

OMA MEMBERSHIP

Why not join the Old Mancunians' Association? You will receive *Ulula* and the *Annual Report*, as well as support various projects at School. Membership is just £12 per year. You can download the membership forms from www.oldmancunians.org

VISIT US

The tours organised for OMs have been very successful. We suggest you book a tour during term time when boys are at work and play! You will be delighted to see the diverse and stimulating activities boys enjoy. OMs have enjoyed reminiscing over a free School lunch in the refectory. Telephone or email Carole Pemberton in the Development Office to reserve your place.

SECTION EVENTS**Midlands Section**

Many will be aware that our Chairman, David Rogers, died suddenly just before Christmas. Committee members attended the funeral at which the School was represented by Ian Thorpe. At a recent committee meeting Dan Binnion was elected Chairman for the remainder of the year. The other officers remaining unchanged.

The Section's events for the year are as usual with the Summer Luncheon at The Anchor, Eckington near Pershore on 14 June when Ronnie Goy will talk, among other things, of his days at Long Millgate.

The Annual Luncheon and AGM will be held at The Forest Hotel, Dorridge on 15 November when the High Master will be the guest of honour.

Full details will be circulated to Section members in due course, but any OM is welcome to join these events and can contact the Secretary, John Wilson on 0121 475 3700 or john@wilson7743.fsnet.co.uk

London & South East Section

All OMs are invited to attend the Annual Dinner of the London & SE OMA to be held at the Oxford & Cambridge Club, Pall Mall,

on Thursday 10 April 2008. The guest speaker will be Michael Crick and dress will be lounge suits.

17 July—Golf Day at the Roehampton Club
17 Sept—Pub evening at The Anchor, South-wark

For further details contact Nick Gartside
nicholas.gartside@schroders.com

South West Section will hold its Commemoration Service at Exeter Cathedral for Hugh Oldham on the 489th anniversary of his death on Sunday 22 June when the High Master will lay a wreath on his tomb. Following the service lunch will be held at a nearby hotel. Please note that all OMs are welcome to attend this occasion. For further details e-mail John Smith at johningsmith@chyanmor.wanadoo.co.uk

Since the last *TOM* we have been advised of the recent deaths of the following OMs:

R Hall (23-28) D A Falkard* (54-60)
F R Davies* (27-32) T C Beswick* (32-39)
A S Mitchell* (35-41) J Clemence* (42-47)
N Tomkinson (30-35) H Fidler* (23-29)
D N Rogers* (38-45) G Newton* (36-40)
B H Knowles* (39-42) DW Lomax* (39-41)
PH Bracewell* (35-41) B B Taylor* (42-46)
WA Jackson* (38-46) NW Shorrocks (41-44)
A J Pearson* (30-33) R J Kingsley* (36-40)
L J Lowe* (39-41) K Davies* (50-57)
K A Yates* (43-50) S A Fox* (60-67)
IW Crompton* (45-54) RL Raffles* (31-36)
J H Betts* (51-58) J B Swindells* (47-52)
R Buckley (29-34) H W Dalton* (34-39)
I D F Taggart (39-46) A Jones (50-56)
J Wrigley* (48-55) G A Fisher (42-50)

We would welcome offers to supply brief obituaries for *Ulula*. The asterisk shows that an obituary is already in preparation.

Correspondence to Carole Pemberton at MGS, Old Hall Lane, Manchester M13 0XT (c.m.pemberton@mgs.org) 0161 224 1746 or to John Horsfield at School. Closing date for the next edition is 5 September 2008.



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The Old Mancunian

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Owls are all over. So I was not too surprised to catch sight of the effigy of one on some grass at the side of Anson Road and not that far of course from Old Hall Lane. Was it an MGS owl, not quite made it to School? But close up it just read 'Victoria Park East' on the plinth.

