cricket ground in the sky barely eight days before the celebrations are to begin. However, he would not like us to grieve his loss and dampen the 75th year celebrations. He would like us to celebrate his life and remember him through those four days of DS75.

We, at the Rosebowl and the DSOBS, dedicate this Silver Jubilee edition to this legend, this icon known as Sheel Vohra. May his soul find eternal peace and rest.

When The School Was 12

by A. E. Foot

Jamsheed Rahim, 247-K (1937-1944) has had a distinguished career. After school, and BA (Hons) at Government College, Lahore, he did his M.A. in Economics at Pembroke College in Cambridge. Joining ICI Pakistan, he went on to take over as Chairman, the ICI Group of Companies, then became Chairman Pakistan Advisory Board of Grindlays Bank, Chairman Pakistan Oxygen Ltd. and is now Chairman, Pakistan Petroleum at Karachi. Jamsheed is the OBS Representative for Pakistan. He has sent 'The Rose Bowl' this extract of the paper on the School, written by the Headmaster, Mr. A.E. Foot but read out for him by Jamsheed Rahim at the Joint Meeting of the India and Burma section and the East India Association on January 16th 1947.

In 1928 Mr. Satish Ranjan Das, cousin of the nationalist leader C. R. Das, became Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. With the encouragement of the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, he used a considerable amount of his time and energy arousing interest and enlisting support of the establishment and securing registration of the Indian Public Schools Society. The object of this society was to establish in India boarding schools of the same type as the English Public Schools, in which there should be no distinctions of caste, creed or social status, and Mr. S. R. Das aimed at raising 40 lakhs of rupees for the establishment of one school, that would be the forerunner of many others for both boys and girls. Mr. Das died in the same year, 1928. He had collected 10 lakhs, and had formed the Indian Public Schools Society under the Companies Act. After his death, the committee of management, with frequent changes in personnel, was not able to do very much, and early in 1934 some of the donors of the Rs 10 lakhs began to suggest the return of their subscriptions. But fortunately Sir Joseph Bore, then Railway Member of Lord Willingdon's Council, undertook the Chairmanship of the Committee, and with Mr. M. S. A. Hydari (now Sir Akbar Hydari) as Secretary, decided that this must not occur and that a site must be found and a school started with the funds available, which with interest had by then amounted to Rs 14.5 lakhs.

They obtained from the government of India on favourable terms the site at Chandbagh, Dehra Dun, which had been left vacant when the Forest Research Institute moved to new quarters, and put forward a definite scheme which was accepted by the Society in August, 1934. Lord Halifax, then President of the Board of Education, was asked to convene a selection committee to appoint a Headmaster, and the writer of this paper, who was at the time an assistant master at Eton College, was selected. The Headmaster arrived in India in February, 1935 and the school was opened in September, 1935.

For the first term there were seventy boys between the ages of eleven and fourteen. In the second term, starting in February, 1938, there were 110 new boys, ranging down to a minimum age of eight. In subsequent years the minimum age limit was raised gradually to eleven, so that the age range at the present time is eleven to eighteen. In 1937 a fourth house was added, and since that time there has been no major change in size, though the existing structure has been stretched so that there are now just under 300 boys. There are four boys' houses, named after the biggest initial donors; Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu and Kashmir and Tata. Each house holds sixty to eighty boys. Fifteen are accommodated in a holding house for boys in their first term, and there are about ten day-boys--all sons of genuine local residents. There has never been any lack of demand for places in the School and the waiting list is full up to 1953. There are over 100 names on the list for each term for the next five years, out of which not more than a quarter will be able to get in.

Mr. RL Holdsworth



The fees in 1935 were 1,375 rupees a year; in 1938 they were raised, for new admissions, to 1,525 rupees. In 1941, owing to the over all rise in prices, a charge of 100 rupees was added for all. From September, 1946 the fees have been raised again, for new entrants, to 1,800 rupees (£138) a year. The fee is very inclusive and with pocket money (limited to 8 rupees per month), clothes and travelling, a parent should not need to spend more than £170 a year.

About 60 per cent of the parents are professional men or in Government service. About 20 per cent are business men and the remaining 20 per cent landowners or princes. The boys come from all over India.

Boys take the Cambridge School Certificate examination usually when they are between fifteen-and-a-half and sixteen-and-a-half. Except when the upper age limit interferes (a boy may not stay beyond the end of the school year in which he becomes 18) most boys stay on after the School Certificate. The Intermediate can be taken fifteen months, and the Higher School Certificate two years, after the School Certificate. The majority of boys choose to do Science subjects, either Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, or Physics, Chemistry and Biology. The Arts subjects are Economics, History and Civics. Most boys on leaving go to a university in India. About a dozen are in England now and the same number in U.S.A. Other boys go direct into one of the armed services or into business. At the end of the war about 65 Old Boys had commissions in the Indian Army, Navy or Air Force.

The games played at the school, and in which there are school matches and inter house competitions, are hockey, association football, cricket, athletics, tennis, swimming, boxing, Indian wrestling and cross-country running. These are spaced out through the year, so that at any period there is one major game and a minor game in season. There is P. T. daily in the early morning. All the classes taken by senior boys, who have a course of training in leadership somewhat analogous to that for Certificate A, part-1, in the O.T.C. in England, and all boys have to do this course so that those who are lacking in



Mr. John Martyn

self-confidence get a chance to develop it. Senior boys also teach new boys to swim, and later on give the instruction for Royal Life Saving Society's Certificates. There is also coaching in boxing, wrestling and athletics in the P. T. period.

We have a system of badges on the lines of the English country-badge plan which was unfortunately, still-born some years ago. We have formulated three standards called bronze, silver and gold, in athletics, apparatus work and swimming and each boy has a card on which his record in the tests is kept. When he has passed the tests in all three activities, he receives a bronze, silver or gold badge, and of course, is likely to qualify gradually to the higher standards as he stays in the school. These badges encourage a boy to pay attention to his physical development even if he happens not to be much good at ball games, and to get the satisfaction and definite accomplishment.

There are a variety of school societies which for the most part, meet in the evenings, fortnightly, and where appropriate, have lectures from outside people or boys--Scientific Society, Literary Society, Historical and Economic Society. Senior and Junior Debating, Poorbi (Hindustani), Shama (a junior Poorbi), Baz-i-Adab (more highbrow Urdu), an Art Society, Musical Society, Colloquium (for serious Mathematics), Chess Club, Film Society, Natural History Society, Philatelic Club and the Crickets (somewhat similar to the Essay Society at Eton). There is the Doon School Weekly, of which the editorial board is made up of a Master and a boy from each house. This contains, as well as the School news and fixtures, any news of old boys that is available. All members of the Doon School Old Boys' Society, which now number about 300, receive this paper and it forms a most useful link with them. It now spreads very far

over the world. There is a tuck-shop of which a senior boy is manager and others have a roster of duties as servers; the profits are available for grants to school societies for capital expenditure. The tuck-shop has two dozen bicycles for hire.

Religion and discipline can logically be placed in the same section, as they are both treated as a part of personal responsibility. There are boys of many different religious backgrounds in the school; out of 300 boys there are usually about 50 to 60 Moslems (who include Sunnis and Shias), 15 to 20 Sikhs and the same number of Parsees, half a dozen Christians, and the rest Hindus. There is, daily, a school Assembly at which there is music from a gramophone, a prayer of a type that makes no assumptions about after life but which centres around the development of the human personality and the recognition of its sacred nature, a period of silence, and a hymn--one of Tagore's or Iqbal's. From time to time the headmaster talks on some suitable



*Mr. Arthur Foot and Lord Louis Mountbatten
at the School's Founder's Day, 1948*

topic. The prayers are mostly from Tagore or R. L. Stevenson; they are explained by the headmaster in his weekly period with the lower classes. Discipline is not based on any system of punishment, but we rely on the boy realizing that the authorities of the school really care about the development of his character and his absorption of the ideas of the School and his acceptance of its standards of conduct. When a boy falls short of the standard either in matters of personal discipline such as punctuality, or in respect for the orderliness of the school, or in more serious things concerned with honesty in his work and his

dealings with Masters, he is likely to be seen by the Headmaster. The Headmaster will try and ensure that the boy realizes where he has been wrong, and will usually give him a yellow card, which the boy has to get signed by his Housemaster and tutorial Master and return at a certain time to the School office. After a week he has to get a discharge card from the office, get it signed again, and bring it to the Headmaster who thus gets an opportunity to close the incident. During the period up to discharge the boy is not allowed to go to the tuck-shop, or to go out of the School grounds. The restriction is not very serious and the yellow card is largely a symbol to indicate to the boy that he must do better. Moreover, as there is the same treatment of offences of varying gravity, the yellow card is in no way a payment like a fine or a hundred lines or a beating. The effect is subjective, and a boy who has a yellow card for something which is rather shabby will feel differently from the boy who has one for being late or forgetful. If a boy is idle at his work the Headmaster will give him a red card on which there is space for each period of the ensuing week and the boy has to get it signed by the master who has been taking him. At the end of the week he brings it to the Headmaster who will either give him another one or assume that he has been sufficiently reminded.

There are four School Prefects in each House appointed by the Headmaster, who sees them all together on Sundays at his house, so that there is an opportunity to discuss matters of importance that occur to him or to them. There are an additional four to six boys appointed by the Housemaster in each house with jurisdiction over the affairs of the House. These and the prefects are allowed to go out to the town for shopping and an occasional cinema.

Recognition of merit does not take the form of competitive prizes. If a boy reaches a certain high standard in regularity of conduct, in industry at his work or in achievement in the terminal examinations, he will sign the School Honours Book. Every three signatures entitle him to a prize of a book. A boy may also be awarded School Colours by the Council, on the recommendation of the Colours Sub Committee, which consists of one Prefect from each house and the Headmaster.

