



# John Sullivan

Explorer, Survivalist,  
Inspirational Speaker

John Sullivan is a former Royal Marines Commando of nine years' experience. He has operated in some of the world's most challenging environments - Jungle, Desert and Arctic. John's passion in life is to explore with a sense of purpose. Working alone, this has taken him to some of the remotest corners of the world to research and set up factual programmes for the BBC and the National Geographic Channel. He has also led numerous life-changing conservation expeditions for young people to Namibia, Belize and Borneo.

## **Advisor to the BBC, Channel 5 and National Geographic Channel**

John has excelled in the realm of freelance consultancy. He has remarkable first-hand knowledge of many remote regions of the world. He develops unique networks of in-country contacts - often local tribes. John uses these to advise media groups and expedition leaders on how best to deal with the cultures and natural environments of the countries they plan to explore.

John is in great demand from the top TV Companies. His aptitude to inhospitable conditions in remote areas uniquely qualifies him for TV 'groundwork' and preparation. The BBC hired him to make all in-country arrangements for **Last Man Standing** and **Extreme Dreams**. For Channel 5, he executed a similar brief for the programme, **Unbreakables**. More recently, John prepared all the pre-shoot arrangements in Papua New Guinea for the National Geographic Channel's documentary, **Eating with Cannibals**.

John loves nothing more than to pass on his passion for the natural world and for the peoples of the most remote regions of the planet. As an extreme survivalist, he is always looking for that next adventure!

# Sample Presentations



## Eating with Cannibals National Geographic Documentary

John recently undertook a search for the Biama tribe in the Papua New Guinea jungle. This led him to live with the tribe and gain an insight into the secrets of their culture. He learned about the mystery of cannibalism and how it is understood today. John talks of how he carried out all the preparation work for the documentary, **Eating with Cannibals**, a film that was aired across the world on the National Geographic Channel.



## One Man, One Machete Living with the Penan

John speaks about his time recently spent with the nomadic tribes of Borneo, in which his initial aim was to learn about jungle survival. However, his eyes were dramatically opened up to the changing ways of the life and ecology of the jungle.

