

Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools - 1892-1979

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MILTON HIGH SCHOOL.

AT A LITTLE BEFORE ten o'clock on the morning of Monday 25 July 1910, a distinguished party crossed Selborne Avenue and walked some 150 yards along Borrow Street. The party, including His Excellency Sir William Milton, the British South Africa Company's Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, his wife, Lady Eveline, the Director of Education, the Solicitor-General, Sir Charles Coghlan and the Mayor and Town Council, had just witnessed the opening of the school named after Lady Eveline and was now on its way to see Sir William perform a similar ceremony. The event was recorded in the following terms: "The Mayor extended a hearty welcome to Sir William and Lady Milton. The opening of the two new schools, he said, was an important step in Rhodesian education and it was extremely good of the Government to assist so much in the building of the two schools. As a memento of the schools that would in future be called by their names, His Worship presented Sir William and Lady Milton with silver keys to the schools.

... "Sir William, in his reply, stressed that he was greatly honoured to be officiating at the ceremony.

... "Col. Gordon Forbes referred to the generous donations of the Beit Trustees in the form of boarding grants, scholarships and other donations.

.. "Mr. Duthie, the Director of Education, proposed a vote of thanks to the Loyal Women's Guild which had presented each of the new schools with a Union Jack.

... "When the ceremony was over, the doors were formally unlocked and the flag hoisted."

No doubt the pupils were delighted that work did not begin until the following day!

Although Milton acknowledges this date as its beginning, in some respects its origins lie fourteen years earlier. Bishop Knight-Bruce had planned an Anglican school for Bulawayo in 1893, but had been frustrated by the Matabele War. However, in 1897, St. John's School, a private establishment, opened its doors as an Anglican foundation. It was, in fact, housed in St. John's church (now the chapel of St. Gabriel's Home). Very soon the Church of England assumed full responsibility for the running of the school. By 1909 its facilities were quite inadequate for Bulawayo's requirements and largely as a result of representations made by Mr. R. A. Fletcher, the London Board of the British South Africa Company gave Sir William Milton permission to have separate boys' and girls' schools built to replace it. And so it was that Milton came into being with an enrolment of eighty.

According to the preliminary notice which had appeared in The Bulawayo Chronicle, the curriculum aimed at providing instruction in all subjects of the High School Code from Standard 2 up to and including university matriculation and Rhodes Scholarship. A specialised course was to be provided for pupils intended for commercial, industrial and agricultural pursuits. The school was to be under the direct control of the Department of Education and was to be conducted on strictly undenominational lines. Standard 1 remained at Eveline and it was only two years later that new boys actually began their school career at Milton.

Initially, the eighty boys were taught by Mr. E. B. de Beer the headmaster, and three male teachers.

The matter of school crest, motto and colours was swiftly resolved. The colours were to be plum-bago (Mr. Rhodes' favourite colour," as the first of 'The Miltonian' notes) and Oxford blue; for a crest, Milton adopted that of Bulawayo. Whilst that of Bulawayo has changed completely since it became a city in 1943, Milton's remains substantially the same — the most notable differences being a simplification and stylisation of the townscape in the background and the omission of the words "Justice, Freedom, Commerce" from the rays of the rising (setting?) sun; some also suggest that the contemporary elephant has a more benign expression than its predecessor. The school's motto is Greek — and as such has caused trouble and confusion to generations of schoolboys and type-setters among others! Its origin is in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and the Authorised Version translates it as Quit ye like men. On the occasion of Milton's silver jubilee, Mr. de Beer explained how he came to choose this for Milton:

... "While at Cambridge I often visited a favourite cousin of mine at Selwyn College, and always my eyes were caught by the Greek inscription which runs along the stonework of the front and which means in English, 'Stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men' . . . Years later, as the newly appointed headmaster of the Milton School, I had to discuss the question of a school motto with my good friend Colonel Brady, who was then the inspector of schools for Bulawayo (and subsequently Milton's second headmaster). I suggested the inscription on Selwyn College front, and Colonel Brady approved, but bettered my suggestion immensely by proposing that we use the last word only, which he added we might render freely as 'Play the Game!' Thus, it was decided and so it has remained."

