

OMs strong now after

early struggles

THE strength of the Old Miltonians Association today is a remarkable contrast to the struggles of the early years.

The attractive modern club premises which are now "home" to the Old Boys arose barely six years ago beside Townsend Road and have expanded steadily.

Meanwhile membership, says Mr. D. C. Harrison, chairman for the last eight years, "is growing at a fantastic rate".

The first attempt to form an Old Boys' club was made in 1919, but fell through. The first meeting of the Association was held on February 23, 1922, in the Std. V classroom.

Mr. E. de Beer, the Headmaster, took the chair, and 42 old boys were present. Mr. De Beer was elected president, Mr. E. Raubenheimer secretary, and Mr. A. R. Williams treasurer.

KEEN INTEREST

The meeting agreed that the Association should erect a memorial to the Old Boys who fell in the war, and decided that the new school hall, which was to be built soon, would be an ideal place for it.

The records speak warmly

of the keen interest in and sympathy for the association shown by Col. Brady, who realised "that the fair name and reputation of any school depends as much on old boys as on present scholars."

The committee strove to build up a strong organisation, but made little progress for some years, mainly because of lack of interest among members, and the fact that lads leaving school did not join.

During World War II so many members were away on active service that the Association almost became extinct. However, a nucleus was kept going by Messrs H. P. de Bene, Ben Baron and G. E. H. Green, and they tried to keep in touch with members serving overseas.

After the war many Old Boys determined to revive the Association and make it a thoroughly worthwhile organisation. Enthusiasm rose as returning members began to pull together with a will.

Unfortunately they ran into fresh difficulties, the worst being the loss of their headquarters at the Showgrounds. Again the Association was in danger of folding up.

The sporting sections however, managed to stick together, although each section was a separate entity.

Through the years spent in recess the chairman, Mr. D. C. Harrison, and his committee, clung to their ambition, which was to provide an adequate

new home for the Old Boys.

They worked untiringly, and with the help of the sporting sections sufficient funds were raised to make a start. The first portion of the new clubhouse in Townsend Road was built at the end of 1964.

From then on progress was rapid. Both club and grounds grew steadily, and steps were taken to bring all the sections together in the home fold.

The school helped by allowing sports teams to use its excellent facilities for practice games.

ACHIEVEMENT

At first it seemed an impossible undertaking to gather so many sporting sections — rugby and cricket, swimming, water polo and hockey, tennis and even bowls — together under "one roof". Yet stage by stage the necessary work was done.

Then more extensions became necessary, this time to the bar, lounge and cocktail bar.

Now a new memorial hall — in memory of Old Boys who died in the wars — has been built and will shortly be officially opened.

The initial dream has become a far more impressive reality than the most optimistic envisaged 10 years ago.

● To help celebrate the school's 60th year, the Association is working to swell the Diamond Jubilee Fund, which will provide scholarships for Milton pupils, and also build a new sports pavilion for them.