

A 180-year-old story

MALACCA HIGH SCHOOL'S AUGUST HISTORY HAS NOW BEEN CHRONICLED IN A COFFEE-TABLE BOOK

LOVE is what prompted a group of Malacca High School (MHS) old boys to start a book project on their Alma Mater. After two years of hard work, the group, the MHS 180 Book Committee 2006, published *Our Story - Malacca High School 1826-2006* (pix, right).

This 216-page coffee-table book with more than 500 pictures was launched on Dec 9, last year, at Shah Village Hotel in Petaling Jaya, two days after the school turned 180 years old.

Writer/editor Chua Bok Chye (pix, above), a former journalist, looks back at the making of the book:

Who initiated it?

A group of old boys, comprising mainly the 1966 batch, came up with the idea during a dinner.

Seniors like former civil servant Dicky Lee and myself were co-opted because of our experience in the media. Juniors Robert Lim Fung Wang and Kang Tsz Wong were invited to join the panel because of their expertise in restoring old pictures, and networking and marketing respectively.

What's the objectives?

[The] book is meant to be a fitting tribute to the school to mark its 180th birthday; to serve as a historical benchmark for present and future students to emulate; stimulate bonding between the school and old pupils; and to raise as much money as possible for school-related causes.



What led the committee to undertake the project?

Confidence. Lots of it in ourselves and we were encouraged by the response from supportive old boys. ...

Besides direct sales, we have a book sponsorship programme, whereby we appeal to old pupils to sponsor X number of books. And many have answered our call.

For example, one phone call to businessman Oh Kim Sun resulted in him sponsoring 100 books. Next was Koh Gah Hwee with 90 books. Tan Sri Geh Ik Cheong donated RM5,000 which was akin to sponsoring 50 books.

The sponsorship programme and direct sales will help defray the production cost of 2,000 books. If we sell the entire stock, the school will benefit from the profit accrued.

How did the committee proceed with no money?

Passion and the will to persevere, coupled with trust and encouragement

from old pupils. [And] goaded on by the school motto, *Meliora Hic Sequamur* (Here We Strive For Better Things).

Through personal old boy network and the Internet, we managed to get ... old pupils, who backed us by booking the book.

We did not collect from them until we set up a company, MHS Anniversary, with Lim Koh Chin, Tan Onn Poh and Martin Chan as publishers.

Our hats off to those who trusted us to deliver without knowing what form the book would take.

Here I would like to pay tribute to former teacher bandmaster David Jeevaratnam and 1962 old boy Juan Suan Tien, who encouraged us but [passed away before seeing the book published].

Most of us in the committee served in honorary capacity. That helped save costs.

Who constituted the editorial team?

There's me as writer/editor. Layout was undertaken by Inforeach Communications Sdn Bhd. The old boys did their own photography.

Our thanks go to the school, various contributors, former teachers and principals for their various articles ... [and] sharing with us their private collection of photographs.

We are grateful to journalist Percy D'Cruz and the Christ Church library for the historic book cover picture.

We are indebted to master restorer Robert Lim for touching up pictures gleaned from the collection of the school magazine, *The Optimist*.

How did you envisage the form of the book?

After several editorial meetings, we [decided on] a coffee-table book with lots of pictures to break up the grey of the articles in 12-point size [to make reading easier for old pupils] and 180 pages (to coincide with the school birthday) thick.

... We decided on 11 chapters, covering its history, the school today, tributes, mentors, roll of

honour, etc. ...

But this book was a 100% effort by MHS old pupils from editorial to printing. ... This is our gift to the school.

Our Story - Malacca High School 1826-2006, at RM100 per copy, is available from www.malaccahigh.net, or call 03-2283 3293, 03-6203 3712 (KL), 03-7956 9322 (PJ), and 06-282 4466/4379 (Malacca).

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bestselling books

Top 10 Fiction Bestsellers

1) Shopaholic & Baby	Sophie Kinsella
2) Grotesque	Natsuo Kirino
3) The Thirteenth Tale	Diane Setterfield
4) Sweetness in the Belly	Camilla Gibb
5) Digital Fortress	Dan Brown
6) Tenderness of Wolves	Stef Penney
7) Interpretation of Murder	Jed Rubenfeld
8) Anybody Out There?	Marian Keyes
9) The Memory Keeper's Daughter	Kim Edwards
10) False Impression	Jeffrey Archer

Top 10 Non-Fiction Bestsellers

1) The Reluctant Politician	Ooi Kee Beng
2) The World is Flat	Thomas L. Friedman
3) The Undercover Economist	Tim Harford
4) The Business of Bullshit	Graham Edmonds
5) The Secret	Rhonda Byrne
6) Apocalypse 2012	Lawrence E. Joseph
7) Blue Ocean Strategy	W. Chan Kim, Renee Mauborgne
8) Crash Proof: How to Profit from the Coming Economic Collapse	Peter D. Schiff
9) Letters from Iwo Jima	Kumiko Kakehashi
10) The Pursuit of Happyness	Chris Gardner

- courtesy of Kinokuniya Bookstores