As a temporary boarding-house for the seventeen boarders the old St. John's premises were used — not very successfully evidently as the first edition of 'The Miltonian' remarks that: "These buildings were totally inadequate, but Archdeacon Foster did every-thing possible to help us, and eventually matters became tolerable at least."

There was good news within a fortnight — the Beit Trustees chose the plans for a new boarding-house and, though the P.W.D. subsequently modified them considerably the old St. John's buildings were vacated in favour of the new hostel — named Milton House — at the end of September 1911.

The playing-fields also left much to be desired in those early days. Water was scarce in Bulawayo and there was certainly none to spare to water the fields; consequently, there was no grass on the rugby pitches and an Old Boy recalls that "after rugby, the nurse-matron was fully occupied in attending to the wounds of the players due to the hardness of the ground". Not only was the ground hard, it was also littered with stones which were cleared by the boys but seemed constantly to reappear. The school also undertook the levelling of the main field, with the help of many of the boys, but eventually the Government took pity and sent hard-labour prisoners to finish the work.

Milton's association with Plumtree began in that first year; the first of an on-going series of cricket matches was played on 9 December 19-10, on Milton's newly finished ground — and was won by Milton, as were five of the following six matches; since then honours have been more evenly divided! Milton's first rugby match was against St. George's on 10 August, less than three weeks after the opening, and the school was able to field a strong side. The following year, indeed, Milton went on to win the School Rugby League in Rhodesia as well as defeating Plumtree 25-0, a pattern that was to be repeated for several years; it was not until 1921, that Milton went down to Plumtree.

However, the earliest extracurricular activity, and the one that was accorded most importance was the Cadet Corps, which came into being in the first weeks of the school's life and involved all its fit members. The Corps pursued the normal activities of drill, shooting, signalling and so on and regularly attended camps and parades. It also formed a guard of honour when the school received important visitors such as the Duke and Duchess of Connaught in November 1910, (on which occasion the Duke disappeared but was subsequently discovered to be engrossed in a chemical experiment with two small boys!) and Sir William Milton when he came to say farewell to 'his' school on the occasion of his retirement in October 1914. The most distinguished of the school's visitors was the heir to the throne, H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, who came to Milton on 1 July 1925, to unveil the school war memorial. The Prince was accompanied by the Governor and greeted by the Cadet buglers playing the Royal Salute; the Royal Pennant was unfurled and the Prince inspected the Cadets, now over 300 strong. During the service that followed the Prince made a brief speech, "speaking with deep feeling" according to a contemporary account, which ran in part:

... 'Here at Milton, since the foundation of the school, a fine tradition has gradually been built up, and your record, as regards Rhodes Scholarships, general efficiency and sport is, I know, one of which every school might well be proud. Those whose loss we deplore and whose names are here commemorated

have, in the spirit of the school motto, given you a tradition which will stand you in good stead in the years to come.'

Later he laid a wreath of laurel and Flanders poppies at the base of the memorial and, at his own request, met the relatives of those who had fallen in the war.

Throughout these years Milton maintained its links with St. John's and the school attended services in the church which had been the first home of St. John's School in 1896. At the consecration of the new St. John's Church (now the Anglican Cathedral) the choir which walked in procession from the old church to the new was comprised entirely of Miltonians and, indeed, for many years Milton provided the choir; "Dab" simply named 'volunteers' as vacancies arose and that was the end of it! There was always a good turn-out by the school for the Sunday morning Communion as, on their return, all communicants were given a 'masters' breakfast' of bacon and eggs, toast and marmalade, etc.!

Perhaps the most lasting of the Association's achievements in those first years is the school war memorial; this was proposed at the very first committee meeting in March 1922, and endorsed by a general meeting in November 1923; £100 of the Association's funds was placed on deposit and the fund-raising began in earnest. The result was the fine bronze tablet which was unveiled by the Prince of Wales in 1925, and which forms the centre of the present memorial.