Then the other day I saw an armorial 'Sapere Aude' by a crossing at Oldham bus station. Douglas Rossington (MGS 1943-50) can help us here. He quotes from an article by a heraldry adviser John F Pell in the Lincolnshire Family History Magazine, no less. "For example a certain Bishop Oldham was given arms showing an owl holding a streamer on which was written 'Dom'. To understand this, one has to hear how older local residents pronounced the name of the Lancashire town. Obviously the herald was aware of this or heard the way the Bishop pronounced his name." This owl topic, dear to OMs, has obviously plenty of mileage left.

I was recently sorting out some old papers and came across my MGS staff salary statement for March 1966. After deductions it came to £90 16s 7d. That was in real pre-decimalisation money! Five pounds of this amount was earned supervising Saturday morning. Not the worst of duties. Indeed, quite a civilised one. I was assisted in its administration by Wilf who acted as maitre d' making sure that the regulars had their accustomed seats.

This March 1966 payment would have ended up at Martin's Bank at the corner of Dickenson Road. I used to toddle across Birchfields Park to draw money from this branch. Charles Wright (MGS 1919-22) was clerk-in-charge there to 1965. He always wore an OM tie and was like a candid uncle to me

telling me that my handwriting was as bad as my father's. One day Charley Wright as he was known looked at my bank statement before handing it over to me and admonished me to watch my wife's spending. I told him I had no wife.

John Horsfield

FROM THE HIGH MASTER**Dr Christopher Ray**

January 2008 was an extraordinary month for MGS. We were visited by a team of inspectors. As well as the usual 11+ examinations, we carried out assessments for boys aiming to join our new junior section at ages 9 and 10. We received approval from the International Baccalaureate Organisation enabling us to offer the programme to sixth formers from September 2008. And we received several generous contributions to our bursary and drama centre funds, together with one massive bequest.

The inspectors spent four days in the School—considering everything from teaching to catering and libraries to management. We are still waiting to receive the written report from the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which is empowered by the government to carry out inspections of independent schools in England. As soon as we receive it, we shall publish it in full on our website. Until then I am not allowed to give specific details. However, I am able to say that the inspectors were very complimentary indeed about all aspects of the School.

We are likely to admit some 80 boys into our new junior section. We have recruited four specialist junior teachers for next year, but we shall also be using the considerable talents and enthusiasm of our existing staff to ensure that these younger pupils develop and flourish in the best traditions of the School.

We shall be teaching the International Baccalaureate Diploma as an alternative to A-levels from the start of the next academic year. A pilot group of about 35, including half a dozen students joining the sixth form from other schools, will lead the way. Pupils, parents and staff are very excited about the prospects for this challenging programme. All sixth formers, whether IB or A-level, will be given the opportunity to produce an extended research project—and very many have signalled that they intend to do so next year.

Demand for bursaries remains high and is increasing. It is heart-breaking to turn away any boy who has passed our entrance examination simply because we do not have sufficient bursary funds to meet the demand. So it was hugely encouraging to receive news of the largest single bequest so far to the MGS Trust: a residuary legacy likely to be worth £3 million. When we receive the expected funds, the Bursary Fund will have reached some £17 million. However, even with this tremendous boost, we know that much more will be needed in future to achieve our aim to be genuinely needs-blind in our admissions process. You will forgive this High Master, I know, for asking you to consider—if you have not already done so—making a bequest to the School. Ian Thorpe, Director of Development, is always ready to provide advice as to the most effective way for this to be done.

JACK KAHANE & THE OBELISK PRESS

Jack Kahane (1887-1939) was one of the school's more eccentric and intriguing old boys. Having left MGS in 1903 he entered the textile trade and became a dealer in the highly competitive cotton velvets market. But his main interests lay in the literary and musical life of Manchester. He was one of the leading lights of the Swan Club, a luncheon club which included Harold Brighouse, Stanley Houghton and Ben Iden Payne (all of

