

# Scholarships

## RAJIV GANDHI TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAMME

Under this programme, the Foundation awards upto 20 scholarships every year to students from five universities in the U.K to travel in India. This is done in collaboration with the Cambridge Common- wealth Trust and the Rajiv Gandhi (UK) Foundation. Since the inception of this programme in 1996, a total of 185 scholars have been sponsored. There are eight awards to students from Cambridge, and three each from the Universities of Hull, Oxford, Edinburgh and the London School of Economics.

This year fifteen scholars were selected including eight from Cambridge, six from Edinburgh and one from Oxford. However, only thirteen scholars could visit India. Most come in connection with their research work and, at the end of their visits, submit a report describing their experiences

Their areas of study this year included Social Anthropology, Mathematical Physics, Sanskrit Literature, Theology & Religious Studies, Engineering, Geography, Law, History, International Business, Politics and Development Studies.

Phillip Ernest, doing an MPhil in Sanskrit Literature at Cambridge, spent most of his time at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune, studying and reading Sanskrit. He concentrated on the Ramayana, in preparation for his dissertation on the

### PROGRAMME VISION

International student exchange builds bridges and promotes understanding.

The Foundation gives:

- Travelling scholarships to British university students to come to India.

- Scholarships/Bursaries to Indian students to study at Cambridge

- Science Talent Research Fellowships to encourage careers in science

*"I go back with an attitude to my work that has been transformed and reanimated by one of the truly significant and determinative experiences of my life"*

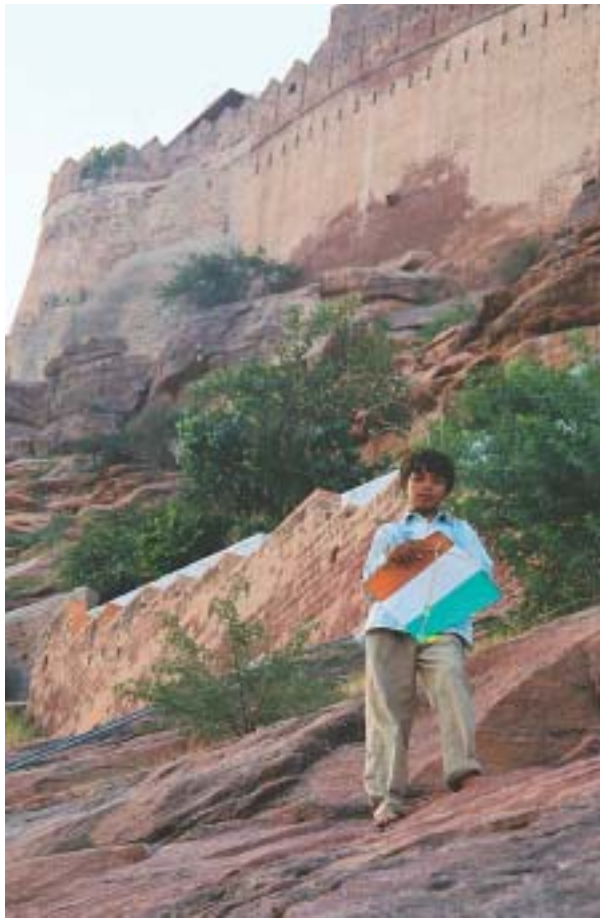
Mahabharata and the treatment of literary character in the two epics. "The reading of Sanskrit", he writes, "is not research or work. It is a play as natural and inevitable as eating, which I cannot forego any more easily than I can forego that other daily activity". Yet in his first few weeks, the alienness of India and its distance from Sanskrit upset him deeply, making him want to escape back to England. He soon realized that he must master at least one modern spoken Indian language, and resolved to do so to connect better with the people and their living culture. "I know that I must return here, again and

again, and as soon as I can. The early difficulty and disappointment have been dwarfed by a deep love for India that began to shine out of what was almost a stupor of culture shock in the first three weeks of my stay. And this love, despite the length and intensity of my commitment to the Sanskrit language and its literature, was actually something new....If I had the choice, I would miss my flight back to London from Delhi. I would remain living in Pune, if it were possible, and learn Marathi or Hindi, and travel, and settle, and study, and work, if I could be allowed....I go back with an attitude to my work that has been transformed and reanimated by one of the truly significant and determinative experiences of my life".

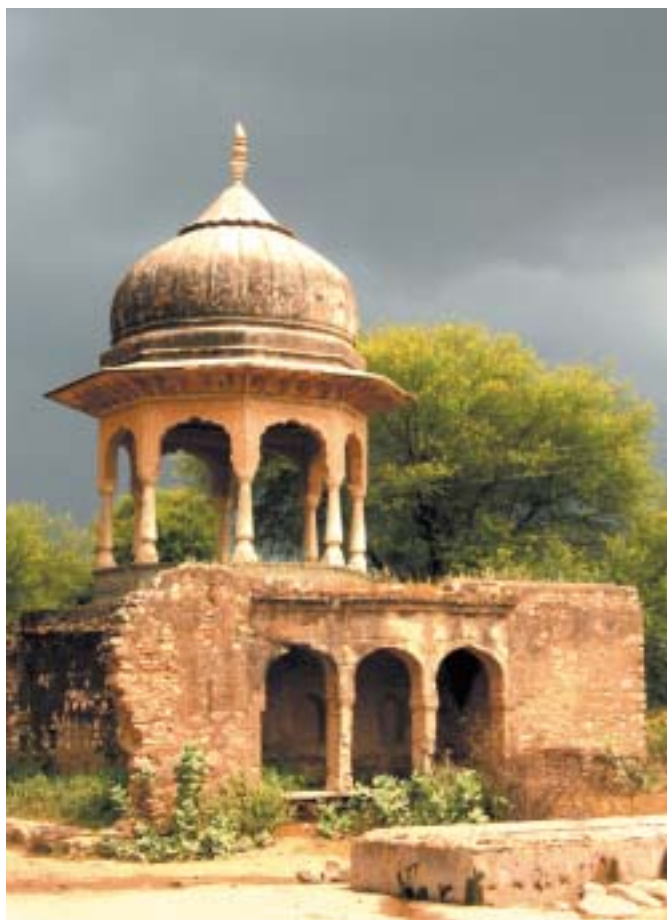
Claire Anholt, pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Social Anthropology from Cambridge, was able to fulfil her long-time desire to visit and photograph Indian life in relation to art and its cross-cultural manifestations. Being brought up in a family of artists her fascination for art grew with age and she developed a deep interest in photography. Her purpose in undertaking this trip was to understand