In the discussion that followed, Sir Frank Noyce, K.C.S.I. C.B.E. referred to the very successful way in which The

Doon School seems to have dealt with thorny questions of language, race, creed and caste and how successful the School has been on one of its main aims, the development of character and of individual aptitudes. Lieut. General Sir Thomas Hutton, K.C.I.E. C.B. M.C. was rather struck by the statement that only a few of the boys on the 'Waiting List' could get in and wondered if any effort was being made to create more Doon Schools. Sir Henri Richardson asked the question on the future of the boys after they left The Doon School. He suggested that something might be done about making the School better known to industrial and mercantile offices in Calcutta, who would need more and more of the type of boy which The Doon School will be able to turn out.

Jamsheed Rahim in his statement dealt with the future of the boys, especially in the years in University just after leaving school. He did not quite feel demoralized but certainly felt that there was a great deal to be achieved yet in the Indian universities. Life is so much less regular, whereas in the Doon School practically every minute is chalked out for you and there is very little time in which to idle. Quite often when a boy goes to an Indian university he finds time on his hands and no one to enforce his activities. Some boys do



Doon School tennis team, 1940-41 (Sitting) Yugal Puri, Chetan Anand (Master-in charge), Tilak Nanda K. Balram Singh, Ghulam Jilani Khan (Standing) K. Prem Lal, Jamsheed Rahim, C.K. Sinha, Trilochan Singh Brar

nothing about it although they may be quite talented. There are others who do try to get into the life of the university. I found that most Doon School boys, when they first go into a university, are up against a hostile group who consider the Doon School boy a snob. I do not blame this group because considering Doon School boys have worked and played together for as long as seven years, they naturally tend to come together when they go to another institution. So the general impression is that the Doon School boy does not care for the Indian university. Personally I

do not think that is a correct conclusion. I admit that the boys do flock together, but I do not think it is snobbery at all, and some of the boys have done very well in the social life of the Indian universities. Another point is that The Doon School boy has been playing games since he was eleven and the members of the university who are good at games, but not quite so good (except in the Punjab), are inclined to resent the fact that they should be superseded by these Doon School boys!

Mr. K. N. P. Nair (1905-1993)

*Kamal Bhagat
(September 30, 1993)*



Mr. K. N. P. Nair, former Housemaster Tata House, passed away on Wednesday, 28th July, 1993.

I first met Mr. Nair when, as a Welhamite, I came to the Doon School with my mother

to visit a brother who was in Holding House, run by Mr. Nair. My brother was on a Yellow Card so a tea was arranged in School and I watched with awe those very adult looking 11 years old Doscocs. Mrs. Nair was Mistress of Ceremonies and Ambika and Appan, the older Nair children, were also present.

When I came to the Doon School, Mr. Nair's fearsome disposition was a source of much trembling amongst us little boys. He had, like S.K. Vohra today, a reputation for detecting misbehaviour in class from the back of his head. Such individual faults were often followed by throws of dusters at the miscreants. I suspect there must be a mathematical formula which led to such similarities. (This similarity could perhaps be summed up as 'Bonding' effect?)

In fact, as a Maths master, his particular strength lay in his careful restructuring of

weak students' abilities and development of their confidence. He was meticulous as a master and frightening but fair as a man.

He took over Tata House from Holdy. This could have been a daunting task for anyone, as RLH had become a legend in his own life time. Not for KNP, these doubts. He set about remodelling the house to fit his own particular style of functioning, and by the time he handed over, no one could have doubted his ability or commitment as a House Master.

Retirement is inevitable, but KNP was a schoolmaster, so he took himself off to Blue Mountain School which is where I last met him in the mid-seventies.

His passing away brings to an end the life of one of the original and much admired of men on the Chandbagh campus. To his family, our condolences and also thanks for sharing him with us.

Boys Will Be Boys

S. P. Sahi

(October 28, 1989)

I say this not in the sense in which some grown-ups will rebuke you for grumbling about what you regard as wild or irresponsible behaviour in the young. Have you forgotten, they remind you, that you, too, were once that age and up to similar bursts of exuberant energy? Or they question pityingly, if you were always goody-goody doing what others regarded as proper and right. They say boastfully that they themselves behaved just like that, and ask you to see for yourself what they have made of their lives.

It is not in that sense that I wish to remember that boys will be boys, but in the sense Wordsworth recalled his childhood: My heart leaps up when I behold/ A rainbow in the sky/ So was it when my life began/ So is it now I am a man/ so be it when I shall grow old/ or let me die! And when he grew old, instead of boasting about the renown that he had gained, he talked of the need to turn to nature to avoid the sneers of, 'selfish man, greeting where no kindness is, the dreary intercourse of daily life. The conceit of so called successful men, who can recount only how naughty they were when young, fills many prospective, sensitive and shy people with sorrow. If they had been exposed to life at a Public School and come to know intimately many of their contemporaries at school, they would have discovered that it is just a pose when on growing up they talk of nothing else but having been tough, wildly adventurous, initiators of ingenious ways of giving a slip to authority, breaking rules clamped down on them which they regarded as patently arbitrary, unreasonable and sadistic. This projection of a coarse and rebellious exterior in fact belies the immensity of their deeper feelings--their respect for integrity, modesty, their admiration for those who are uncommonly talented, who have the courage to declare boldly their conviction, who help the weak and the defenceless. They did not talk of these things for fear of being called priggish, holier-than-thou, or being laughed at. On the occasion of friendly get-togethers, they wanted to laugh with others and the easiest way to do that is to recount what adventurous lads they were or debunkers of pompous

authority when young.

During the twenty three years of my stay at The Doon School (1945-68), I remember many occasions when I watched with wonder this truer aspect of boys' nature. I should like to put on record some of these memories, only please forgive me if I make mistakes in giving names and years, or even narrating the sequence of events. With age my memory has become slippery, and I have no records to check up.

Two of my earliest memories are connected with Mr. Foot. He liked taking E form for English, when he tried to explain to the new entrants the meaning of the prayers that he read out at Assembly. Soon everybody came to know that he was a strict disciplinarian in enforcing in boys habits of punctuality, proficiency in doing work, truthfulness etc. The prayer by R. L. Stevenson beginning with 'Lord, behold our family here assembled.' is a long one and needed much explanation. It contains the words 'Offenders ourselves, give us the grace to accept and forgive offenders. Forgetful ourselves, help us to bear cheerfully the forgetfulness of others.' Mr. Foot gave examples of situations in boys' life at



school to illustrate this when a young voice piped up "But please sir, you do not bear our forgetfulness cheerfully. For every small act of forgetfulness on our part you get cross. You give us a bad chit." Mr. Foot was taken aback. He felt small and shamed. As restitution he recounted to many of his colleagues this reminder of his failing.

Mr. Foot sometimes took C form for English. It was I think in late '47 or early '48. I happened to be taking this form

and explaining some point on the black board when I found Mr. Foot standing at the door. He said he wanted to speak to the class. "You are a fine set of boys," he said to them, "all very gifted and industrious." These were uncommon words of appreciation from their Headmaster. Some boys looked wide eyed with surprise, others smirked with self satisfaction. "I know I can always trust you" continued Mr. Foot, and after a slight pause added, "I shall not be able to take you in the next period, but I expect you to sit quietly in the class and complete the exercise that we began yesterday." Happy at the prospect of having a free period, the boys chanted 'Thank you Sir, thank you'. Mr. Foot was about to leave the classroom but he froze in his movement. He turned to the class and looking furious, he yelled, "You horrid ill-mannered boys!" There was a moment of shocked silence. "What should you have said?" he demanded. Boys looked too frightened to speak, until someone (I think it was Jagmohan Khanna, ex 64-T) who got up or said in a tone tremulous with contrition that they were sorry the HM would not be able to talk to their class in the next period, that they would greatly miss him. "That is what you should have said." said the HM, who now had considerably relented and left. He had hardly gone out of earshot when the whole class shot out of their places to hug Jagmohan for having saved them from the HM'S wrath. However had he thought of the words that were appropriate for the occasion?

As manager of The Doon School Weekly from '50 to '68, I was associated with a succession of editors, many of whom showed remarkable insight in deciding what should be printed in the weekly and what not. They worked under many pressures: their readership included school boys (present and old), members of the staff, parents of boys, and many friends of the school--even its critics. On some occasions the feat of producing a weekly that would project a truthful but fair picture of the happenings in the School and still hold the interest of its wide range of readers was like skating on thin ice, but they managed it quite skillfully. I remember particularly Ramaswami Rajan, editor in '49-50', Deelip Surve in '57 and Ashok Ranganathan in '52-'53.

They were a lively lot and kept everyone guessing, sometimes anxiously, about what would appear in the weekly next. They scooped news, varied their form of presentation and were fearless in expressing their views. Rajan was keen on organizing Gallup Polls and presenting statistically boys' views on whatever controversy happened to be raging in the School. He did this once on the demand from the Hindi department, that the weekly should contain a page in Hindi. The weekly is run entirely on the subscriptions raised from the boys, with no financial aid from the School. The subscribers (i.e. the boys) felt that as the weekly was their very own paper they should be allowed to run it in the language they all commonly used in school, in any case it should be free from all external pressures. Here was a subject about which people had got excited and Rajan put it to the Gallup Poll. One can imagine the verdict of the boys. On reading in the weekly the report on the Gallup Poll results, Mr. Chandola felt very displeased and told Rajan in no uncertain terms what disservice he had done to the cause of Hindi in the school. Rajan remained unflustered. To him Gallup Poll was a lark that liked perching on whatever controversy came its way; he didn't think its verdicts were momentous enough to change the course of history. He got into trouble again, this time with his roommate, for printing pages from his diary, recording proceedings of a secret society that he and his friends ran. The 'scoop' was in the best journalistic tradition, exposing activities that every law abiding student knew were unauthorized. However, the author of the diary felt aggrieved, and protested against what he said was theft of a purely literary exercise on his part.