No record of these early years would be complete without a reference to two of Milton's most distinguished Old Boys. Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd is undoubtedly the most famous name to have emerged from Milton; his career at school was quietly successful — he was a Junior Beit Scholar in 1915 (at the age of fourteen in which year the family moved to South Africa where Verwoerd attended Brandfort Public School in the Orange Free State)'. He did not forget his old school and in 1960, on the occasion of Milton's golden jubilee, he sent a message pointing out that it was rather remarkable that the Union of South Africa, of which he was Prime Minister, and the school which he attended — "not quite fifty years ago, but almost!" — should share the same jubilee year. His final words are perhaps more relevant now than when they were written:

... "My sincere wish is that the boys of my old school will rise to the heights of endeavour and courage which the white man in Africa will need even more in the future than in the past . . May you, one and all, help to consolidate peace, prosperity and progress in this, your native land."

Three years after Hendrik Verwoerd's departure, J. de L. Thompson came to Milton; his was certainly a more spectacular career at school as he was head boy (or senior prefect as it was then) and captain of both cricket and rugby. Subsequently he went on to play both games for Rhodesia, only one aspect of a long and varied career of service to the Army, agriculture, commerce, sport — and Milton School. He wrote a 'History of Sport in Southern Rhodesia', received the O.B.E. and was made Honorary Colonel of the 2nd Battalion, the Rhodesia Regiment. Nor did he ever forget Milton — he constantly showed his interest and support: financially his generosity knew no bounds and his donations ranged from a few dollars to a Form 1 boy for a sponsored walk to \$2000 towards Milton scholarships; he served as chairman of the School Council for several years and donated a cup for place-kicking; it was largely due to him that the City Council gave Milton, at a nominal rent, a ninety-nine-year lease on twenty acres of ground on the other side of Selborne Avenue for use as additional playing-fields; Col. Thompson then promptly gave trees and bougainvillea by the dozen to make the setting more attractive and it is entirely appropriate that those lovely fields should bear his name. It is sad that Col. Thompson died just days after this history was commissioned — nothing would have given him greater pleasure than a book on Rhodesian schools in which Milton takes a place second to none.

Milton's numbers grew rapidly in the years after 1910, doubling to 160 by the end of 1912; in 1921, the total enrolment was 390 and two years later 480. As early as 1918, it had become apparent that the senior school would ultimately have to move to a new home as the Borrow Street site would not be large enough to contain the necessary additional buildings. In 1923, the school was bursting at the seams and the most junior classes had to find temporary accommodation in the new Jewish Guild Hall; although the Hall was at some remove from the school and its position was a drawback in most respects there was to young Miltonians "a heartfelt relief at being a certain distance from the head's office"! On 28 November of that year the Beit Hall was opened by the Governor, Sir John Chancellor, and in the course of the speeches Howard Moffat, the Minister of Mines and Public Works (and subsequently Premier) gave a clear hint that the Government was prepared to look kindly upon the suggestion of a new senior school for Milton. Mr. de Beer and the School Advisory Board proceeded to 'harry' the Government which by the end of 1924 had agreed to allocate £45 000 for a school to comprise "a large block of thirteen class-rooms with science laboratory, school of geography, workshops and school library, also two hostels, each to accommodate 60 boarders, and a central dining-hall to seat 250 to be built on a site overlooking the town and adjoining the race-course". The site at the top of Selborne Avenue occupied some thirty acres and on completion, the whole senior school was to transfer en bloc, leaving the existing hostel and class-rooms as the junior school.

