

ing activities outside the academic areas and ambitious plans for the future not least the new Drama Department. Following lunch, the Section held its annual AGM. Once more, this event was very enjoyable and was attended by 48 members and guests. This included, from the School, the High Master and his wife, Ian Thorpe, Carole Pemberton, Jane Graham, teachers Sally Byrne and Simon Jones and the School Captain. Next year, the Cathedral and Hotel are booked for Sunday 22 June and all Old Mancunians are very welcome. Equally all Old Mancunians are welcome to our Autumn event which is to be on Saturday 3 November at Barrington Court, a National Trust property in Somerset which is a 16th Century Manor House with interesting gardens. This is a special opening for Old Mancunians just after the end of the season and will include lunch in the Strode House Restaurant.

For further details e-mail John Smith at johnsmith@chyanmor.wanadoo.co.uk

1980-89 REUNION

A reunion for all those boys who joined the School 1980-89 will be held on 3 May 2008. For further details contact Jane Graham in the Development Office.

THE OLD BOYS' DINNER will be held at School on Saturday 24 November. His Honour Judge Clement Goldstone QC and Matt Williams, an ITN news producer who was recently voted Young Journalist of the Year at the Royal Television Society Awards will be speaking. For further details please contact Paul Rose, Recorder. E-mail

Paul.Rose@halliwells.com; Birchdale Mews, 3 Birchdale, St Mary's Road, Bowdon, Cheshire, WA14 2PW; 0870 365 8678.

VISIT US

The tours organised for OMs have been very successful. OMs have enjoyed reminiscing over a free School lunch in the refectory. Telephone or email Carole Pemberton in the Development Office and reserve your place.

We are trying to trace an old school photo of a lacrosse team from about 1932-36 which has the caption 'The long and the short of it' written by, we think, the High Master of the day. Please e-mail Jane Graham at j.graham@mgs.org in the Development Office if you have such a photograph or telephone 0161 224 1746.

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

L J Shaw* (Staff 1979-2007)
 D H W Davies* (Staff 1950-58)
 P S Uzzell* (Staff 1959-64)
 D J W Williams* (Staff 1950-62)
 A C Woods* (Staff 1950-59)
 G P Borrington* (35-40) T C Keen (34-39)
 R A Blackburn* (39-43) G Langley* (51-57)
 M A Shippey (75-82) G Tansey (25-29)
 R A Young (32-37) J D Wilkinson (50-57)
 A Gee (47-52) A Walton (45-48)
 P E Redhead* (36-40) D C Bradbury (31-36)
 M S Bridge (27-34) A D Staton (28-32)
 M H Phillips (51-56) R P Bennett (51-58)
 F R K Edwards (51-58) B Falk (51-58)
 D A Prenton (51-59) A Halliwell (23-25)
 W H Eckersley (22-26) RA Durrant* (63-70)
 B V Hall (43-48) D K Palmer (29-34)
 K Hepburn* (24-29) E H Bentley (33-37)
 N Tomlinson (28-32) J H Baldwin* (49-51)
 M J Vercoe (80-85) H K Snape (38-40)
 P G Hall (29-37) P B Rippon (48-55)
 D H Snape (31-36) P D Cusick (29-33)
 H Edwards (29-34) R G Key (43-48)
 L B Farrelly (37-43) A Tyldesley* (36-43)
 G H McKinna* (44-49) P B Taylor (37-42)
 R M Heyes* (47-53) D G Mather* (38-45)
 R Moss* (24-31) A H Brooks (30-38)
 A H Turner (43-48) H T Taylor (39-47)
 F J Pettigrew* (24-28) A Culver (37-41)
 H Fidler (23-29)

* obituary in preparation for *Ulula*

Correspondence to Carole Pemberton at MGS (c.m.pemberton@mgs.org) 0161 224 1746 or to John Horsfield. Closing date for the next edition is 12 November 2007.



