

The Honorary Graduand: John Graham Pontin

The Orator: Professor James Longhurst

John Pontin is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science.

John Pontin was born and brought up in Bristol, growing up in Southville as the son of a postman. John is an entrepreneur, property developer and a true champion of sustainable development.

John started the JT Group in 1961 which, over forty years, has developed a national profile, in particular for green issues in construction and mixed-use urban renewal. He was among the prime movers in rescuing the Bristol docks from near-dereliction and has played a significant role in progressing one of the UK's most difficult waterfront regeneration programmes. John has been involved in many more projects in Bristol, including restoring Bush House (Arnolfini), restoring Leigh Court and conserving E and W Sheds on the harbourside to house the Watershed Arts Trust. Without John's vision Bristol's Harbourside would look very different today.

John has initiated and been involved in a large number of charitable causes, using his business and financial skills to look after those less fortunate and to promote a sustainable future both here and overseas, particularly in India.

JT Group has established a not-for-profit company called Under the Sky which, under John's chairmanship, is working in partnership with public bodies and charities to restore or create places in which local businesses and community enterprises can thrive. John's passion is continued in his charity, of which he is co-founder, The Converging World, bringing communities together through contraction, convergence and renewable energy.

John has also been a Trustee and Chairman for The Dartington Hall Trust for 13 years, a charity with a significant community involvement principally in the South West. He was also closely involved in the formation of the Quartet Community Foundation by the Society of Merchant Venturers and is a member of the Bristol Fifteen group, a leadership and mentoring group run by Footdown.

The Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of John Pontin's contribution in the field of sustainable development.