whom were OMs) among its members. He also founded the Manchester Musical Society and led a campaign against Richter, accusing him of including too much German music at the Hallé at the expense of French and English composers. By the time he was twenty-five Kahane had established himself as a wit and bon viveur in Manchester Bohemian society.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 Kahane immediately volunteered and spent nearly five years as a transport officer on the Western Front, where he was wounded, and later in Italy and Fiume (now Rijeka). During the war he married the daughter of a wealthy French engineer



and in 1919 he settled down in his beloved France. The 1920s saw him living the life of a French country gentleman, raising a family and writing a series of light novels. In 1929 the family fortune was hit by the depression and he moved to Paris. Here he set up the Obelisk Press which became one of the main avant-garde English language publishing houses of the city. Kahane brought out work by James Joyce and Lawrence Durrell, but he was particularly close to Henry Miller's group and in 1934 he had his greatest publishing coup with Miller's "Tropic of Cancer". He published his autobiography in 1939 but suffered increasingly bad health and died in Paris just as war broke out.

Until recently Kahane has been remembered as the father of that even more eccentric and notorious Parisian publisher Maurice Girodias. Kahane's life and work have now been commemorated in a new book, "Obelisk" by Neil Pearson (pub. Liverpool University Press 2007). The author, who is better known as a leading TV actor, has for

Cross Country Trophy

I was the second generation in my family to go to MGS: my uncle, Samuel Herbert Pilkington, who died in 1933, aged about 30, was the first. He was a keen cross country runner. His youngest sister lives in Southport. On a recent visit she gave me a photograph of the Pilkington Trophy, a plate, complete with the OMA coat of arms. Beneath the photograph is the caption: "This trophy was given by the members of the Old Mancunians Association Harriers for competition every four months in memory of S H Pilkington who died 1 April 1933."

I think it was still competed for in the 1940s. My aunt would like to know what has happened to it. Any information I shall gladly pass on to her.

Gordon Phasey (Sale and MGS 1943-50)

Mr Bunn and an MGS education

I was in History Sixth from September 1938 until July 1941, and at the beginning of September 1939 the whole school was assembled in the refectory, I think it was, to hear Chamberlain say in his tired voice, "We are now at war with Germany." My life was not immediately changed by these words but MGS did change my life in a way because of several things I learnt there in addition to the usual baggage of facts.

One day the amazing Mr Bunn told us to go into the museum and look at some Dutch paintings. For homework we had to write what we had seen. My homework, copied out of the encyclopaedia, was scorned. What I should have seen if I had really looked was an orderly, almost smug, society, middle class interiors, comfortable furniture, expensive clothes, musical instruments, tranquil town scenes and so on. That little exercise taught me how to begin to look at pictures. Another rather more unpleasant development in my education was this. We had French lessons (about Racine) and Brian Stannion and I were so bored by both subject and

teacher that we decided not to go any more. In other words we dared to be wise! When this rebellion was discovered we were sent home. The next day when I didn't go to school I managed to persuade my mother it was a holiday, but the third day I had to confess. Fortunately that very day a note came to me on a postcard (in an envelope so that only I could see it) which said: "You may return to school tomorrow." Young as I was I realised the elegance of this punishment and I never transgressed again. Funnily enough when I went to live in Paris after the war I became passionately fond of Racine.

The third thing I learnt from Mr Bunn concerned a Jewish member of the class called Margolis. He invariably came late and banged the door when he entered the classroom. We didn't approve of this behaviour at all. But one day when he wasn't there Mr Bunn explained that he was frustrated by what was happening to the Jews in Germany and that was the only way he could express it. After that it was easier to understand history; it was a question of motives not only of battles and economics. And by the way economics was one subject I did not learn at MGS.

One of my essays on the subject was returned to me with the comment 'asinine'! Now that a historical novel of mine has been published on the Internet (on 13 May 2007—my eighty-fourth birthday) I am glad Mr Bunn is no longer around to tell me that my knowledge of history is as asinine as my knowledge of economics. Unfortunately most of my classmates have died too, which restricts my sales! What then is my verdict on MGS? That in my day you learnt far more there than the ability to pass exams. I am sure that is still true today.

