

CELEBRATING OPPORTUNITY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Good afternoon !

I didn't start my hungarian education early enough, though my children did, both of whom speak hungarian and its a gift, my wife has given to them. I gave them a slightly odd manchester accent.

I am going to seem rather remote to you. I realise these days I'm quite old, have some grey hairs. When I start talking about hungary I'll say things like "twenty years ago" I did this or that. But, I am hoping, my life experience and what its brought can perhaps be of interest.

As you know, I am the honorary consul of hungary, here in manchester and indeed across the north of england. Hungary, at its best, is an open, modern, future-facing european country that I have lived and worked in. I won't bore you too much with my long and varied associations with the *magyarok* but I was there first just after the berlin wall came down, living in budapest and setting up student unions there and across eastern and central europe. It was a thrilling time to be in the region and one of the best experiences of my life. When I returned to hungary, a decade later, I was a professional lawyer, working at a firm called ormai es tarsai cms cameron mckenna, when hungary was coming to the end of an era as the star economic performer of the post-communist world and that was when I met my wonderful wife, which made the hungarian connection permanent. I then worked at the european central bank, for some years in legal services I was the hungarian rapporteur, working with the hungarian central bank there, where I still have many friends. I was a

regular columnist for many years in the budapest sun which was hungary's english language newspaper. I remember one occasion at the bank a speech by your linguistic cousin the former finnish prime minister, mati asahari, which I was listening to in translation, and a certain point the interpreter said mr asahari is now making a joke in finnish which it is not possible to translate, so could you all please laugh – NOW !

So, colleagues, students, thank you for inviting me today to celebrate the occasion of a year of the precious institution being built here. Manchester as I am sure you know, is today home to several thousand hungarians, and I hope you are finding a vibrant city, and I'm not just talking about manchester city or indeed manchester united.

Manchester is a buzzing international city, I work at the airport, where you've probably been, flying to budapest. We fly over 22 million people now, from atlanta to abu dhabi, nice to new york and hamburg to hong kong. Manchester these days sits alongside barcelona, munich, and amsterdam as a leading european destination that sucks people in and, we hope, treats them well. Our universities are a massive magnet for international students, for the crowds that fly in to see the football and for the manchester international festival.

This is not new. Manchester once threw its doors open to the world and begged people to come, hanging its hat on the open borders and international trade that once made our fortune.

That's because businesses are really just people. Trade is managed by people, tourists are people and good ideas, intellectual property, economic value is all made, maintained, stored, developed or exported by the talented people that dot the world: a few here, but most there, elsewhere. I speak to a lot of grown up people and I have a strong

message: if we want to be more international, and if we want economic prosperity, growth, thriving businesses we need potentially talented people – you to come and visit, work, live and settle in our cosmopolitan city.

My hobby of the last months has been researching my own family tree. I am third generation british. My great uncle, jack white, got the victoria cross in the first world war, for jumping into the bosporus, under fire on both sides by the ottoman turks, turning the boat around by its steel rope and swimming against the current to safety, saving 17 men, of which one was an officer. Today, one of his grandchildren has breathed new life into the old factory he used to manage in salford, making it one of manchester's great textile manufacturing success stories. He, and 40 or 50 others of his generation, like me, are part of the positive fabric of this city now – like you are or will be. Jack white, or jacob weiss as he was born, was an international, his parents from russia and austria.

If you shake the family tree of most people living in manchester hard enough, you will find someone who came with one of the many, many waves of irish immigration, or scots; indian, pakistani and bangladeshi immigration after the war, from the caribbean, from kenya. They came here from hong kong, from cyprus or, going back, with the vikings, normans. Even angles and saxons were what we'd call today immigrants. Back in antiquity came romani in the middle ages, and romans before them.

Arkwright, who invented possibly the greatest discovery to come out of manchester before graphene, was born in preston. Our newest graphene nobel prize winners were from rather further afield: the dutch-russian andre geim and konstantin novoselov from russia. They joined

an incredible pantheon of 25 nobel prize winners associated with the university of manchester – of which just 3 were natives.

Manchester gains in every way from the influx of talent and of internationals' energy and industry that you represent. And I hope that their success is an inspiration to what you can do and achieve if you work hard, focus your energies, seize the moment.

So it was that alan turing developed software for the world's first computer, having moved to this city aged 34. John dalton came at 26 to undertake his pioneering work on atomic theory. New zealand-born ernest rutherford took that a step further having moved here aged 37, and german-born charles hallé arrived aged 29 and founded our hallé orchestra. Elizabeth gaskell was a child when she moved here, before writing the most popular books of her era, as was beth tweddle one of britain's greatest every gymnastics olympic champions, who immigrated from johannesburg in south africa.

Still today most globally-successful cities manchester needs to emulate and learn from have fluid populations. 36% of new yorkers are foreign-born; more than a quarter of manhattan residents have lived there for fewer than five years, so it is maybe no surprise that new york's former mayor bloomberg said that the "single most powerful step" that could be done to stimulate job growth in his city would be encourage more immigration. We too want more.

40% of the top 500 us companies (still the richest economy in the world) were started by an immigrant or their child. They together employ more than ten million people. The reason for immigrants' ability to create millions of jobs is simple says bloomberg - they "are dreamers and risk-takers who are driven to succeed". I hope you are. As in new york, so in manchester, where today more than ever economic growth needs the

best and the brightest from all around the world as the decline of the industrial city put an even higher premium on international individuals – migrants, who bring not only hard skills, ideas and capital, other experiences and ways of working and the connections that a successful city needs to other cities across the globe and the people in them.

Especially to hungary – home of janos neumann who invented the computer, josef pulitzer for whom the prize is named, theodore herzl, founder of zionism, laszlo biro, who invented the pen, denes gabor, the hologram and of course erno rubik, the cube. You have a rich heritage of invention and innovation to draw on, of your hungarian heritage and manchester home.

So, this city and this country, is not always wonderful, but its backbone is a welcoming, international history, of which we are loud and proud. You are a part of that and I hope you will leave your mark. Whatever it is you do – work at it, seek help, push yourselves and carpe diem – seize the day, lead the way. On such enthusiasm, confidence and determination are great things built – and I wonder who in this room is going to create something great. YOU might be the next ernest rutherford, YOU might be the next charles hallé. YOU might be the next elizabeth gaskell, You could be the next beth tweddle. I will watch with anticipation.

I am sure this place will help you achieve what you can achieve, so cherish it, support it, and build it. You are the founders. Well done !

I wish you all the very best for your futures.

Thank you !