The Government's estimate proved to be rather optimistic and the contract was finally awarded to McDonald and MacFarlane whose successful tender was £54 853. Work began on 1 March 1926, and it was hoped that the buildings would be ready for occupation at the beginning of 1927. The site was

cleared in the ensuing months and by late May the architect, G. E. Fitzgerald, had finalised his plans and actual building had begun. The laying of the foundation-stone had been deliberately delayed so that the ceremony could be performed by the Earl of Athlone, the High Commissioner for South Africa, who was at that time visiting Southern Rhodesia with his wife, Princess Alice. In his speech the Earl said that he was "greatly honoured to have the privilege of laying the foundation-stone of what is undoubtedly the leading boys' school in the Colony." Using a silver trowel (which now hangs in the headmaster's study) he laid the stone that can be found in the main entrance to the school.

The builders' estimate of time proved even more optimistic than the Government's of cost; hampered by a severe rainy season and various other difficulties, work progressed very slowly and it was only in September 1927, that the buildings were ready for use. One major change to the original scheme had been made — Colonel Brady, the new headmaster, had felt the lack of a hall to be a serious drawback and during a visit to England he approached Sir Henry Birchenough and Sir Otto Beit with the result that the Beit Trustees agreed to give £6 000 for a school hall. The architect accordingly modified his plans, dividing the open rectangle of the class-room block into an E with the Beit Memorial Hall as the central arm; accordingly the building of the hall began some six months after work on the class-rooms had actually started. It was agreed that portraits of both Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit should hang in the hall "as a constant reminder of Rhodesia's great benefactors," and that the war memorial should be transferred from the old school to the south end of the new hall. The lower walls were to be panelled in Rhodesian teak and were specifically intended to serve as honours boards, which they do to this day, although space is now becoming somewhat limited!

The actual move to the new school took place in the September holidays of 1927, but it was only on Friday 1 June 1928, that The Milton School (as it was officially named) was formally opened by Sir John Chancellor. As Colonel Brady reminded those present, the school had no better friend than Sir John who had never failed to visit Milton when he was in Bulawayo and Sir John himself remarked: "I first came here when the foundations were being dug. I have seen your buildings grow brick by brick and I have never missed a chance of watching (Milton's) progress." He then unveiled the portrait of Alfred Beit and declared the school officially opened. By a curious coincidence the first building Sir John had officially opened as Governor of the colony was the Beit Hall of the original Milton and now the last was the new Milton; the following afternoon he left Bulawayo station for England, en route for Palestine, where he was to become High Commissioner after five years in Southern Rhodesia. Milton was present in force to see him off.

The school of 1927 had just over 300 boys and a staff of 17; all of the original buildings still exist although they represent only a modest part of the present Milton: the school that Sir John Chancellor opened in 1928, comprised the two boarding-houses, dining-hall, Beit Hall and the present labs. 1 and 2, rooms 1 to 11 and the music room, this last being the original woodwork shop. Although it is possible to

imagine Milton without its subsequent additions, it requires a considerable effort to picture its surroundings: in 1927, the school was on the eastern boundary of Bulawayo and there was very little else so far out of town; someone wrote at the time that "beyond Milton is miles and miles of — —!" and the Secretary of Education was rumoured to know of the school merely by hearsay! There were virtually no trees on the site but small game could be found (and were on occasion shot!) in the bush south of Pioneer House where the sixth form block, tennis-courts and Hambly Field are today; drainage was non-existent and in the rains, there were times when the water on the undeveloped quad was knee-deep and more. A canoe was kept to ferry hungry boarders from the hostel to the dining-hall and on occasions well-built and sturdy seniors were pressed into service as suitable mounts for hostel staff!

Having seen the school firmly established on its new site, Colonel Brady retired at the end of 1930; it was by no means the end of a career for one of the more remarkable of the many remarkable men associated with Milton: Colonel Brady had first come to Africa as a soldier after taking his degree at Trinity College, Dublin and had served throughout the Anglo-Boer War, receiving the Queen's Medal with four clasps. He remained in South Africa becoming headmaster of Grey College, Bloemfontein and subsequently inspector of schools in the Orange River Colony, as it then was. He came to Rhodesia in 1909 to join the inspectorate, and in 1914, was one of the first Rhodesians to join the British forces; he was on active service by October 1914, taking part in the First Battle of Ypres; by 1918, he had been wounded twice, mentioned in dispatches four times and received the D.S.O. and Croix de Guerre. He returned to Rhodesia in 1920 as senior inspector of schools and moved to Milton in 1925, having taken a close interest in the school since its foundation and, as already noted, played a part in the choice of its motto. After leaving Milton he entered Parliament as member for Bulawayo North in 1933.