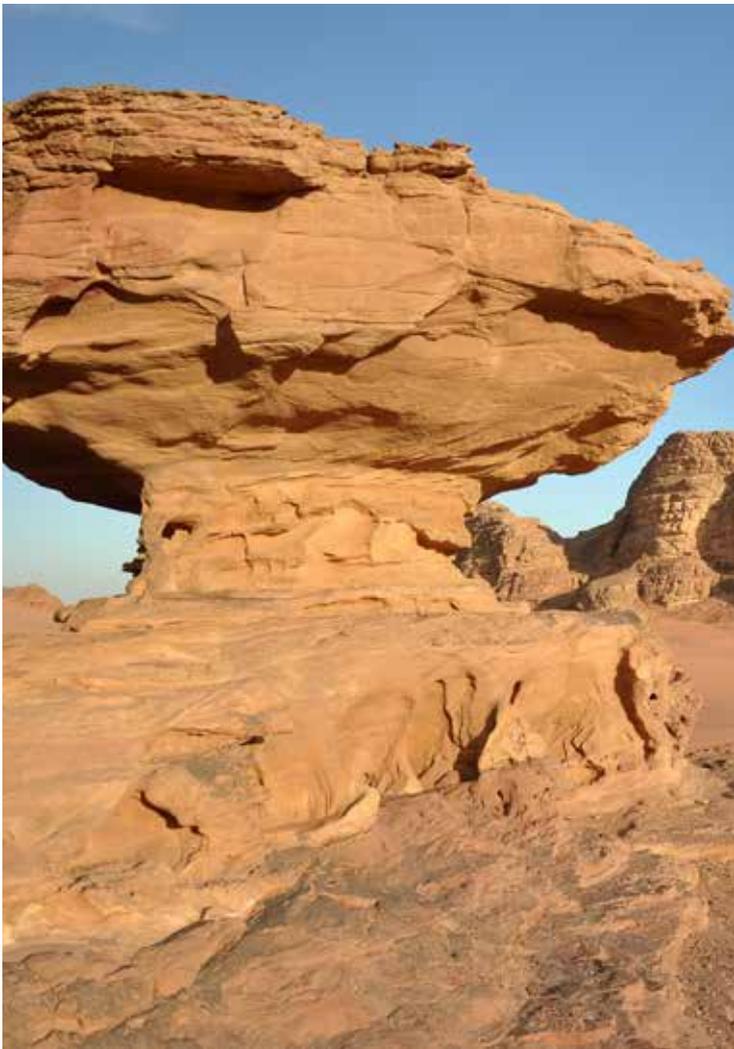
## Feed the Rat Living Your Dream

In 2005, a climber friend introduced John to the concept of **'feeding the rat'**. That feeling of unfulfilled ambition, gnawing away at your insides that just has to be fed! 'Go feed your rat!' advised the friend, giving him a Feed the Rat t-shirt to take round the world. From jungles to deserts to mountains and tribes, John shares his best rat moments with you.



## TV Programming Myth and Reality

John gives a fascinating insight into the compilation of T.V documentaries - from original concept to final broadcast. He shows how trust, humility and friendship are critical for earning the confidence of local tribespeople. John also demonstrates how the filming process can bring genuine benefit to remote communities.



## Into the Wild The Art of Survival

John shares his experiences to give a master class in personal survival. From spending time on an uninhabited island off Borneo to coping when lost in the desert or stranded in the jungle, John shows us that survival is 10% skills and 90% mindset. He demonstrates that, whether alone in the Saharan wastes or facing a crisis in the workplace, a positive mentality is everything.



## Survival of the Species Wildlife Conservation Projects

John has led numerous global conservation expeditions - from Orang-Utan projects in Borneo to Save The Jaguar in Belize. John shares his passion and profound experience of these projects. He deals with:

- the importance of sound planning
- leadership
- understanding group dynamics
- maximising team performance

John's talks graphically illustrate how a small group, battling against the toughest conditions, can achieve unbelievable results, both for themselves as individuals, as well as for the environment.



# John's Messages

How John brings his amazing experiences to bear on everyday issues in the workplace



- **Creative Thinking & Risk Taking**  
How a quick, agile mind can help us out of a challenging situation.
- **Self-Discipline & Preparation**  
How getting into the habit of carrying out small routine tasks helps avoid problems in the future.
- **Overcoming Adversity**  
There's nothing like a period of sustained tropical isolation to appreciate how 'stickability' will always see you through.
- **Leadership & Fostering Morale**
  - Learning to accommodate different character types with the group – making each one feel valued.
- **Embracing Change**  
Learning how change is not to be feared but welcomed – change can be a genuine life-enhancing experience.
- **Appreciation of the Environment and Natural Resources**  
Following his experiences with the tribes of Borneo and Papua New Guinea, John has gained a unique perspective on the urgent issues facing our planet. He has unbounded admiration for the way in which remote tribes cherish each and every element of their surroundings.
- **The Courage to Be Yourself**  
John has learned how it only takes a few steps along a path of your choosing to gain a winning mentality, unbeatable confidence and self-esteem.

## In a Nutshell

John is a master story-teller. He takes his audience on a journey of **adventure, suspense** and **discovery**. He brings together a wealth of personal experiences:

- failures and successes
- his appreciation of research, preparation, teamwork and leadership
- his ability to make hard decisions
- his belief and trust in the talents and abilities of others
- the joys of discovery and meeting new people

John's delivery invites his audience to **reflect on** and **evaluate** their own professional and personal experiences. He helps us not to fear change or adversity, to learn that they are a part of life – that being a victim is a matter of choice.

John brings to his talks a wonderful sense of humour and imaginative use of video. Invariably, he concludes his presentation with a stunning twist, taking his audience completely by surprise, bringing them to their feet with rousing laughter and applause.