And then there was the occasion when he chose to write in the weekly about Mr. Kapur's old vintage car. Mr. Kapur often used to oblige some angling enthusiasts from amongst the senior boy to have its use to go fishing to Raiwala during some week-ends. On their return they told stories, not about the usual mammoth fish that they had almost caught but which had slipped away but, of the trouble they had with the car. Rajan came out in the Weekly with the confidential report about the car he claimed had come his way. When it came to the engine, the report only recorded a hoot of shocked surprise.

Under Deelip Surve's stolid exterior lay a nimble and lively mind. A lightness of



First Old Boy's get together which took place at the Swiss Hotel, Delhi in 1950. Amongst those present were: Mr. John Martyn (HM), Vijay Lamba, Anand Jauhar, Surendra Sahai, Chander Prakash, K. Prem Lal, Shanti Swarup Bery, Atul Gupta, Mohinder Lal (Kali), Tilak Nanda, Manish Bahl, Lakshman Katre, Nalni Jayal and Surender Lal (Bandy)

touch in his writing intermixed with sallies of sharp sparkling comments. At one stage he wrote pen-portraits of some of his teachers, including one of the HM, titled, I think, the Earl Of Chandbagh. I used to fear that in doing this, Deelip was treading on dangerous ground and showed the manuscripts of these to the HM before allowing them to go to the printer. The Headmaster was not one to suppress talent in the young, and felt that there was no doubt Deelip's writing was the work of an uncommonly observant mind. Not all the Masters were equally understanding, and let their displeasure, born mostly of fear, as to whomsoever Deelip would pick on next to write about be known to him in some form or the other. Deelip then came out with an article entitled 'The Panwala Club Incorporated', describing condition of membership (addiction to chewing betel leaf being a must and a propensity to unearth lapses, recent and past, of senior boys of the school, specially the Editors of the Weekly, etc.), the venue of the meetings (the two garden benches that lay near the cricket pavilion in those days), the time (after evening games when boys had returned to their houses), and the matters discussed (for this a specimen of minutes of the previous meeting were submitted). This I could not allow to be printed in the weekly. Deelip said that he understood, that he himself had felt that perhaps the weekly was not the right forum for it. Just then Holdy happened to be officiating as Headmaster in the absence of Mr. Martyn who was away to attend a conference being held in Lovedale. Deelip and some of his friends dropped in at Holdy's place, and among other things asked Holdy what he thought if boys ran a paper of their own, and paid for it from their pocket money. Wasn't this allowed at Harrow, or was the

Harrovian the only weekly paper that Harrow had? Oh no, Holdy said; there were any number of papers that made their appearance at Harrow School from time to time, brought out by some group of enthusiastic boys or the other, but they were short lived, mainly because boys could not afford to meet the steep printing charges. Deelip and his friends clutched at the idea of having a paper of their own. They exercised their charm on Sardar Jaswant Singh who printed the School Weekly. He was quite game to print 400 copies of Deelip's paper for the cost of only the paper used, which didn't amount to much. The material was quickly collected and the first issue of their enterprise called 'The Suppressed Echo' was produced and distributed before Mr. Martyn's return from Lovedale. It had a Foreword by Holdy, commending Deelip's initiative, and had as its main feature Deelip's article on the Panwala Club Incorporated. (Holdy had a pre-view of all the articles that were to go into this new paper before writing his Foreword, but he was too remote from what was occupying the boy's minds to attach any significance to what the young writers were trying to convey.) School boys were thrilled to read at breakfast during mid-week something refreshingly new, but the members of the staff puckered their brows and puckered their lips in displeasure. Deelip was proving much too audacious and irresistible. Mr. Martyn did not approve of any innovation that might give offence to anyone. There was no further issue of 'The Suppressed Echo'.

Ashok Ranganathan had earned the nickname "Cheeky", an epithet used by his friends for him not in any derogatory sense but out of endearment for his straight forwardness, his boldness, and his courage to call a

spade a spade. He would not suffer weakly any person's unjust conduct however august his status, or from fear that he might do him harm. He took head on Mr. Catchpole, Principal of the RIMC when in '52, he demanded an apology from the Manager of the School Weekly for allowing to appear in it a signed note by Ashok Ranganathan commenting on the conduct of the RIMC football team in a match that the school had played against them on their ground. Mr. Catchpole was so enraged that a mere boy (Ashok was the Editor of the Weekly then) should dare to cast reflection on the conduct of the RIMC team that nothing would satisfy him unless we printed unabridged in the next issue of the Weekly a letter of apology drafted by him on our behalf, declaring that we had erred grievously and begged to be forgiven. Mr. Catchpole refused to meet the Manager or the Editor. He went straight to the HM with the letter, and asked him to order us to comply with his demand. Ashok was equally enraged with Mr. Catchpole's unreasonable attitude. He knew Mr. Catchpole, he had played cricket and squash against him, and he could not understand how one who had gained a Blue for cricket at Cambridge should be so lacking in simple courtesies and a spirit of sportsmanship. Ashok went and saw Mr. Catchpole that evening and told him exactly what he felt. No matters were minced, no punches were drawn. Mr. Catchpole called Ashok a cheeky young man and told him that if he had been a student of the RIMC, he would have rusticated him. "That is why I didn't join RIMC: knowing you were its Principal," was Cheeky's reply. The frank exchange of views, carried on in an atmosphere charged with goodwill, ended in a compromise. Mr. Catchpole would delete all references to the Manager, he would make no demands of apology, he would only state whatever he had to say in defence of the composition and the conduct of the RIMC team. And Ashok, as Editor would add a footnote to it to say that he understood Mr. Catchpole's point of view and sympathised with him in his difficulties. We felt greatly relieved when Ashok returned late that night to report how the matter had been resolved. We had nothing but admiration for the courage and wisdom that Ashok had shown for his years in the circumstances.

One more memory and I shall have

done. It was '65(2), and Abhay Shankar, as Head of Tata House was rigorously training the boys for the Cross Country Cup. One morning, after breakfast, he came to me and said that he wanted to resign from the House Captainship. When I asked him whatever had happened, he said that surely Sanmya Mitra must have been to me to complain about his atrocious behaviour. Sanmya had not been to me. On learning this, Abhay burst into tears and it was with difficulty that I could get out of him that the evening before, on finding that Sanmya had taken a short cut in the cross country run, he felt furious and slapped Sanmya so hard that the slender and delicate boy that he was, he fell flat in the middle of the main field. It was a hellish thing for Abhay to do to one who was respected by everyone for his gentleness, his academic brilliance, and for his readily helping all those who had approached him with their difficulties by explaining to them portions of their school work about which they had felt muddled. This Sanmya had now borne meekly the brutish punishment meted out to him, and not even complained about it to the Housemaster. Abhay could see in the looks of every boy on the House disdain for him for having been a fiend. He felt that a boy like him was not fit to be the House Captain; he deserved to be demoted, even publicly reprimanded. So heavy were his self reproach and his sense of guilt that I felt touched. All that I could suggest to him was to go up to Sanmya Mitra and tell him how sorry he was for what he had done and then send him up to me. They both came later; Sanmya was his usual gentle self. He took the blame on himself, and asked Abhay to please forget what had happened; he on his part would try not to give offence in future. Abhay felt shriven, relieved, even grateful. The incident had shades of the Rime of the Ancient Mariner: you perhaps remember the poem by Coleridge, in which is described the agony of guilt suffered by the mariner for having slain the albatross, the bird that made the breeze to blow to save their ship from disaster. The poem is not a mere horror story it gives expression to the travails of the human soul under stress of a deep sense of guilt.

Mr. S. P. Sahi was Head of the English Department and House Master Tata House. After Doon School, he took over as Principal of the Scindia School at Gwalior. He is now retired.

Reminiscences Of Gulmarg

*Hari Shankar Kapur 48-H, '39
(April 11, 1987)*

A group of masters and boys attended a ski-course at Gulmarg way back in 1937-38. HARI SHANKAR KAPUR (48-H, Class of 1939) looks back at the trip, probably the first association of the School with this sport – Ed

The ALFA straight race, starting from 'Lilly-White Shoulder' (near Alpathar) was won by Jack Gibson in great style from amongst many foreign competitors, but I am not sure if the Great Slalom was also won by him or not. We watched the competitions from our Grand Stand along the pony trail, located just below the nose-dive close to the Killan Hut (later swept away by an avalanche.)

Jack Gibson negotiated the nose-dive by cutting across its sweep face, thus reducing the terrific speed which had been built up while skiing down the Alpathar slope before he reached the foot of the nose-dive. He was, thus, well under control to negotiate a series of bumpy 'graves' which stretched across the run for another 200 yards before entering the forest trail, and on to Nedou's Hotel.

But, we were truly astonished and awestruck when we found Holdsworth coming over the crest of the nose-dive and then plunging straight down it fearlessly! He had gathered tremendous speed but his brave and beautiful run came a cropper when negotiating the bumpy 'graves' that followed. He simply disappeared into the soft snow and it was after a few minutes that we spotted jerky movements-- Holdie struggling to surface for fresh air! A team of stretcher bearers finally dug him out, and if I recollect correctly, that was the end of his skiing season due to knee and ankle injuries.

"First View"

*Jamsheed K. A. Marker (126-J, '40)
(October 28, 1989)*

My first view of The Doon School was on a bright, crisp February morning in 1936, the sort of the day and scene--brilliant sun, frost, a slight mist and a nip in the air, the magnificent trees of Chandbagh and the spectacular backdrop of the mountain-- of which there is no equal anywhere in the world. The buildings of Hyderabad and Kashmir houses (or Barret's and Martyn's as they were then known) looked neat, tidy and inviting, promising exacting fun and friendship. I think excitement was the operative word for my feelings at the time. There was the Main Field, with the hospital on one side, administered by the admirable Sister Mary Welby, and next to it, a white bench, reserved by tradition for batsmen padding up and waiting the agonizing walk to the wicket (I wonder are you still there, white bench, absorbing charges of nervous tension through the seats of countless opening batsmen or next men in?).