September 2007

The Old Mancunian

Edition 26

EDITOR'S NOTES

The death of Lady James last April at the age of 95 reminds us of the contribution she made in her own right to the public life of Manchester during the period of her husband's highmastership. Her passing also reminds of years when Manchester was a much more distinctive place than it is today and when 'The Guardian' was the 'Manchester Guardian', a greater newspaper than today's London emanation.

The weighty and voluminous planning application for the further development of the locale of Chetham's School of Music contains some most interesting information as to the physical development and physical vicissitudes of the MGS buildings in Long Millgate. It contains a picture dated 1877 of the MGS mills and reminds us that the former house of the High Master became in 1868 the Cathedral Hotel. Those concerned about the taming of the River Irk, close to MGS, will also find much of interest.

Over the years the MGS Parents' Society has aided the life of the School with numerous donations. In recent times the parents have provided a rich variety of contributions including a specialist camera lens for the Camera Society, bagpipes for a pupil who wished to learn to play them, and a rowing machine. The Society has on sale MGS cuff links, the silver ones being priced £40 and the gold £125. Any OMs interested in making a purchase should contact Ellen Wheeldon at 0161 432 7653.

John Horsfield

ANOTHER ANGLE

From time to time wives and or partners, as they call them these days, must cast a glance at the Old Mancunian. We would welcome letters from them on the role of MGS in their

life. Genuine contributions only please!

FROM THE HIGH MASTER

Dr Christopher Ray

Earlier this year, the Governors of the School decided to establish a junior section, admitting boys at ages nine and ten in September 2008. We believe that we can develop within each able young man who joins us a passion for learning and life, challenging him through exciting and demanding lessons and extending him and stimulating his interests beyond the classroom in the way that we do with our existing boys. We believe that many very able young men will flourish in our junior section just as they now do in the senior school itself.

Did Hugh Oldham revolve in his tomb? I rather think not, given the fact that for several hundred years MGS has taught boys younger than eleven and, indeed, as young as six when the School was first established. However, Eric James, who closed the last of our prep schools (Sale), might have rotated a little. Lord James is reputed to have said that his proudest boast was that MGS was "within the state system and available to anyone" ... until the Government (in the person of Shirley Williams) threatened to get its claws into us. In their edited history of the School, Graham and Phythian comment on the closure of the three prep schools during the 1940s: "Perhaps their disappearance was the natural, if painful, result of the growth of quality of state education." Some future historian might be inclined to say that the re-appearance of pre-secondary education was the natural result of the many unresolved tensions within state education in the early twenty-first century. I always sense a deep regret amongst many OMs for the passing of the direct grant sys-

tem which underwrote much of the strength of the School for some thirty years during the post-war period. When the Governors decided in 1975 to choose independence rather than to embrace the comprehensive ideals of socialism, they accepted the need for the School to raise funds for poorer families. They did not anticipate the extent to which Government would attempt to control public examinations and the curriculum. Much good may have come from those attempts – but there has been much harm too. The Governors at that time did look forward to “the day when a new enlightenment of government or electorate re-opens the way for fruitful co-operation” – but sadly we are still waiting. The lack of any sign of genuinely enlightened thinking warns us to guard our independence fiercely. However, that independence, as Peter Mason’s Governors realised, requires that we must continue to work hard to increase our funds for means-tested bursaries (now to be available from age 9 to 18); and we must not ignore changing external conditions – responding appropriately and (if necessary) boldly. The establishment of the junior section is arguably a bold response but it is also timely – given the tremendous interest shown by prospective parents and pupils.

Hugh Oldham’s message of godliness and good learning is especially relevant at a time when many parents have significant worries about fulfilling the needs of those more able young pupils during those critical years just before secondary school commences. We are continually frustrated by the constraints imposed upon learning by the government’s key stage tests: too many children are simply not challenged by their junior school education. We believe that we can do significantly better than many others in bringing out the full potential of very able boys with a specially designed and exhilarating curriculum.