The second World War saw him as liaison officer with the Rhodesian Forces, initially in West Africa and subsequently in Egypt; in the middle of 1942, he was invalided out of the Army — and his place as liaison officer was taken by the newly promoted Lieutenant-Colonel Jock Thompson. Colonel Brady received the O. B. E. for his services in the war and in 1948, he spoke at the unveiling of the 1939-45 plaques added to the school war memorial:

... "Short years ago we knew them, shared with them the fleeting hours of peace, their dreams of youth, the hopes and promise of manhood . . . In years, many of them still boys, yet all in high courage, faith and purpose, grown to the full stature of a man, they endured the uttermost of human pain, so when their hour came they faced it, steadfast and unafraid. Mindful of the school motto, they quit themselves like men, they were strong . . . We know how this little company of Milton men held high their country's flag in battle . . . They showed by their shining example how a man may rise in the greatness of his soul, triumphant over fear and pain and death."

He died in 1952, and it is no less than he deserves that one of Milton's two original quads should enshrine his memory in its name' for, together with de Beer, who is commemorated in the second old quad, he made Milton what it was — and is today.

The face of the school began to change even before Col. Brady's retirement: in the last term of 1929, two tennis-courts came into use and Milton tennis swiftly gained respect; in 1936, the school won both the national inter-school and the Rhodesian championships and between 1935 and 1938, it held the Mim du Toit Cup (Prince Edward gained it by the margin of one game in 1939). After the arrival of Mr. H. G. Livingston as the new headmaster in 1931, the school's appearance began to change very rapidly: Mr. Livingston was an arboriphile and in his first years at Milton was responsible for the planting of literally hundreds of trees — many have gone to make way for further building but many more still stand, adding much to the attraction of Milton's setting. In 1932, the headmaster's house in the north-east corner of the grounds was built and Mr. Livingston was able to move in for Christmas after two years in Charter House.

The school celebrated its silver jubilee in 1935: the occasion was marked by a presentation ceremony on 26 July, at which the Old Miltonians gave the school a photograph of its founder and, as already noted, Sir William Milton's silver key was returned to Milton; both Mr. de Beer and Colonel Brady were present, the former having travelled from Cape Town especially for the occasion. Two days later, Milton joined Eveline for a joint commemoration service and later in the year the Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, was guest of honour on Speech Night. 1935 also saw the addition of a gymnasium to the range of school buildings.

1938 brought substantial changes to the organisation and methods of the school in both academic and competitive pursuits. In 1936, the Government had appointed H. F. B. Fox to examine "the efficiency, adequacy and suitability of the present system of education for meeting the needs of those entering the professions, industry, commerce, agriculture and mining," and Fox had produced a report which strongly urged the necessity of providing facilities "more suitable to the needs and capacity of a very large number of children," something much less academic in both context and approach. Fox's other far-reaching recommendations and the Government's reaction to them (largely favourable) cannot concern us here, but the effect on Milton was considerable: in 1938, 'modern' forms were introduced to run parallel to the academic forms; there were five extra classes in the Forms I to III range and parents were given the choice as to which course they wished their sons to follow. Mr. Livingston summed up the difference between the two courses at Speech Night in 1938: "Boys who take the modern course still get their mathematics and science and history and geography — everything in fact except Latin. The difference is that since they do not have to face an examination set by university professors they can study these things in a manner more satisfactory to themselves."

As a result of the introduction of the new course, Milton gained further new buildings — two fine craft rooms, a spacious workshop for wood and metal, and a new general science laboratory . . . all equipped in up-to-date style. (These buildings form the south range of the present Livingston Quad).