Then there was the Main School Building covered by ivy creepers, looking solemn and purposefully with the classrooms clearly and somewhat proprietarily delineated, with the appropriate Master's name. "Mr. Martyn's Room", "Mr. Clough's Room", "Mr. Mehta's Room", "Dr. Bhai's Room". But the Main School Building also housed the Library, inviting with the array of books on the shelves and the newspapers and magazines on the long tables; and the Tuck Shop, somewhat incongruously located in terms of the dignity of the rest of the building, but inviting nonetheless, particularly on one's own Tuck Shop Day.

By the time of my second term, the school had taken a quantum jump, and instead of two houses, there were now four, properly designated Hyderabad, Kashmir, Jaipur and Tata, and some of us were shuffled around from our old to the new Houses.

The Headmaster, with his usual perspicacity, combined delicacy with history and likened the transferees to the pilgrim fathers, out to settle in a new environment. Jack Gibson and Howell Thomas were the new Housemasters, each in his own manner bringing a new

dimension and stimulus to the Chandbagh. The swimming pool became functional and Skinners, hitherto very much subsidiary to the



Main Field, became an integral part of our lives--especially during the long hot summers when the lychee-trees and fruit, stimulated by prohibition against plucking, exerted their inevitable attraction. The polychromatic link between the pink skinned fruit and the yellow cards, which probably exists to this day, was first established during my time.

Other, more purposeful initiatives also commenced circa 1936/1937, and remain as sterling attributes of life at the Doon School. Tunwalla was "adopted" by us at this time. Why this particular village was chosen, and who chose it, I do not know but the idea and the concept were almost certainly driven by Messers Arthur Foot and John Martyn. Our first objective was twofold, adult literacy and the construction of a tank to hold fresh water for the village, and from these humble beginnings there grew an entire concept of practical public service. This was also the era of the first expedition to the mountains, bringing to the midterm breaks a special sense of adventure and

companionship, and leading to the preeminent position that The Doon School has now by tradition established in the mountaineering circles of India and the world.

Another memorable event was the construction of the Rose Bowl, initially associated with the labour points system, but eventually replacing the Assembly hall as the centre of cultural activity in the school. As for the Assembly, the simple ceremony must inevitably have left the deepest imprint on every Dosco. I know it certainly did with me, for later in life, when confronted, as all of us are, with moments of tension, doubt and uncertainly, I have found reason to be deeply grateful for all that was inculcated into me at The Doon School. Much of this was epitomized in the Assembly Prayers; "Teach us, good Lord to serve Thee...." and the others, which started out in our young lives as beautiful words, and then, through some mysterious and subtle process of osmosis, became a living credo for us all.

Last, but not least, is the fun and sense of humour that all of us acquired at The Doon School; not the humour of cruelty or ignorance, but the humour of tolerance, sometimes self deprecation, and always of joy and fun. Doon School jokes and stories are countless and have been repeated through the years. One which is perhaps not so well known, concerns the time when, as a prefect, I escorted a bunch of juniors from the Headmaster's room after they had received the customary lecture on the facts of life. As they emerged from the sanctum, one of the juniors, who, like the unknown soldier, shall remain anonymous but immortal, had a look of bewilderment on his face as he blurted "Yar, he knows everything!"



Doscoc And The Armed Forces

*Lt. Gen Gurbir Mansing (70-T '48)
(October 1989)*

Although The Doon School does not have a high profile in the Armed Forces, the palm being taken by the "other school" down the road, with the succession of Service Chiefs like Thimmayya, Bewoor and Sharma that it has produced as also its all time war hero Prem Bhagat, Victoria Cross, who were all proud Rimcolians, and yet, The Doon School need not be modest as there have been very substantial achievements by Doscoc in the Armed Forces over the years.

It is also not illogical that The Doon School should make a major impact in the Armed Forces. Many of our alumni are themselves sons of senior Services officers who later went into their father's profession. The location of the Doon School within the Cantonment itself must have had its own effect. Dehra Dun has one of the lovelier cantonments in the country and the intangible influence of the environment is permanent on the school. As a child, I recall being given a lift through the Cantonment in a jeep by the Sub Area Commander, then Brig Cummings, who had won the VC in Malaya. At that age I confess I was less interested in his VC than the jeep, a vehicle which had only just made an appearance in India, but those early impressions of the Army remain.

Successive Headmasters would also testify how important the Cantonment must have been in the day-to-day life of the school--whether it was help from the Gurkha Regiment Centres and the IMA for running our PT and Boxing competitions or for the water and electricity obtained through the Military Engineer Services. Other military institutions in Dehra Dun also had a major impact, most notably the Indian Military Academy. The most attractive date in the School's cricket calendar was the annual fixture against the IMA particularly if it was played on the beautiful IMA cricket grounds because the IMA was known to offer a superb lunch to visiting teams. Opening the batting for the school against the IMA, I can recall the tall figure, in silk and flannels of the IMA Adjutant Capt Wilson, who opened their bowling, commencing his run half way from the screen before flinging the ball down with demonic fury. Nearly forty years

later, at the Golden Jubilee of the IMA, I was seated next to him at lunch, now General Wilson since retired from the British Army and Company Chairman of the Imperial Tobacco of the UK. Cricket was a strong link which bound the IMA to The Doon School, particularly because of the awe which the legendary Holdy commanded amongst cricket enthusiasts in the IMA. One of the officers in charge of cricket at the IMA was John Dalvi who was determined that his son Michael grow up in Holdy's shadow. Michael Dalvi subsequently became one of the finest cricketers The Doon School has produced.

Another Armed Forces Institute which undoubtedly influenced The Doon School was the Bengal Sapper's in Roorkee, not so far away from Dehra Dun. Lt. General Harold Williams of the Bengal Sappers, who later became the Engineer-in-Chief, was himself a man very much in the same mould as Holdy, Gibson or Martyn. Like them all, a bachelor, William was a keen naturalist and an enthusiastic mountaineer and probably responsible for luring a lot of the earlier Doscoc who joined the Army into the Corps of Engineers, in particular the Bengal Sappers.



Gurbir was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers of the Army in 1952, winning the Sword of Honour as the best all round cadet at the Indian Military Academy and the Gold Medal for being first in order of merit of his Course. He later became the Quartermaster General at Army HQ in New Delhi.

Amongst the Bengal Sappers in the Army, Nandu Jayal was one who made a very vivid impact on anyone he encountered. Earlier, he had been my House Captain in the school. When I joined the Army he was commanding a unit in the parachute Brigade while I was subaltern in a rival unit of the Brigade. Nandu was not a person who could be ignored. Bubbling with life and energy his unorthodox approach to life must have been an irritant to his conventional superiors, but he was loved by his men. It is hypothetical to speculate if he would have ever become a General, but had he lived and had the opportunity, he would surely have been decorated for gallantry in war. We were building a Bailey bridge on an exercise once and he came to see what was going on. It had been raining and all the steel girders were wet; hardly the surface to walk along in hob nailed boots. While I crept along gingerly on one edge, he jumped from girder to girder laughing all the way, quite oblivious to the fall below him, had he slipped. Nandu set up the Army's High Altitude Warfare School in Gulmarg and was the first Principal of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling. It is an everlasting loss to the country and the Army that he was killed on a mountain when still in his thirties. Another Doscoc in the Army who was a distinguished mountaineer was Jagjit, Guru's younger brother. Jagjit led one of the Indian expeditions to Mt. Everest.

Other distinguished Bengal Sappers were Tilak Nandu, who rose to become the Master General of Ordinance of the Indian Army and Surinder Chhachhi who retired as a Major General. Many stories about Chhachhi live in the Army; one is a Christmas party at the Gaety Club in Simla where a party game "Her Majesty Commands" was in full swing. When Her Majesty commanded a pair of trousers, Chhachhi who was nearest, whipped off his own. Her Majesty, the Army Commander's wife, was apparently not amused, by what he was or was not wearing underneath and Chhachhi was promptly posted out to Calcutta.

I first encountered Chhachhi in the Army when he was on the Directing Staff and a student at the Staff College



Amongst the Army (L-R) Lt. Col. Rajinder Singh (67-T), Lt. Gen. Faridoon Billimoria (76-K), Pushpinder Singh Chopra (74-T), and Capt. Mohit Whig (501-J)

in Wellington. The faculty at the Staff College is the crème-de-la-crème of the Forces and The Doon School was abundantly represented. Apart from Chhachhi, other Doscos also on the faculty were Yeshwant Desai from the Army, Chakravarty from the Navy and Timki Brar of the Air Force. The present Commandant of the Staff College is also a Dosco, Bulbul Brar, who had earlier commanded a Corps in Sikkim. As the Commandant and also because of his colourful personality, he will in the next few years strongly influence the professional thinking of many generations of young Service officers.

Another Dosco, who had earlier been Commandant of the Staff College, was Adi Sethna, who had a very distinguished career, retiring as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff. He was a key figure on the Organising Committee of the Asian Games in Delhi in 1982 and responsible for the splendid military precision and impressiveness of all the ceremonies which marked the Asian Games. The Vice Chief ranks the same as an Army Commander, who are all only next to the Chief, and many other Doscos have also reached that exalted rank. Bhupinder Singh was the Army Commander in Central Command. With his relaxed manner and cool, analytical, razor sharp mind, the first impression one held of Bhupi was more of a civil servant than of a fire-eating military commander.

Wherever he was posted, he was noted for taking the usual starchiness out of military social functions and his crisp kurta-pyjama were evident at the more

informal ones; possibly recalling Saturday nights of his school days.