THE ARCHIVES

The Archives are on the move. Our ever growing collection of MGS books, documents, photographs and memorabilia has outgrown the narrow and cramped room in the Paton Library and we have been afforded a spacious new facility right in the centre of the School near the Memorial Hall (the former Alan Garner Junior Library). The move has involved a good deal of work to the point where John Bever, Bob Mackay and Jeremy Ward have been toiling during the summer holidays in an otherwise almost deserted building! Our efforts, however, are proving worthwhile as so much more of our material will eventually be on public display or at least accessible to interested parties such as Old Mancunians, visiting scholars and potential pupils and their parents. It is also the intention that current pupils will have access to the Archives so that they may learn more about the history of their school.

The move has thrown up items which we thought were lost or never knew we had but it has also revealed some big gaps in our collection. At the heart of the Archives are the Admissions Registers which High Master Walker started in 1862 and which with one exception run continuously to the present although taking different forms in different periods. The exception is 1879-88 when the Register was closed mysteriously “on the order of the High Master”. Fortunately the biannual Form Lists continued their publication during those years. They started in 1862 and were last published in 1940 and provide an invaluable source of information about the academic performance of all the boys in the School. The gap until the first Owl List was published in 1947 means that little can be known about the boys in the School during the war years and just after as no Form Lists exist for these years. The third pillar of the Archives is *Ulula* published from 1873 onwards and an invaluable source of all

narrowness of view of many of the correspondents. They all seem to imply that the teachers were either brilliant or awful. My memory is that most of them were pretty good, but many had foibles that sometimes detracted from the purpose of the lesson.

I can remember Johnny Rivers asking us to write a short essay in German about our activities on Christmas Day, and his being appalled at a boy who wrote that he had played football. Rivers, who was a devout Christian, had forgotten that the boy’s name was Cohen!

I can remember Arnold Ashbrook, putting the whole of M6(ii) in Saturday Morning, because they chose to watch the School play the MCC, after they had taken their A-Levels (in which most of them got distinctions). One of the reasons we were all so successful was Ashbrook’s excellent teaching.

I can remember EJFJ (never called Eric James then), as a cold person with a brilliant intellect. When he personally taught, it was a challenge to keep up. But I also know that he assembled and motivated the best team of teachers ever seen up to that time, and, possibly, since, in any school.

Roger Payne (1953-59)

SECTION EVENTS

Midlands Section

The Section’s annual summer luncheon was held on 9 June at the Anchor Inn, Eckington. 19 members and guests enjoyed the usual excellent buffet lunch and were afterwards entertained by Matthew Jones (1994) who recounted his experiences in Russia over the last 10 years and bringing us up to date having just returned from another trip. The talk was illustrated with numerous photographs and reference to his article in *Ulula* in 1994. The numerous questions asked reflected the obvious interest of members. Our next event will be the Annual General Meeting and Luncheon to be held on Saturday 10 November at the Forest Hotel, Dorridge when the

High Master will be our principal guest. All OMs are welcome and anyone who wishes join us on this occasion should contact me on 0121 475 3700 and you will be notified of the details in due course.

J H Wilson, Honorary Secretary

London & South East Section

The AGM will be held at Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese on Tuesday 6 November from 7 pm. The concert at St John’s, Smith Square on 2 March was a great success where OMs and guests enjoyed an evening of music by the young musicians of MGS. The music composition prize was won by Simon Grange who performed it at the concert. The adjudicator was Adam Gorb, Head of the School of Composition and Contemporary Music at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. *Ulula* will give more detail of the concert.

For further details e-mail Nick Gartside at Nicholas.gartside@schroders.com

South West Section

The 41st Annual Hugh Oldham Commemoration Service was held in Exeter Cathedral on Sunday 24 June. Matins was conducted in lively fashion by Canon Carl Turner who preached “Less of self and more of Christ” as would have been the sentiment of Hugh Oldham on whose tomb the High Master laid the customary wreath during the short Commemoration Service after Matins. We then moved to Southgate Hotel for lunch following which Ian Thornton asked us all to stand in silence in memory of John Baldwin who was a staunch and faithful member who died on 3 June. The newly appointed School Captain, Alex Handy, then spoke very well praising the Bursary Fund for enabling less well-off boys to benefit from the School’s education of the whole person. The High Master then outlined the continuing achievements of MGS boys especially in mainstream subjects like Mathematics, Science and Modern Languages and he described the wealth of inspir-