'The confines of paradise, or Nelson, the flawed hero' by Brian Deakin is available from Hazelburr Publishing Brian Y Deakin (1938-41)

although complaining outright would have breached the good manners required of children at that time, I must somehow have exposed my dislike. The hostess emphasised the connection between fish and Friday and went on to reproach me for not having attended Mass.

Understanding and harmony were restored only when she produced the documentation delivered with us. In military fashion this specified religious persuasion. She had mistaken my initials for mine.

R C Stephenson (SHS and MGS 1937-41)
Memories of Eric James

I read with much interest the "Memories of Eric James" section in the latest TOM. (Though I was rather sad that Dr Goldberg should have such negative memories of his time at Oxford—very different from my own at about the same era!) Dr Goldberg captured very well EJFJ's characteristic pronunciation of 'you' as 'yer'. I can still hear him saying "This is yer school".

May I add a few reminiscences of mine? Eric James was indeed an aloof figure, seen each morning at assembly in the Hall and rarely at any other times. I, like Dr Goldberg, recall the sessions in which he tried to broaden the horizons of the sixth form—scientists in my case—without a lot of success, though I can still vaguely recall the theory of Platonic Idealism!

I too encountered EJFJ when a junior member of the school. Three or four of us had committed some minor misdemeanour and were hauled up before him. He asked what form we were in. "Upper Three A, sir" we stammered. "What!" roared the great man, "Get out before the heavens fall!"

He used to interview all Oxbridge candidates in order to write reports on us and he asked me what I had been reading lately. "Well, sir, I've been reading rather a lot of Dornford Yates" I replied. "Rubbish!" he barked. What could I say but "yes, sir!"?

I also recall the 'soirées' for prefects which he and Mrs James held in their home on Old Hall Lane. We were treated to nibbles and intellectual games, one of which was to be given an initial letter and a category and to go on for as long as we could as a group calling out, for example place-names beginning with 'B' (I remember calling out Bunbeg' (where I had recently been with the Troop IV trek to Ireland) and EJFJ saying to his wife "Did you hear that? He said 'Bunbeg'".

We of advancing years have more and more of these 'snapshot memories!'
John Shore (1946-53)

My father held a senior position in industry and appreciated getting away, such as at half term, and as this was towards the end of the war (1944 or 1945) no petrol was available and the family was due to travel by train (I think to the Lake District) in the afternoon to reach Windermere at a reasonable time. My father's request that I be allowed to leave school early was declined so it was decided that my mother would make another attempt by telephone to Dr James but he again declined.

However it so happened that recently he had given the "Thought for the Day" talk before the 8 am news which my mother had heard. So before putting the phone down she said how much she had appreciated his talk. She said how important moral training was in children's education and that she took my brother and I regularly to church which meant walking quite a distance, rain or shine, as there was no transport available. Dr James must have warmed to these comments and said that in this particular case he would give me permission to leave school early so that the family could get away on the Friday afternoon. My mother must have been one of the very few people to cause him to change his mind—much to his credit!

F R Purslow (1944-48)

some years studied Kahane and has built up an impressive collection of his publications. The book, which runs to nearly 500 pages, consists of three sections. The first 75 pages contain a well-researched monograph on Kahane entitled "A Very British Pornographer". The next 240 pages present a very detailed bibliography of the Obelisk Press and of Kahane's own writings. The descriptions of the various editions reflect Pearson's detailed knowledge of the subject. The final 170 pages contain biographies of over forty of the writers published by Obelisk. In all, the book provides a wealth of information which will be useful to students of English language avant-garde publishing between the wars.

Two subjects which might be of interest to Old Mancunians are not dealt with in the book. One is the difficult relationship between Kahane and his nephew Edgar Lobel. The other is Kahane's apparent lack of interest in his Jewish heritage.