BC Nanda, who has only just retired as the Army Commander of Northern Command, is best remembered for the handling of the "Roof of the World" Siachen operations in Ladakh. Nanda (or Chengappa as he was known in school) is the nephew of Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa and as a senior Commander reflected in many ways the sterling values of the old Field Marshal himself. We opened the batting for The Doon School Cricket XI together and this connection was recalled to me only recently by another Dosco when linking our names together in the command of the Siachen operations and in the logistic support thereto. Another Dosco who is also linked with Siachen is Vijay Chana who was the Brigade Commander when the problem first flared up. Playing cricket with Chengappa in School was followed by many happy cricketing days with another Dosco in the Army, Shamsher Singh. We opened the batting together for the IMA against the MCC in 1951. The one day fixture was more of a festival event for the tourists but we took it deadly seriously. We won the toss and chose to bat. The MCC had Ridgeway and Statham followed by Jim Laker in their armoury. Shamsher and I had only one aim, to hang on there as long as we could. After an hour we were still there, about forty runs on the board and both of us mighty pleased with ourselves. The Commandant of the IMA was evidently not pleased. An order came out with the drinks to say that the Commandant expected his cadets to display a more offensive

approach and step up the run rate. There was no choice but to obey. The IMA was all out for 82 at lunch! Shamsher and I played some interesting cricket together years later in the desert at the Gaza strip when serving with the United Nations, looked on by curious Palestinian refugees. Shamsher would surely have been a Corps Commander by now but left the Army when still a Major.

Currently, the senior serving Dosco in the Army is Faridoon Billimoria who has just been appointed an Army Commander. In recent years The Doon School would have come across him intimately when he was Commandant in the IMA.

Achievements of Doscos have not only been in high rank. Surpassing the high ranks have been the gallantry awards they have won. Bhaskar Roy won the MVC in 1965 in the Chhamb operations. It is unfortunate that he was killed in a road accident in Sikkim only a few years later as those who knew him were certain that he would have risen in rank. In the 1971 War, Sukhjit Singh of Kapurthala won the MVC commanding an armoured regiment in the Sialkot Sector and 'Bubbles' Bhawani Singh of Jaipur, also won an MVC when in command of a Para Commando battalion in the desert sector. Both commanded very high respect in the Army, but being scions of princely houses probably found their family commitments too overpowering to continue in the Army. Their associations, however, remain in different ways. Bubbles is still actively associated with Polo, a sport dominated by the Army. Sukhjit has acquired a reputation as a consultant by all film makers, wherever the Army needs to feature.

A number of Doscos joined the Armed Forces Medical Services. Amongst the earlier ones were Jagdish Narain, Rattan Kochhar and Kasturi Sharma. Jagdish rose to the top as the Director General of the Armed Forces Medical Services and has only just retired.

In the Navy, Ranvijay Singh became a Rear Admiral and was in-charge of Naval Aviation at a time when the latest generation aircraft were being inducted. He was my neighbour at the National Defence College. Himself the son of one of the earliest Indian Army Commanders, Lt. Gen Nathu Singh, having Ranvijay as a neighbour gave one the bonus of being treated to his

father's picturesque yarns of the Army of a different era. Ranvijay's successor as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air) is Rear Admiral Santosh Gupta, who won the MVC while flying Sea Hawks off the carrier in 1971.

Doscoc have not yet had an Army Chief, but they have had one of the greatest Air Chiefs of our times--Lakshman (Babal) Katre, who tragically passed away before he could complete his tenure as Chief of the Indian Air Force. Apart from being a fine pilot and a superb Commander, he was known for his far reaching perspectives of the future. Besides Timki Brar, the Air Force also had other Doscoc as Air Marshals. Devashar was one of them. Perhaps the most promising of all, still in service, is Brijesh Jayal, who was commanding a Jaguar Base some years ago and is now the Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Operations) at Air Headquarters. Another one of the Jayal family to join the Air Force was Nalni. He did not stay in the Air Force too long and moved on to the Administrative Services. While in the Air Force he took those fantastic photographs of Mount Everest in 1953, the year it was first climbed. One of

those photographs was used on the commemorative postage stamp issued by the Govt. of India to mark the first ascent of Everest.

Any recollection of Doscoc in the Armed Force would not be complete without mention of our old colleagues who joined the Pakistan Army. The most eminent was Ghulam Jilani Khan, who was my House Captain in my first term. He retired as Lt. Gen and later became the Governor of Punjab, where the open hearted hospitality of Government House in Lahore to any visiting Doscoc became a legend. He was expected in Dehra Dun as part of the delegation of Pakistan Old Boys at the Golden Jubilee in 1985, but matters of the State must have intervened and we missed seeing him back at school. One Old Boy who joined the Pakistan Army and did come to the Golden Jubilee was Miangul Aurangzeb. In his early years he was ADC to Field Marshal Ayub Khan the president, then married the President's daughter and finally left the Army for greener pastures in business and industry. Raza-Ul-Haq and Wahid Mohammed also joined the Pakistan Army but I lost track of their progress.

On the eve of retirement from the Army myself, this brief recollection invariably concentrates on Doscoc of my own vintage. I have surely left out a number of younger names who have the future ahead of them, but I will mention one, Sanjay Shekhar, since he is of my own Corps - the Engineers and has already distinguished himself by sailing around the world on the Trishna.

A final note, I would like to conclude on this subject what I had discussed with John Martyn a couple of times but which, unfortunately, we could not bring to conclusion before his passing away. It would be appropriate to revive this in the Golden Jubilee year of the Old Boys Society. It would be a fine tribute by the School, to the contributions of its Old Boys in the defence of the country, to recognize the names of those very special Doscoc in the Armed Forces who have either laid down their lives in war or been decorated for gallantry in war. Can a place of honour for those names be found in the new School Hall?

AFTER HALF A CENTURY: V. Shirodkar (1938-1954)

March 22, 1991

It is interesting how the mind links pieces of music to certain times or events or personalities from the distant past and how these are evoked when one hears these pieces or even snatches from them. I don't know if this happens to everyone; but it does to me. The time: the late thirties. The events: Everyday ones like cricket nets, a Saturday sing-song (as it was then known), a lazy afternoon in the area of the 'Chestnuts', a particular Golden Night. The person: V. Shirodkar, music Master and Shantiniketan alumnus; one who could, and did, implant in many of us an appreciation and, in some of us, a love of Indian classical music and his own special insight into it. To those who wanted to hear he would uncover and put across, in his own inimitable way, the essence and the beauty of a Raga. He was a mine of information on the subject of music.

We never knew how and why, from his native Goa (itself a cradle and repository of Indian music), he made the transition to Shantiniketan in Bengal. He never told us. I asked once but he changed the subject, getting me engrossed in his exposition of Raga Malkaus! In retrospect, one feels that there could well have been some trouble with the Portuguese administration that made him leave Goa. He was that sort of a man, and we were still under foreign rule where the word 'Sedition' was a multi-

purpose stick used against nationalists! But that is only a conjecture made credible because, at that time, Bengal was considered the heart ('hotbed' by the British) of Nationalism. But this much is certain that he took with him to Bengal--in his head--the musical creations and 'Cheez' as of the celebrated Abdul Karim Khan and the songs (themselves of immaculate classical content) from the Marathi stage of the 1910-25 era. It is these, or something from the monumental research-compilation of Pandit Bhatkhande, that he would teach us just before or just after a Rabindra Sangeet song in the same Raga. Somehow, each such pair of composition seemed to get taught at the Raga! So, the 'Basant' brings back the memory of the songs of 1938 (or is it 39?) and the Miya-Ki-Malhar the last days of the 1938-1 term in June.

In Bengal, Mr. S. had married. Mrs. S. is a Bengali lady and it was because of her that we were introduced to the delights of that most delectable fish preparation Machher Jhol! I must explain here that, in those days, we had perfected the art of getting ourselves invited to Sunday lunches by the married masters and that, amongst us, were numbered some celebrated 'Hogs' (as those super trencher-men were then known). What is more, it was always subtly (!) conveyed to the hosts that, because of so and

so, vast quantities of food would be required. But we of those days knew little more of Mrs. S. We could not know of the exceptional moral fibre that was hers. Nor could we know of the indomitable spirit with which she carried on after the sudden sad death of her husband. Nor could we know how she would inculcate these qualities in her children who she would bring up single-handed.

'Buzz', as Mr. S. was known because he would often be humming a tune to himself, was above--in fact beyond--any regional or communal ideas or feeling. Once I asked him if he thought of himself as a Bengali, Maharashtrian or Goan. He only smiled and said that he was an Indian. Another time, I asked him about his religion--or perhaps we were talking about caste. He said, what does it matter when there is God? Yes, he was a man of great depth and goodness. But, in our foolish teens, we had neither the sense nor the perception to see or give a thought to either. Now, with the passage of half a century of time and the consequent ingress of a certain amount of maturity into our previously chock-full heads, we have gained some sense of perspective and have the time an inclination to ponder on such things. Or have we?

Of Quills & Columns

Valentina Trivedi, 708-K '81

In the 50s and 60s when boys at Doon discussed possible careers, nobody ever mentioned journalism or writing. The preferred choices of the day were the civil service or the corporate world. It was also a time when science and technology seemed to hold immense promise and the newly opened IITs beckoned to those not choosing the other two professions. Yet once in a while, some Doscos, buoyed by the nurturing atmosphere in Doon which provided the space and encouragement they needed to develop any inherent talent, decided that writing was what they would like to pursue as a career. So going the then usual route of Doon, Stephen's and colleges in England, they decided to build a career around wielding the pen. I am sure many parents would have been quite skeptical at such a decision of their well educated sons! But the fact remains, that many famous Indian writers of today cut their teeth churning out pieces for the Doon School Weekly.