The other innovation of 1938, was a restructuring of the House system; in the earliest days the school was divided into three houses — Milton(i.e. the boarders of Milton Hostel), North Town and South Town, but for the Athletic Sports the two town houses had to combine, and were still beaten by the boarders! Subsequently the houses were reduced to two, the day-boys being known initially as Day House and subsequently rather more grandly as Oppidans. On the move to the new site, the boarders competed as houses —Charter and Pioneer — and so it remained for ten years, but at the end of 1937, the decision was taken to divide the school into four houses for games, the object being to put day-boys and boarders side by side in the same houses so that the former could take a more active part in the life of the school. A look at the inter-house competition results suggests that a corollary motive was to break the boarders' dominance as; for example, they had never lost the athletics championships and in the ten years on the new site Charter and Pioneer had, curiously, each won it for five consecutive years. The four new houses which appeared in 1938, were named Birchenough, Borrow, Fairbridge and Heany; the only one of these four gentlemen to have any real connection with Milton seems to have been Sir Henry Birchenough, a president of the British South Africa Company (1925-1937) and chairman of the Beit Trust. (Henry Borrow was a Cornish soldier and pioneer who was Adjutant of the Corps in the Pioneer Column and died, with Allan Wilson and the Shangani Patrol, in 1893 at the age of twenty-eight; Kingsley Fairbridge, the poet, is better remembered particularly for his advocacy of farm schools and the outdoor life; Maurice Heany was a Virginian adventurer who was Captain of 'A' troop in the Pioneer Column and took part in the Jameson Raid before retiring to Bulawayo where he died in 1927.)

1939 brought World War and Milton felt its effects far more strongly than it had a generation earlier; when the third term began, five members of staff had left on active service and by the end of the war more than 900 Old Miltonians were serving in the armed forces; 114 lost their lives, forty were decorated for valour or for their war services and seventeen were mentioned in despatches. The school supported War Funds strongly and within the first year had sent £100 to the "Speed the Planes" Fund, £30 to the Air Raid Relief Fund and £50 to the National War Fund; one form regularly collected all the more interesting items of local news from the papers and these were sent to Rhodesian soldiers serving in East Africa. The O. M.'s virtually ceased to exist other than in name for, in the words of a contributor to the 1941 Miltonian• "There are very few O. M.'s left in Bulawayo; they are chiefly those who have just left school and who will be in the Forces very soon, and a few who are too old for military service."

Nevertheless, Milton continued to expand and in the first year of the war the long-heralded sports

pavilion was at last opened; it provided seating for about 150 spectators, a large changing-room with showers, tea-room, store-rooms and a squash court — then, as now, it overlooked the main cricket field — the Oval. Hockey also came to Milton in 1940, though it was to be some years before it was played on the school's own fields. 1944 saw a determined effort to improve the quality of the playing-fields: a new rugby-field was planted in January, a turf wicket came into use at the nets and the main cricket-field was newly turfed at the end of the year; the real problem had always been that of a limited water supply but both Municipality and Government had come to the rescue — the former by offering Milton water from the Hillside Dams and the latter by bearing the cost of pipe-laying and pumping.

The end of the war initiated a growth in numbers and two new class-rooms were added in 1946; even so, by 1948, the boarding-houses were filled to capacity, the form-rooms were overflowing and one form was condemned to a peripatetic existence —and this was only the beginning of an inexorable increase that was to be maintained for nearly twenty years, a reflection of the enormous post-war expansion of the whole country and subsequently the boom that followed Federation. The first two years of the fifties emphasised this trend - during 1950, numbers rose from 420 to 457; by the end of 1951, they were 581, far outstripping available accommodation and precipitating a 'housing crisis'; the prep-rooms in both hostels had to be employed as class-rooms, two marquees were erected on the Morgan Quad and an O.M. builder put up two new class-rooms in a record time of twelve days — a quarter of a century later they are still in use: they are rooms 20 and 21. It became necessary to hold Speech Night in the City Hall as the school's own Beit Hall was no longer large enough and on that occasion J. H. Downing, the new headmaster, remarked that the solution to overcrowding in schools was not to add class-rooms but to build new schools. Little did he know that within a decade Milton's population was to double!