DIARY RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BERKELEY SOCIETY

'2.3.1955 ...Berkeley Society: attendance small but the Chief was there. We talked about emotional and rational thought. I listened most of the time. To my astonishment we concluded that the two were inextricably interwoven, since all rational thought must start from the premise 'I want'. We also talked about the Hydrogen Bomb, inconclusively. It's surprising how difficult it is to find an instance of pure rational thought outside mathematics. These discussions are always stimulating; I felt quite enlightened afterwards.'

'13.5.1955 Went today to the Berkeley Society, where a man called Alexander from Manchester University talked about Aesthetics.' (I then noted that attendees included John Davies, Ian Lyon, Hugh Mellor, Paul Whittle, Goudy, Ashton (H vi) & formerly Chris Ehrhardt who must have left by then, and went on:) (We) foregather in the Chief's study, with some of the masters - Halewood, Corbett, Young & Percy Hill - first for tea & biscuits and conversation in small groups and then to discuss philosophical questions such as the nature of scientific proof, history, the moral instinct, chance, rational & emotional thought, etc. The whole thing is very refined and highbrow but the discussions once under way are often on quite a high level, since we can muster a fairly wide range of talent between us and Halewood is equal to almost all emergencies. The Chief's study with its deep light-brown carpet, comfortable chairs, fireplace, modern paintings and general atmosphere of subdued munificence is ideal as a background and it is invariably astonishing, to me, how many people (usually about 20) we can collect who are able to talk intelligently & interestingly about things which to most sixth formers are either incomprehensible or uninteresting, or both.'

My views on many of these issues have changed a bit over the last fifty years, but not on the importance of what Eric James and Donald Halewood were trying to achieve. Roderick Allison (1947-55)

BLACKPOOL AND SANDBAGS

Regarding Michael Bowker's letter on Jack Rivers, I feel quite insulted that my sandbags, under the great arch, should have been so little appreciated.

I was evacuated, with many hundreds of other MGS boys to Blackpool—and, yes, we were all running half-naked round and round Stanley Park at 2.30 am on the morning of Sunday 3 September 1939. For the six weeks we were there, we had School six days a week—but only **alternate** mornings, or afternoons, with Palatine Road School, our hosts. Each alternate day—(well, many of them) I and other sixth-formers spent filling endless sandbags to barricade the windows on the ground floor of the Miners' Home at Bispham. That tedious back-breaking labour of filling sandbags and stacking them high did not come to an end we were horrified to discover. (Yes, Michael Bowker, I was at least in part responsible for that "great pile" you seem to have not understood. Since you went to MGS in 1941 surely you were shepherded under the arches on many occasions when the sirens sounded where you would have been protected from blast and from flying debris by my sandbags.) And, yes, MGS was indeed a Nazi target one night in 1940, when the twin landmines fell, one on the MHSG new building in Grangethorpe Road, the other one (was it T F Nutter, the Receiver's house?) in Old Hall Lane. Most of the windows and doors on that side of MGS were broken but from the picture I still have most of our little appreciated "sandbag mountain" seems to have stayed upright. Rev Stuart Wesley (1935-42)

MGS TEACHERS

I enjoy the magazine, but I am amazed at the

things MGS. Finally the three Biographical Registers of Old Mancunians add vital information about the subsequent careers of Old Boys and Masters.

Perhaps the majority of enquiries we receive are from family historians trying to establish whether an ancestor was an Old Mancunian. If their name is not to be found in the sources mentioned above it is highly unlikely that they ever darkened our portals! Strangely about one in three of our many enquiries results in disappointment. We also have a steady stream of scholars enquiring about notable old boys and masters. A recent visitor was a Professor from Memorial University, Newfoundland researching the career of F A "Birdy" Bruton who having taught at MGS from 1892 to 1925 used his retirement to cross the stormy Atlantic every year to assist J L Paton at Memorial University. Some of the more revealing material is to be found in the "private" documents we hold—Governors' Minute Books, Punishment Books, Lord James' response to the HMI Inspection in 1950 and some private letters and references for example. We also possess an ever growing collection of published memoirs by old boys and members of staff, some more candid than others. There is also a small collection of personal diaries written by boys at School.