Amitav Ghosh (246-H '72) admits, The Weekly influenced and shaped his writing and that Doon gave him the confidence to pursue his passion for writing. Working for the Weekly and school plays were some of the most vivid memories of Amitav Ghosh's life at school. He recalled working with Karan Thapar, Kanti Bajpai, Vikram Seth and Vinay Oberoi on the editorial board of the Doon School Weekly. It was a life of great freedom he says, spending hours on end discussing everything under the sun. The manager at the time, Mr Kandhari, only advised the board, giving them a great degree of freedom with the actual publication. What he loved most about it was how people from different houses, all with a keen interest in literary



Amitava Ghosh playing the violin

activity, could meet and interact. At the same time the school was not really a conducive environment for creative writing and was even 'brutal' in many ways. Let alone writing, boys fond of reading too, were not liked very much. There was a keener emphasis on games than on cultural pursuits. Writing is a discipline and one needs to carve out a certain amount of time to think, read and write everyday. This is almost impossible in School, which encourages a host of activities. People he met at St Stephen's College, many of whom came from far more affluent households, were insecure about taking up writing because writing was monetarily not a very rewarding profession. However, he never felt insecure about his choice of career, even while struggling to make his debut as an impoverished young writer working in a barsati.

What made a great impression on young **George Verghese** (150-J '42) when he was in school were, Mr Gibson's Geography lessons. He believes that Geography is absolutely fundamental as it is about land, water, mountains, the sun, the moon, the planets. From Geography springs History as civilizations and events have a basis in Geography; and from History comes Politics. So a good understanding



George Verghese with the chess team

of Geography is an absolute must if we are to have a deep understanding of the world around us. He too was on the editorial board of the Doon School Weekly. In those days the chief editor would always be a master. When he was in St Stephen's George Verghese started 'The Midget', a newspaper which used to be put up on the board. Yet it was not journalism but, a job in the UN—since it was a new body and it seemed exciting to

join it—or a teaching job that he was looking out for. But journalism's gain became teaching's loss.

While at Cambridge, when he put his name in the career's bureau, he was told that The Times of India needed an assistant editor. The Times of India was going through a transition from British to Indian. RK Dalmia had bought it but Bennett Coleman was keen that the assistant editors be Indians who had been educated in the UK, to continue the tradition. His first reaction was a 'No.' immediately but was told that there was still time before the person from Bombay was to come to UK to recruit. MV Desai and he were the only two people selected both from Cambridge and he accepted the offer since he thought a journalist's job was a bit like both the other jobs he had in mind. In September 1949, dressed in chocolate brown corduroys and a pink shirt, he reported for work at the Times of India office, Bombay.

While **Swaminathan Aiyar** (52-T '59) was still in D form, one of his weekly class essays was judged good enough to be published in the Doon School Weekly. He continued writing in the Weekly over the years and joined its editorial team in his final year. But in spite of this, he had decided he wanted to be a nuclear scientist. This owed something to what he calls the 'ridiculous marking system at school.' In maths or science it was easy to get upward of 90% in school exams, whereas nobody got more than 70% or so in English. This double standard in marking meant that he got higher marks in Physics than in English, and this misled him to believe that he should become a scientist. He failed to notice that he usually topped the class in English but not in physics!

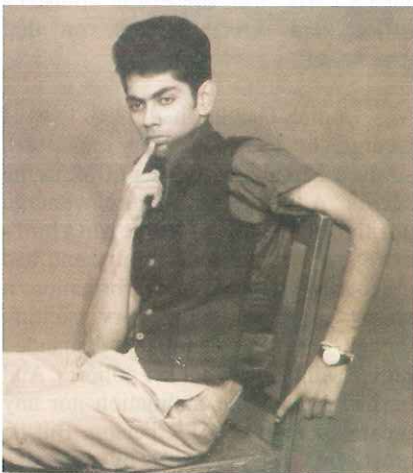
He won the Marker Cup for English four times apart from essay and poetry prizes. An early taste of journalism came to him in the form of a bizarre local incident. He was at the time a Dehra Dun resident and a day-scholar; yes, there were day-scholars in School in the '50s and '60s. He had got to know the publisher of a local Dehra Dun weekly called Vanguard, and had written a couple of cinema reviews. I don't think there is any other Dosco who has successfully transformed going and watching a movie at Capri into a literary exercise! During that time, Ellen Roy, a Dehra Dun resident and wife of the famous Marxist leader MN Roy, was brutally murdered

in her own home. An avalanche of journalists from Delhi descended on Dehra Dun to cover the murder, and Swami's own acquaintances in Vanguard weekly helped him meet and talk to the Delhi journalists. To Swami's young mind a profession which allowed you to go rushing all over the country, seemed very exciting.



Swaminathan Aiyar (c) standing in a school cricket team photograph

It was precisely with this thought of dashing about all over the country to bridge the gap in knowledge about his own country which he felt his elitist education was responsible for, that another Dosco took up a job as an assistant editor in The Times of India, Bombay in June 1970. But to start at the beginning, **Gautam Vohra's** (154-H '63) writing career was inspired by the mid-term expeditions he went on when in Doon. After one exciting mid-term, during which along with Basant Sharma and Alok Chandola he climbed Chaur, his essay about it got him the highest marks in class from Mr Martyn. It got published in The Weekly and shortly thereafter he was invited to join its editorial board by Mr Sahi. The other editor was Anand Bhatia, brother of the Britain based journalist Shyam Bhatia, both sons of the veteran journalist and



Gautam Vohra in a pensive mode

editor, the late Prem Bhatia. (Shyam Bhatia, Editor of Asian Affairs magazine, has been a staff foreign correspondent for London's Observer newspaper based in Cairo and Jerusalem and US correspondent and Foreign Editor of the Deccan Herald. A frequent visitor in the past to Pakistan and an Arabic speaker, he has won the Foreign Reporter of the Year Award in the British media and is the author of 'India's Nuclear Bomb', 'Nuclear Rivals in the Middle East', 'Brighter than the Baghdad sun', 'Contemporary Afghanistan' and more recently 'Goodbye Shahzadi' the biography of Benazir Bhutto.)

This provided Gautam the right motivation at an impressionable age and gave him the confidence to persevere with writing. His interactions with people during his college days at St. Stephen's and subsequently in London, made him realize how little he knew about his own country, specially the new India that was opening up. So he began to read systematically, even as he visited Cuba, Russia and East European countries with British Marxists and came to an understanding, however superficial, as to the kind of work that he wanted to do. On his return to India he decided to work at the grassroots level and started living in a village in Haryana. He soon realized that he needed to have a regular income and the only skill of sorts he had was writing which was not of much use in the village. He landed the job in Bombay, and soon realized that he would have preferred to be a reporter, going out in the field, rather than an assistant editor working in an office. Though Gautam likes to say that he has given up journalism and one can now probably call him an organic activist [an appealing label!] his passion and fiery enthusiasm about the written word and its power, belies this statement.

Karan Thapar (238-JA '71) joined the editorial board of the Weekly in B form and became editor in chief later. He says, "There is no doubt the experience gave me a taste for journalism but at the time, if you look at the pieces I wrote, they were more feature articles or even poetry and fiction rather than journalism." His initial attraction to journalism was the fact that two of his cousins, Ramesh Thapar and Ashok Thapar, were successful and highly regarded journalists. He was much younger than both but, perhaps because of the age difference, was attracted by the idea of following in their footsteps. In those days it was newspaper journalism that he was thinking of. But shortly after he did a series of articles for The Times in



Karan Thapar (c) with fellow actors

London on the Asian community in UK, he was offered a job by London Weekend Television. They were not only paying a lot of money but seemed very keen to have him. In addition the idea of being on television and being seen struck his fancy. So in a fairly short period of time he accepted the offer and moved from The Times to LWT.

It is intriguing that quite a few people who chose career paths in journalism or media – like **Prem Shankar Jha** (84-K '53), Swaminathan Aiyar, Prannoy Roy, Karan Thapar, Arun Poorie to name just a few studied Economics in college. I wonder if a predisposition towards Economics indicates a preference for these careers or is it something in the subject that makes one more predisposed to careers in journalism and media? Or was it just the most promising humanities subject those days? I have never studied the subject and know nothing about it, having only in recent years acquired the wisdom to discern debit from credit! But what I find even more intriguing than the eco-journo connection is the responses of some of them to economics.

Swaminathan Aiyar's introduction to economics happened when he was a science student at St Stephen's. Many distinguished speakers came to address evening meetings where even science students could attend, and he was enthralled by the economic sessions, which seemed to touch on the most important ways to reform India. So after completing his B.Sc at Delhi University he switched to economics at Oxford. Yet today he says, "I have always been a journalist who knows economics, not an economist who writes in the media."

Here is another Dosco who has coined his own brand – Swaminomics, that well known Sunday weekly column in the Times of India from where his

bespectacled, cheerful visage, unlike other columnists' grim and serious countenance, stares at us, hands clasped behind his head. It puts Economics-deprived people like me in a more confident frame of mind, giving us a sense that we can probably understand what he has written and that the subject itself can't be so daunting if he is looking so cheerful and relaxed talking about it. I guess there in lies the difference between Economics and ... Swaminomics!

Apart from journalists, Doon has also produced some academics and research oriented authors, among whom the maestro is **Ramchandra Guha** (7-H '73). Anita Nair, in her profile of Ram Guha, says, "Ramachandra Guha has two degrees in Economics and yet it is with almost a childish glee he admits to being a failed economist. He turned his back on Economics and switched to Sociology and then went on to do his Ph. D on the social history of forests. Then there is his love affair with Marxism. After years of believing in the cause, Ramachandra Guha is no longer of the faith. Along with his failed economist title, he acquired yet another one: that of a lapsed Marxist. And strangely enough, today Ramachandra Guha is best known as a historian-biographer or a cricket writer, for neither of which he has any formal training." Ram Guha was passionate about cricket even before he joined Doon. His mother proudly proclaimed him to be a walking cricket encyclopaedia. Even as a child he had a serious streak and would not like it if fellow players abandoned a cricket game midway for any reason.