After the death of their parents Kahane was taken into the household of his much older sister Mrs Amelia Lobel. One of her children, Edgar Lobel (1888-1982) was only eighteen months younger than Jack. In 1900 both boys won Foundation Scholarships to MGS. However while Jack's main interest at school seems to have been the Debating Society, Edgar was establishing himself as a brilliant classicist winning a scholarship to Balliol and going on to spend his entire career in Oxford, first at Balliol, then at the Bodleian, and finally as a don at Queen's College. He became an expert papyrologist and authority on the poets of Lesbos. In his autobiography Kahane writes "It was on my elder nephew's account that I was glad to leave school. I had an average brain and as luck would have it, his was one of the best of his generation. A first class mind, bad cess to him." Living in completely different worlds, uncle and nephew never met again.

Kahane's attitude to his Jewish background is strange but perhaps not surprising. The forename on his birth certificate was Jonas but he was always known as Jack. His family, who all lived in the Jewish community on Bury New Road, were not religious and Kahane, unlike his contemporaries at MGS Simon Marks and Israel Sieff, had no interest in Zionist politics. He did not appear to have moved in Jewish circles in Manchester and wrote of his opposition to the Balfour Declaration. He went even further by portraying a number of Jewish characters in his novels in an unflattering light. Kahane's sympathies always lay with France and he was critical of German politics. It is ironical that his son, Maurice, took his mother's maiden name in 1940 in order to survive in wartime Paris and like many others seems to have done some business with the occupying Germans. Kahane was a fascinating but somewhat enigmatic figure, but his life throws light on many aspects of English and French life and letters. Neil Pearson's book provides a fine memorial to one of our lesser known OMs. Perhaps we can look forward to a long overdue reprint of the Kahane autobiography, "Memoirs of a Booklegger" (pub Leopold Joseph 1939).

Stewart Platts (1946-51)

PROFESSOR LORD WINSTON, one of the world's most respected medical academics and researcher of the human reproductive system, will be delivering this year's Hugh Oldham Lecture on Monday 30 June in the Memorial Hall at School. For further details contact Sally Rogers at School or visit the website—www.mgs.org

WW2 AND MGS

A small group of historians from years 1-Lower 6 intend to make a documentary about the impact of WW2 on MGS during Activities Week in June. This follows on from last year's project, which resulted in the production of an acclaimed film about the impact of

WW1 on the school, entitled *Sons of the Owl*.

I would be very interested to hear from any Old Manx who may have been at the school 1939-45, or who saw service during the conflict. The intention would be to include the memories and experiences of these former pupils in the final documentary, either through a conventional interview or voice-over.

If anyone is able to assist with the project in any way, I would be very keen to hear from them. Please contact Mr Neil Smith (n.d.smith@mgs.org) for further details.



By the time you receive your **next** copy of TOM, in September, we expect to be reporting that demolition work to the Lecture Theatre and adjacent buildings is taking place, with the new Drama Centre poised to emerge from the rubble. The first 18 months of fundraising towards the cost of the project have been very successful, with a little over £1.6 million donated or pledged. During the next 6 months we are hoping to reach our £2 million target to ensure that the new facilities can have all the qualities we need to take both performance drama and drama in the curriculum at MGS to a new, higher level. All gifts from UK tax-payers can benefit from the Gift Aid scheme as MGS is a qualifying charity. Further details from the Development Office and www.mgs.org.

ESTABLISHMENT OF EUROPEAN OM SECTION

I would like to gauge the level of interest in a European Section among the Old Mancunian population.

Events would take place in easily accessible locations on the continent, ideally where there is a significant OM population. Since I am located near Geneva I propose to organise the inaugural meeting here, most probably in the form of a wine-tasting in the vineyards of La Cote (on the shore of Lake Geneva) followed by a meal in Geneva. Date to be confirmed.

Could you please contact me at mgartside@hotmail.com or Jane Graham at School (j.graham@mgs.org) if you are interested in being part of the Overseas Section? Membership and attendance are of course open to all Old Boys, not only those living outside the UK.