# Media/TV work undertaken

Going out alone and finding a story line. Ensuring the safety of presenters and crew

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BBC **Last Man Standing** Papua New Guinea - 2007

BBC **Extreme Dreams** with Ben Fogle Papua New Guinea - 2007

Channel 5 **Unbreakables** with Benedict Allen Sahara Desert - 2008

National Geographic Channel, **Eating with Cannibals** with Piers Gibbons - 2010

Numerous interviews with BBC Radio, speaking about his adventures and survival skills.

## Notable Speaking Engagements

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**St James Palace** – Guest speaker for the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards. 2012, 2013, 2014.

**Shepherds Bush Housing Group** – corporate event – audience of 400.

**Expedition Medicine** – Doctors seeking expedition advice -audience in excess of 400

**Explorers Connect** – Numerous engagements from audiences of 70 to 350.

**Unlimited Adventures** – numerous, audiences in excess of 100.

**BBC Radio** – recordings available on request.

**Epic Tomato** – adventure travel promotion – audience in excess of 400.

**Fast Hosts** – corporate event – audience of 100.

**Barclays Bank** – corporate event – audience of 300.

Numerous **Schools, Academies, Colleges and International Schools**. Audiences between 30 and 600.

**Celebrity Cruise Ships** – January & March 2014. Audiences of 350 and 400.

## Guest Speaker at St James Palace for the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards

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John is a keen supporter of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. He enjoys a close affinity with the sense of achievement that young people feel following their success.

John feels immensely proud to be asked every year to attend award presentations at St James Palace. Along with His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex, he presents the Gold Awards to the successful young people.

John also feels honoured to be a regular guest speaker at this event. He gives a rousing speech, congratulating the young people on their amazing achievements. They, in turn, feel a similar sense of privilege; not only are they rewarded for their efforts by meeting members of the Royal Family, but they also get to know John Sullivan, a man whose own achievements so often mirror their own.



### An excerpt from John's presentation

*"Congratulations to every single one of you for completing your Gold Award. I hope you've gained a love of exploration through doing your DofE. People ask me why I got into adventure. I tell them that it didn't start when I was in the marines; it wasn't when I was living with tribes in Papua New Guinea or trekking through Borneo; it was when I was twelve in the cadets, doing similar activities that you have done through your DofE, learning how to work as a team and gaining skills like determination and resilience. Remember that the world is your oyster and whatever you want to do in your life, you just have to grab it and do it."*

# Testimonials

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*"Culturally sensitive, technically skilled, and with first-hand evidence of the challenges remote communities now face, John is a Boys' Own adventurer for the 21st Century."*

**Mary-Ann Ochota**, Anthropologist and Broadcaster.

*"Your talk was really nicely pitched, with great pace and just the right amount of detail, suspense and laughs, delivered with some really interesting messages and stories too. And the rat - I loved this and so did the audience. Such a simple and yet powerful concept that everyone can make their own and take away. It was great."*

**Sarah Outen MBE**, first woman and the youngest person to row solo across the Indian Ocean and also the Pacific Ocean from Japan to Alaska.

*"John Sullivan and his experiences were both entertaining and extremely interesting. Highly recommended; something you are likely not to see or hear again."*

**Dr Helen Clegg**, Senior Lecturer, Division of Psychology, The University of Northampton

*"An inspirational talk from a jungle explorer. The best that I have witnessed in over 30 years of teaching."*

**Teacher**, Brislington Enterprise College.

*"John Sullivan is a former Royal Marine, adventurer and explorer from the UK. Through a lot of persistence and hard work, he followed his passion to explore the world and pursue adventure. John focused his talk on 'Feeding the Rat'. Essentially the passion that lives inside of us needs to be fuelled whether that is sport, art, adventure, music and science. He shared the virtues that people need to do that e.g. self-belief, hard work, persistence. John is also a healthy risk taker in the challenges he undertakes, fitting in with the IB learner profile. ISH is hopefully certain that John's motivational talk inspired students to do something extraordinary in their future."*

**Head of year 10**, International School of Hague. Holland.