The Dosco is adept at not just evolving and changing professions/careers but even wearing multiple labels with élan. So we have **Prannoy Roy** (66-J '66), who moved from being a chartered accountant and then Economic Advisor in the Ministry of Finance to psephology,



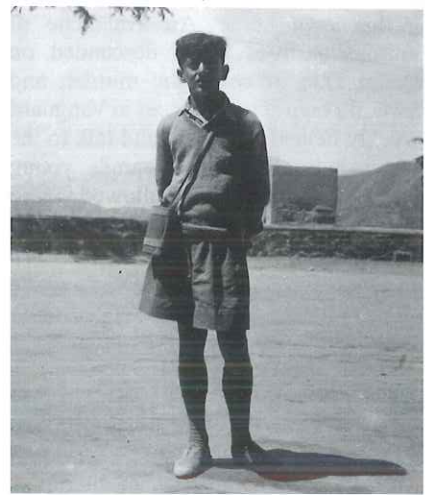
Ramchandra Guha with the cricket team

when most of us had not even known of such a term, and then media. Then there is Ram Guha, who refutes the dubious distinction of the numerous titles attached to him. 'I am not an 'activist', and nor do I want to be called an 'environmentalist.' He says, "I write about topics and themes which I consider important and relevant to my society, and try to write accessibly and for a general audience as well as for scholars. I have, over the past twenty years, also kept in contact with groups working on environmental and in particular forest issues in different parts of India. Perhaps that makes me a 'public intellectual', but I would never claim to be an activist." So here is yet another pioneering category coined by an accomplished Dosco. It seems the wielders of the pen delight in not just using it to do what they do best, but also to define themselves, because lesser mortals would probably not slot them right!

Suman Dubey's (167-J '58) mountaineering exploits are impressive enough to earn him the title of a Journalist Mountaineer, and I highly doubt that there are very many of those. A one-time Vice President and member of the Governing Council of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, he has been Editor of Indian Mountaineer. A life member of the Himalayan Club, he has also been its President (2007-10). With an illustrious career behind him, he says he came into journalism by accident!

His mountaineering career, like Gautam's writing one, had its seeds in mid-term expeditions as a schoolboy in Dehra Dun. Starting with a weekend climb of Nagtibba, a 10,000' high peak north of Mussoorie, at the age of 11, he spent several mid-term breaks trekking in the Tehri hills.

He was a member of Gurdial Singh's 1961 expedition to Nanda Devi and participated in the first ascent to Devistan I, 21,910 feet and the second ascent to Maiktoli, 22,320 feet. He was a member of the 1962 Indian expedition to Everest, and spent three nights on the South Col in support of the summit attempt. Between 1963 and 1965, he climbed in Wales and the Lake District, and in the Swiss and French Alps. Among several other peaks, he climbed Mont Blanc by the Brenva face, the Monch by the Nollen route and the Jungrau by the Guggi route. In 1966, he led a St. Stephen's College expedition to the summit of Garuda, just under 20,000 feet, in Garhwal and got to within 200 feet of the summit of Reo Purgyal. In 1967, he climbed in the region of the



Suman Dubey during the a mid-term break

Kalaband glacier above Ralam and reached the summit of Shivu at 19,000 feet.

His other interests are photography and making films on his treks, and music. He sings with the Capital City Minstrels and the Delhi Chamber Choir. Writing, trekking, photography, music: there is a thread running through these seemingly unrelated pursuits. A thread which a Dosco can fully appreciate, having shared with his school buddies an environment which nurtures these elements.

In many parts of the world, it is quite common for journalists to have periodic stints in government and return to their own profession. This is now a lot easier in India too, but back then it was a relative rarity. Two Dosco journalists whose career paths were entwined with politics at various times were George Verghese and Suman Dubey. Prem Shankar Jha too spent just under a year as the Information Adviser to the Prime Minister, V. P. Singh, in his short-lived government. In that year he witnessed the calculated stoking of communal passions by the right wing Bharatiya Janata Party from the Prime minister's office, and wrote a book on that experience.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi had read two of George's books and was very impressed, so she asked him to join her office as the Media Advisor. From the vantage position of the PMO, George had a bird's eye view of the entire country and had great access to travel and information. It wasn't a job he found very exciting though since it was a job that demanded him to sell the PM, not her policies. And he had neither the inclination nor any great expertise as a PR person. But he created his own job profile by giving it a journalistic hue. So he took leave to

work and travel with Jayaprakash Narayan during the Bihar famine, surveying well digging, relief camps, mid-day meals etcetera and he travelled for a month in the Northeast, meeting local people, army personnel, government employees and learning about the inter-relations between them. He wrote a series of papers about his travels and the learnings thereof. 'Beyond the famine', the paper he wrote after travelling in Bihar, talked about looking and planning ahead after the famine, at land reforms, irrigation and ground water development. Sadly none of the valuably researched and well thought out suggestions were implemented. When studying water issues, he realized that different departments had little understanding of the larger picture. That is when he wrote 'Waters of Hope'.

In 1969, when George joined as editor of Hindustan Times, he decided to devote space in the paper to interpret rural India for the urban people so the Hindustan Times adopted Chhatera in Haryana, about 22 miles from Delhi, to pay regular visits and write about it. 'Our village Chhatera' was a half page write up which appeared in the paper every fortnight on a Sunday. Through George's request to various relevant agencies, young people came to share their special knowledge with the villagers. So the IARI gave advice about seeds and knowhow about maximizing produce, AIIMS organized health surveys and medicines and T.A. Pai of newly started Syndicate Bank, opened a branch in Chhatera. H.P. Nanda made 2 tractors available at dealers' price, Dairy Development Institute, Karnal introduced the farmers of Chhatera to cross-breeding and artificial insemination, Coromandal Fertilisers donated fertilizer, which villagers sold and the counterpart funds were used to build a proper well which was paved and had a bathing place and a few latrines. The American Ambassador came to inaugurate the latrines and said in his speech that it must be the first time a US ambassador was inaugurating such a project!

Krishi Darshan had started and the village got its first TV set – probably the first TV set in Haryana. Though the Sarpanch wanted it in his house, it was decided that it would be installed in the village chaupal. This decision broke two prevalent rules: one, women could also come and watch tv whereas up till then only daughters could come to the chaupal, not daughters in law and second: no one was to be barred from coming and watching the TV so Harijans

could also come and watch along with the higher castes. Students from the School of Planning and Architecture, in consultation with the villagers, put up a Chhatera Masterplan. In 6 years, Chhatera became probably the best represented village in the world. It proved amply the power of the media to do good and bring together people from all walks of life. All this not only got young urban people to get first hand knowledge of a village, but also publicity, as their visits were written about. Publicity, George realised, was a great incentive for development.

Persuaded by EMS Namboodripad of CPM, George took a step closer towards politics by standing for assembly elections from Mavelikara. He stayed in his family home and used his own car. The limit on spending was Rs. 35,000. He decided to spend no more than Rs. 34,500 even though over 1 lakh came in before they told people to stop sending in any more funds. That year only 6 seats were won by the opposition in all the Southern states and none in Kerala. As per the rules, within a week of his defeat, George went to file his election returns and the people at the Alleypi office looked at him in wonder as no one ever came to file returns after the elections were over! With the balance money from the 1 lakh, 'Media Foundation' was formed which also instituted the Chameli Devi award for women journalists.

On returning to India after five years of working in the Singapore-based The Asia Magazine, Suman was hired by the Indian Express. All was well till the Emergency with its censorship. Although still employed by the newspaper, Suman reached out to his Hong Kong contacts and started writing for a start-up weekly, *Asiaweek*, to escape the tedium of Emergency journalism and to supplement a meager income. On a trip to Hong Kong, he was unpleasantly surprised to see a news item on the AFP teleprinter at the Asiaweek office announcing that he had been appointed Editor of *Indian Express*. This he soon learnt was the handiwork of two Doscos, Sanjay Gandhi and Kamal Nath, who had essentially taken over Indian Express, gotten rid of Mulgaokar and wanted a "trusted" Dosco in charge. Doscos in journalism and politics were criss-crossing each other's path

Unfortunately, Suman did not share their enthusiasm for the Emergency or censorship, and went quietly 'underground' till the feisty owner of the Express group, Ram Nath Goenka, was

able to resume some modicum of control and rectify things. But he became suspect in the eyes of the management, and finding the atmosphere at the Express a bit uncongenial, resigned his job. That is when he started writing for Reuters and The Wall Street Journal, which had just started an Asian edition out of Hong Kong.

Three years later, in 1980, he joined another Dosco, **Aroon Purie** (85-J '60), at the three-year old *India Today* magazine as Managing Editor. The next six years were some of his most satisfying in journalism. Aroon brought a new approach to the staid world of periodical journalism and the magazine set new standards, soaring in circulation. The young staff did some groundbreaking stories on topics that others wouldn't pursue, making *India Today* the closest thing to graphic, vivid presentation of news and analysis, before the days of private television.