CHARITIES AND REQUESTS

Solo Atlantic Row

Anthony Taylor started his solo row across the Atlantic on 12 January and after 60 days has covered 60% of the distance to Antigua. Raising money for the Christie Hospital in Manchester, Anthony has had every bit as tough a time as you could imagine. You can read his day-by-day diary (sent by satellite phone) and see a map of his progress at www.soloatlantic.com. His homepage also explains how to send a free message of encouragement to his satphone. Anthony hopes to reach Antigua by mid-April.

Walking for Emmaus

Recently retired MGS Chemistry teacher, Ian Orrell, will set off from Land's End on 1 April to walk around 1,000 miles to John o'Groats, taking approximately 2 months. For many years Ian led MGS's Community Action programme, and his chosen charity is Emmaus (President, Terry Waite) which is soon to open an Emmaus Community in Salford. This Community

will help homeless people to regain their self-worth and acquire new skills. Each Emmaus Community eventually pays its own way, so initial donations are an investment, not a handout.

A donation of £10 will keep Ian walking at 1p per mile. He has a webpage at www.justgiving.com/ianorrell where card donations can be made in a Gift Aid-efficient manner. Alternatively, cheques payable to "Emmaus UK" can be sent to him at 52 Higher Lane, Whitefield, Manchester M45 7WE. Please enclose your address and, if appropriate, the wording 'I am a UK taxpayer and would like my donation to be treated as Gift Aid', with your signature. Gift-aided donations made before 6 April will provide an extra 28% for Emmaus, thereafter an extra 25%.

We are hoping to include details of Ian's route and his progress at www.oldmancunians.org.

Wisdens wanted

The MGS Archives have inherited a fine set of "Wisden's Cricketers Almanacs" from the Paton Library. We have a complete run from 1905 to 1955 including the rare 1919 edition, but there is a long gap from 1956 to 1979 inc. Furthermore we do not have the editions for 1981, 1982, 1986, 1988, 1989 and 1994. We should be most grateful if any reader of the Old Mancunian would be prepared to donate any of the missing editions so we can complete our set. All the missing volumes contain reports on the performance of the MGS XI which we should like to have.

Jeremy Ward, MGS Archivist

Sale Prep

J S Platts (OM) who was at Sale High from 1940-46 would like to hear from others who were at the School and who might have information or memorabilia about it. He says we have very little information about Sale High. It was probably formed in the 1920s, moved into a new building in Woodbourne

Road in the 30s and ended he thinks in 1949. E-mail jstewartplatts@aol.com

OM LETTERS:

Dr John Willson

May I be permitted, through your columns to express my best wishes to John Willson in his retirement? I would like to relate an event that illustrates the quality of the man.

In 1975-76 he was form master of S VI ii Bio x, of which I was a member. In January 1976 I suffered a serious accident at home involving my left wrist and a glass door, and was unable to attend school for five or six weeks, including two stays in hospital for surgery. Dr Willson visited me in hospital the day after the accident and then a number of times thereafter, both at hospital and at home, bringing work for me and making sure I was coping adequately. Without his support and encouragement it is doubtful I would have achieved the required grades at A-level, including an A in chemistry which allowed me to fulfil my ambition to study veterinary medicine at university, something for which I shall be forever grateful to him.

At a recent entertainment event I attended, a member of the audience asked Stephen Fry if he could give one piece of advice to anyone what would it be, and he replied "be nice". John Willson was (and presumably still is) a nice man.

Chris Knott (1969-76)

Blackpool

The wartime exodus to Blackpool has been a bountiful source of reminiscence. I hope that in offering one more I shall not create a glut. Having survived the under-canvas and boarding house ordeals a form mate, Alan Green, and I were allocated to a private house near Stanley Park; incidentally at about the time when an evacuee from Manchester moved into my bedroom in Wilmslow.

On the first few Fridays, fish was served for 'cooked tea'. I had always disliked fish and,