Claire Anholt. Some of her India pictures are on the next two pages.













the concept of 'Ocularcentrism', which means over-prioritisation of all things 'visual' in the way that people think about and experience the world. In her report, Claire states, "many day-to-day sayings relate to the concept of 'the visual'. Even the commonest saying like 'I see' can be synonymous with 'I understand'."

This thought encouraged Claire to study the lives of persons with visual impairment to understand the concepts of the visual world better. For this, Claire used her time in India to visit and stay with several organisations working for the visually impaired like the National Association for the Blind (NAB) and the All India Confederation of the Blind (AICB). In her report, Claire describes her time at the AICB hostel as extremely warm, happy and enlightening for she was able to question her own love for the 'visual' world and engage in debates about the 'hegemony of vision'. "What struck me most about the pupils of this school", she writes, "was that despite their lack of sight and often shocking tales of family shame and abandonment, they were so warm and welcoming".

Claire says her visit to India was a truly life-changing experience as she was able to reconsider her own taken-for-granted over-prioritisation of all visual things and appreciate her own ability to experience and enjoy art. "Photographing in India was a unique experience", she writes, "and frequently a great way to meet and engage with people I met. Being tall, pale and blonde, the people I approached often had as much interest in taking my photograph as I had in creating portraits of them". We reproduce here a small section from the pictures that Claire took. She hopes to include these photographs in her portfolio for a future course in visual anthropology at Manchester.

*Left top and middle:*  
Visually-impaired school children with whom Claire Anholt worked

*Bottom:*  
Charlotte Phillips in Chandigarh

Another scholar, Bina Fernandez doing a DPhil in Development Studies at the University of Oxford writes that she was able to do field work and collect relevant data for her dissertation on 'Engendering Poverty Policy in India' in which she will examine why well-intentioned poverty policies do not reach the poor, especially women and the scheduled tribes. To track the policy practices under the *Svarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana* (SGSY), she interviewed several policy makers, elected representatives, bureaucrats and also beneficiaries at the village, block, district and state level in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In the final stage Bina visited Delhi to interview members of the Planning Commission which has formulated the SGSY policy and also did library research. She states that the scholarship enabled her to collect very useful data, which will be analysed and reported in her dissertation.

The scholarship also enabled Charlotte Phillips, reading for an M.A in History & Politics from Edinburgh, to collect data for her dissertation on economic and political development. For this, she met and interviewed government officials and academics who could throw light on panchayati raj institutions and their working, economic development in India and the impact of the IMF and the World Bank on India's economic sovereignty. She also travelled to Kolkata, Delhi, Agra, Mumbai and several cities in Rajasthan, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to savour the beauty of various historical monuments and places of historical significance.

From developing an addiction to *Roso Gullas* (a Bengali sweet) to getting lost walking on the streets of Kolkata, Charlotte says the scholarship enabled her to breathe life into subjects based merely on theory and literature. "Visiting India was a truly humbling experience". Summing up her experiences, Charlotte writes, "Living in such a small and relatively homogeneous country as the UK really makes India's

sheer size, diversity and greatness a little overwhelming at times. Aside from the beautiful scenery and magnificent architecture, it is India's people that make the country so truly amazing. I will always remember the warmth and the kindness that was shown to me. I know that it is only now a matter of time until I return to India, since there is an infinite amount to learn and experience. I am extremely grateful to the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation."

All our scholars have related many such experiences in their reports for which the Foundation warmly thanks them. We look forward to welcoming many more in the future.

## CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

To pursue a second degree affiliated course at Cambridge University, the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation continues to award bursaries/scholarships to deserving Indian students, with the assistance and support of the Cambridge Commonwealth Trust, UK. This year's bursaries for BA Economics were to Ms. Aarushi Bhatnagar (St. Edmund's College), Ms. Teerna Khurana (Wolfson College) and Mr. Tirthankar Chakravarty (Wolfson College) while a scholarship was offered to Mr. Nikhilesh Singh Chand for Natural Science (Trinity College).

## RAJIV GANDHI SCIENCE TALENT RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

In collaboration with the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bangalore, the Foundation initiated the Rajiv Gandhi Science Talent Research Fellowships programme in 1993. Fifteen students are selected every year to spend two months during summer with distinguished scientists at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore or at other leading research institutions in the country. The fellowships are renewable on a selective basis for a second consecutive

year. The objective of the programme is to give bright young people the opportunity to undertake research with leading scientists to find out what scientific research is all about, in the hope that they will choose careers in science. It is gratifying that many have done so and that the fellowships are so keenly contested. They are tenable in the life sciences, material sciences, chemical sciences, physical sciences, engineering sciences, atmospheric sciences and mathematics.