In addition there are thousands of other items—a vast Trek Archive, an equally substantial Dramsoc collection, the Ian Bailey Archive, books written by OMs and masters and hundreds of photographs covering all aspects of school life. The process of sorting and cataloguing this material is never ending as new acquisitions are constantly arriving but at least we have a pretty good idea of what we have and where everything is! Finally I should like to thank all the OMs who responded so positively to my request for bibliographical information about MGS. The help I have received has been invaluable

and the Bibliography has already reached impressive proportions and will no doubt continue to grow.

Jeremy Ward, MGS Archivist

MICHAEL WOOD

You are warmly invited to attend '**An evening with Michael Wood**' in the Memorial Hall at School on Wednesday 14 November at 7.30 pm. This event is being held in support of the Drama Centre Campaign and tickets priced £5 (concessions £3) are available from the Box Office at School.

IAN BAILEY

20 people gathered at the Grasmere barn during this year's Grasmere camp to share their memories of Ian Bailey, camping and trekking. On a sunny day some enjoyed a walk up the valley past Doc's Pool and back along the Gibson Knott ridge. The High Master and Mrs Ray attended and shared our enjoyment of a delicious camp dinner. A fuller account will appear with Ian's obituary notice in this year's *Ulula*.

SOLO ATLANTIC ROW

In March I had the delightful opportunity to go back to the school, take junior assembly and spend a couple of hours talking about my expedition to the first and second years. Next January, I am attempting to row 3000 miles across the Atlantic alone and unaided both to fulfil a lifetime's ambition and to raise money for Christie's cancer hospital. Bringing the boat to school and taking the assembly brought back the magic of the expedition. It had become a mass of details and deadlines but seeing the excitement on each and every face and their unbridled enthusiasm for it was just the tonic. I find that when I talk to adults about the expedition, I'm often met with a blend of disbelief and envy and you only ever seem to have half an adult's attention. The pupils were quite different and were not shy about showing their interest in the 23ft canary yellow boat that appeared in their quad.

It's also amazing how many questions the first year can fire at you in 2 hours. The



number one question was "Where do you poo?" (Answer, bucket then chuck it) but one pupil's questioning went as follows.. "So you sleep in the cabin".. Yes.. "And it's watertight?"..Yes..."So it's airtight?"... Yes..."So how long can you sleep for then before you run out of air?" He'll make a good barrister in due course.

Possibly more alarming than the above questioning was that when I responded "Well, you're about half my size. Let's put 2 of you in there and lock the door until you pass out—any volunteers?" I was met with a sea of raised hands and eager faces!

I think it was whilst sitting in the Lecture Theatre in the first year nearly 20 years ago that I finally decided that I was going to try and row the Atlantic. I explained to the pupils that there is nothing to be lost and everything to be gained by dreaming big as long as you have the conviction to follow it through. Hopefully the trip to MGS has fuelled the pupils' sense of adventure and the possibilities that are out there.

I set off on the expedition from the Canaries in January 2008. The expedition website is www.soloatlantic.com and there is loads of information on the site. At the time of writing, I have a few really good sponsors such as Addleshaw Goddard and Brixton Plc but the costs of the expedition are far from covered and any help any Old Mancs can generate individually or via their companies would

be very much appreciated.

Anthony Taylor (1988-95)

Anthony.Taylor@addleshawgoddard.com
tel no 0161 934 6043

GEOFFREY PELL DAWSON (1935-40)

Until the mid 40s the Dawsons were neighbours and close friends of ours and indeed Geoff took me to the School on the day of the entrance examination and then kept his eye on me until I had found my feet after starting school. On leaving school he went to Manchester University to study architecture and then, via the University Air Squadron, into the RAF.