After six years of *India Today*, Suman was restless to get back to a newspaper. He returned to *Indian Express*, as editor, succeeding George Verghese. But Ramnath Goenka's agenda in hiring him was to use him as a conduit to another Dosco, **Rajiv Gandhi** (203-K '60), who was by then our youngest-ever Prime Minister. Mr. Goenka was engaged in an all-out battle with Dhirubhai Ambani and wanted to rope the PM in on his side. Once again, Suman had other ideas – and Rajiv Gandhi didn't see himself as a partisan player in this vicious corporate battle. So less than a year later, having failed to win Rajiv's confidence, Mr. Goenka was actively plotting with President Giani Zail Singh to get rid of the Prime Minister. The attempted coup failed - but this time it was the management that Suman found uncongenial and so, a second resignation from the Express saw him back on the street! That was when he decided to take up an offer in the government to work as a media adviser in the team of people around Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

This was the latter half of his prime ministership, the honeymoon period of the mid-1980s long over, the government buffeted by all manner of problems from the Shah Bano judgement to the Ram Janma Bhoomi campaign, from Bofors to the HDW submarine scandal, from the Defamation Bill to IPKF in Sri Lanka -- and many, many more. Suman found the experience educative, trying, tiring, invigorating, illuminating, satisfying and frustrating all at the same time. It came to an abrupt end with the unseating of the

government in the 1989 elections. But the political scene was changing fast – and in little more than a year, two PMs down, the 1991 elections were called, and he was back in a political role as media manager with Rajiv on his campaign trail. That is how he was at Sriperembudur on the night of May 21, 1991 at the tragic moment of Rajiv's assassination.

Since then, Suman has worked at The Wall Street Journal, at first as a correspondent and then as a corporate representative. As the economic reform programme gained ground and as India was swept up by globalization, it became evident that there was a need for the Journal to publish in India. To translate that into reality took over 14 years till finally from May 18, 2009, a facsimile edition of The Wall Street Journal became available in India.

There are several other Doscocs who have made a mark in the world of media and journalism. Some of the prominent ones are:

Prem Shankar Jha (84-K '53) a columnist and former editor of the Hindustan Times, New Delhi is known for his writings on the Indian political system, its economy, and the interconnections between the two. After studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford, he joined the United Nations in 1961, and spent the next nearly five years in the UN Special Fund/ UNDP. He returned to India in 1966 and entered journalism as an Assistant Editor, in the Hindustan Times. In 1969, he shifted to the Times of India. Between 1979 and 1981 he was first the Deputy Editor of the Economic Times and then Editor of the Financial Express, two of India's three main economic dailies. In 1981, he returned to the Times of India as its economic editor and in 1986 became editor of the Hindustan Times.

Rahul Singh (152-J '56) was the first Indian Editor of "Reader's Digest". He was also Editor of "Indian Express", "Sunday Observer", and "Khaleej Times" (Dubai), apart from being a Consultant for the United Nations. Presently, he is a freelance writer and attached to several NGOs in the population and literacy fields. He is also on the selection committee of the Mahindra & Mahindra Education Trust.

Rahul was at Doon for three years from age 11 to 14 years. Never having been away from home he was miserable at first as the younger boys were also

subject to some bullying by the seniors. He felt acutely vulnerable, with no protective elders to turn to. But he thinks that in a way these discomforts had a positive side to them: you learnt how to stand on your own feet and to be independent and strong at a relatively young age. You were taught lessons on how best to cope with bullies, which would come in handy later on in life. It was also at Doon that he first began to appreciate what a gloriously diverse people we Indians are. Almost every major religion in the world was represented in the school, many languages were spoken and the boys were of every hue, from pitch-black to alabaster-white! "I don't think we realised it then," says he, "but I do believe this interaction went deep into our psyche and made us more tolerant and understanding. When I now look back and reflect on Doscocs who later became prominent in public life, I can't think of any fanatics or narrow-minded persons among them. I also believe that pride, curiosity and hunger for knowledge was nurtured in my three years at Doon School." He credits Doon for his love and continuing passion for sports even though he left before he could play for the school in any of its teams. He says, "Though most of us came from India's elite, Doon was not an elitist school. We were constantly made aware how privileged we were and how we had a duty to help those who were not so well off. I believe that awareness, too, became an integral part of our upbringing."

Inderjit Badhwar (155-T '59) is an award winning author and journalist who has worked in the US and India on major publications and TV programmes. His 2004 novel, "The Chamber of Perfumes" (original title "Sniffing Papa") won France's most prestigious international award as the "best foreign debut novel", an honor that went earlier to Salman Rushdie for "Shame." After more than 20 years as a Washington journalist and TV correspondent, Inderjit returned to India as Editor of India Today, a post he held for ten years. He now heads "Gfiles", India's first magazine devoted to issues of governance and the bureaucracy, and heads a Resource Centre that advises the Lexicon Group on strategic communications for heads of state.

Aroon Purie (85-J '60) is most well known for being the founder and Editor-in-Chief of India Today and Chief Executive of the India Today Group, which is India's most diversified media group reaching out to over 50 million

individuals, through its subscribers, readers, viewers and listeners. He is also Editor in Chief of Reader's Digest, the Managing Director of Thomson Press (India) Limited and the Chairman and Managing Director of TV Today.

Peter Mukherjea (17-H '71) changed his name to Peter from Pratim in the UK, where he was born, as people found it difficult to pronounce Pratim. After Doon School he landed a job as marketing executive with the food conglomerate Heinz in the UK in 1972. From there he jumped to the International Wool Secretariat and then to the ailing retail giant British Home Stores. But he was always keen on returning to India and joined the advertising agency O&M, which brought him back to the sub-continent. That, however, did not last long and he finally washed ashore in Hong Kong with no job in hand and very little money to look for new opportunities. But his luck was about to turn. One day he approached the advertising agency DDM Needham, which promised him a job if he could pass a stiff test. He had to win the account of an ambitious young company called Satellite TV Asia Region (Star), owned by the family of local billionaire Li Ka Shing. The rest, as they say, is history. Mukherjea won the account, worked with Needham for a few years handling the Star TV account, and finally signed on with his rapidly growing client. Soon afterwards he was despatched to India to kickstart the company's marketing department. But he received the shock of his life almost immediately after landing in India. Richard Li, who founded the company, had sold it to the world's most powerful press baron, Rupert Murdoch. By this time there was no looking back. After taking over from Rathikant Basu as CEO, Mukherjea put together a winning strategy. The anchor of the success story was the runaway hit Kaun Banega Crorepati, which transformed the company's fortunes and catapulted it to the top slot ahead of Zee. Mukherjea was also a key force behind the decision to aggressively Indianise the channel and focus on Hindi programmes.

Talking about TV, George feels the private news broadcasters cater to the consumer. "Who caters to the citizen?" asks. Technically there has been tremendous development in journalism and the world has shrunk and journalism has become instant and global, but the responsibility has not grown with the power. There is sensationalisation and trivialization of news and there is no one to set standards. On TV, says George, "There is misinformation and

disinformation. Misinformation is by itself harmless but disinformation is downright bad. Development journalism has grown too but much of the information is got off the net now. Media and Information are powerful tools of empowerment. Like the entire Indian Penal Code rests on the FIR, good governance rests on media. Public opinion is a super power so the role of the media is colossal. Profit has triumphed over great values of professional journalism." The lines of a prayer from back in school echo in his mind, '...Nor bend your knees before insolent might.' He fondly remembers the prayers from Doon which taught one to rise above any differences and 'Be Indian.'

Over the years Prem Shankar Jha, George Verghese, Gautam Vohra and others have written several books, distilling their invaluable experiences in various areas throughout their careers. The immense wisdom in these tomes, which would have helped our policy makers and propelled them towards better governance, lies neglected. One cannot help but compare this with the huge advances paid to novelist **Vikram Seth**, (250-J '68) for extremely well written fiction. Is it that we are not ready to pay for or read non-fiction? Though then again there is Ramchandra Guha, who is probably the highest paid author in India of non-fiction research based books. And of course Vikram Seth cannot be faulted for receiving big advances as he is a full time writer and spends a few years writing each book so the amount which makes our eyebrows shoot up is the amount he is earning over those years. Yet when I saw the volumes of books lining George Verghese and Gautam Vohra's book shelves, I wished

college students and research scholars would make use of the knowledge within their pages, even though they did not make any money for the people who wrote them.

Apart from journalists and novelists, there have also been some poets in the Dosco fraternity. Vikram Seth, who straddles numerous genres of novelist, travel writer, poet, children's writer, biographer, memoirist, and a sonneteer is, in his mother's words, "essentially a poet." His poetry needs no introduction. His brilliance shines through in the much acclaimed novel in verse, 'The Golden Gate.' I am tempted to quote from it because his writing is delightful to read each time. The following verse from 'The Golden Gate' conjures up a picture of his unadulterated glee in playing with words as a child would with play-dough:

'How do I justify this stanza?
These feminine rhymes? My wrinkled muse?
This whole passé extravaganza?
How can I (careless of time) use
The dusty bread moulds of Onegin
In the brave bakery of Reagan?
The loaves will surely fail to rise
Or else go stale before my eyes.
The truth is, I can't justify it.
But as no shroud of critical terms
Can save my corpse from boring worms,
I may as well have fun and try it.
If it works, good; and if not, well,
A theory won't postpone its knell.

I end with a few verses by yet another poet who says his journalistic training put an end to any poetic ability he had! The following verses, penned by **Gautam Vohra** (154-H '63) at age nineteen, paint an exciting visual picture

of being a student, arriving wide-eyed in the Europe of the swinging sixties and embracing a whole new way of living in the new found freedom. It was a time when you could dream and take flight to newer horizons, leaving behind the growing pains of an emerging India, specially if you had the financial cushioning:

Tonight he'll go to Sadler's Wells
During the interval
Clap at the fine performance
And smile appreciatively
At his friends
After the show
Discuss seriously one or two
Problems of the world:
Today, will it be Vietnam
Or will it be God?

Tomorrow he'll ring her up
Overcoming his pride
And apologize for his
Foolish anger last Saturday night
Hopes she'll react warmly
Or he will bang the phone down
Losing a pretty friend
Which is sad
Needlessly sad and painful

Day after tomorrow
He'll hand in his essay
(Result of one week's steady plod)
Talk to his tutor
Who'll mention pipe rolls
And the wool trade
In carefully measured tones
And after some talk
Make coffee
Explaining why he doesn't vote
Why Liberalism is best
And communists a set of deluded fools
(From "Twentieth Century Poets",
London, 1968)



Vikram Seth receives an award