He visited us from time to time when on leave and gave us some idea of his experience flying in the raids over Europe as a Bomb Aimer. He showed us the drawings and (literally) brilliant paintings he had made of the view from his position looking down during the attack, facing searchlights, anti-aircraft fire, nightfighters, and seeing amongst all this chaos, the havoc the bombs were creating as they found their targets far below. The Dawson family (Geoff was an only child) then moved down to London and we totally lost contact, which has always been a bit of a mystery to us because our friendship had been more than casual. So, I had often wondered what had happened to him and the answer came when, asking my son to search out the dates of a Bomber Command exhibition which I had heard was taking place at the Northern War Museum, I had the bright idea of asking him to enter Geoffrey's name—with a spectacular result!

He flew a total of 36 missions, went up through the ranks to become a Flight Lieutenant, and was awarded a DFC in addition to his DFM.

Geoff wrote a very detailed diary of his experiences throughout his time in the RAF and recently his widow undertook the task of typing the diary, and the War Museum has produced a number of copies illustrated by

some of Geoff's drawings. I have a copy of this diary and Mrs Dawson is anxious that anyone who is interested should see it. Mrs Dawson would also be delighted to hear from any of Geoff's friends who come to hear his story.

Geoff was quite a small chap. I remember, when I was very very small, seeing two figures passing our house on their way to and from Failsworth station, one very tall and one quite short. One was Geoff and the other Reggie Claber (33-39). He won't remember me, but I see his name as a regular attender of school dinners (ie OMA dinners, not the sort we had during the war—ugh!)

Roger Taylor (1939-44)

MEMORIES OF ERIC JAMES

References to Eric James plus the recent sad news of the death of Wyn "Taffy" Davies (kindly notified to me by his daughter, Kathryn) prompts me to write of my experience of them when I was in form 1Beta in 1957. My father died at the age of 42 years after a long illness—potentially a disastrous trauma for a shy 11 year old. However, the profoundly sensitive handling of myself and my mother helped us to survive intact. I shall never forget how Form Master Mr Davies engineered for my friend Johnnie Parkington to take me to my Nain's (which was just beyond the lunchtime "chippie") for the news to be broken. Nor how the next day I was mysteriously called up to the High Master's office and had a relaxed, supportive and two way interview with the great man, which appeared to have no time frame to it - just as long as it took. It was also arranged for me to go to "Second Camp" - one of the unique R M Simkins' institutions—with the fee waived, thus embarking on a life affirming enduring episode with Troop One. Even after "Taffy" moved to Swansea and then to Chester he maintained contact with my family ever since. Indeed he attended my mother's 80th birthday. He learned Welsh and would

practice on us. Similarly, "Simichidas" kept in touch as he did with many ex-Troop One-ers. A group of us renewed contact at his funeral. Many references to Eric James were about his "aloofness", but my experience was entirely counter to this.

Dr John Williams (1956-63)

In the early sixties I was a very young English master at MGS. My parents' marriage was conflict-ridden ... they finally divorced in 1964 ... and my two brothers, both much younger than I and still at home, were having a hard time of it. I went to talk to the Chief. One of my crazier ideas was that, somehow, my younger brother might live with me for a while. Immediately, without asking many questions, Lord James offered him a place at the School.

We did not take him up on the offer, but I will never forget what was far more than a gesture. In my (almost) thirty years as a college president in the United States, I have tried hard to act as he might have done. Eric James was both bold and demanding, but he was immensely generous of spirit.

Jonathan Daube (Staff 1960-63)

GEOFFREY CROSS came to MGS in 1932 as a very young looking 22-year old, and on his first morning taught me Latin at which, incidentally, he was very good. At midday I went along to the Refectory—in those days we had "dinner tickets" (four shillings for five, so lunch cost about the same as five Mars Bars) and the deputy porter stood at the Refectory door collecting our tickets. As I arrived there I found a very embarrassed Geoffrey Cross being mistaken by the porter for a pupil and challenged for his dinner ticket. Geoffrey assured him that he was a new master and turning to me said "This boy is in my class and will confirm it". And so I did.

Peter Batterley (1931-38)