The war years and those immediately following had been difficult ones for Milton and the number of changes at the helm had not helped. In the first term of 1941, Mr. Livingston had moved to Prince Edward School after eleven years at Milton. His successor was L. R. Morgan, who had been headmaster of Chaplin for fourteen years and great things were expected, but Mr. Morgan was still only settling in when, after four terms, he was appointed Assistant Education Officer in Salisbury and subsequently Secretary for Education. He was followed by W. Gebbie who had taught at Milton in the twenties and had subsequently been headmaster of four junior schools — Gatooma, Sinoia, Prince Edward Junior and David Livingstone — before returning to Milton as headmaster in 1943. The following year, Mr. Gebbie moved to Allan Wilson School (his sixth school as headmaster — surely some sort of record?!) and A. Ball became headmaster. 'The Miltonian' of December 1946, was unusually frank: "During the last six years Milton has had six changes in headmasters or acting headmasters, and though no doubt each has contributed something to the school, it is not an enviable record as a good measure of continuity is usually desirable in a school. Therefore in warmly welcoming Mr. and Mrs. Ball, we openly add the hope that they will be with us for a reasonable period . . ."

In fact Mr. Ball chose to retire in April 1950, and was followed by J. H. Downing whose connection with Milton spanned a quarter of a century. He had come to Southern Rhodesia in 1924 to join the Milton staff (where he met his wife who had been there since 1919) and he remained there until 1948, when he became Education Officer in Salisbury; thus his entire career as a teacher in Rhodesia was spent at Milton — and thirty of his thirty-two working years. On his retirement at the end of 1955, tribute was paid to Jerry Downing: "... through his endeavours, the school has been guided into maintaining a standard second to none in the schools of Rhodesia," and indeed he saw Milton through those difficult years when numbers far outran accommodation and, although the same problem was recurring to challenge his successor, he presided over Milton's transformation into one of the Federation's biggest schools and ensured that its essential character and traditions remained unaffected.

1953 was a year that witnessed several significant events, either directly or indirectly affecting the school's life. For Britain, her Empire and Commonwealth, it was Coronation year; for Rhodesia, it was the year in which Federation became a reality; for Bulawayo, it meant the Rhodes Centenary Exhibition and a visit from Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret. Milton, together with all the other Bulawayo schools and most of the city's population, "gathered on that auspicious day to cheer them wholeheartedly". The three-month-long exhibition seems to have been something of a distraction from the routine of school life and Milton scholars also took advantage of the cultural feast provided — the Halle Orchestra, the Covent Garden Opera, the Sadlers Wells Ballet and a Shakespearian Company led by Sir John Gielgud. (One wonders if anyone went to quite the lengths of an anonymous Milton boy of 1937, who, on the occasion of the Carl Rosa Opera Company's visit to Bulawayo, exhausted his pocket money but "was enthusiastic with the beauty of the opera, that he sold his trousers to obtain the money necessary for admission!")

1953 left at least one very permanent mark on Milton — its magnificent swimming-pool. Plans for a pool had been discussed more than ten years earlier and serious fund-raising had begun in the years after the war, with the biggest single contribution coming from a school fete in 1948. The State

Lotteries made a grant and finally work started in 1950, when the school began to excavate the site but there were many obstacles and difficulties, not least that the early design for the pool omitted a chlorination plant and any adequate filtration plant! When completed, the pool measured twenty-five yards by twenty-five metres and held some 1 280 000 litres of water; there were diving-boards at one, two and three metres and the pool ranged in depth from a little over a metre to three and a half metres. The pool went into use as soon as it was completed, a surrounding wall, terraces and changing-rooms being added subsequently; the final cost was £17500, an enormous amount in 1953.

The following year, enrolment had reached 644 (with 36 members of staff) but there were sufficient

class-rooms for each form to have its own; two years later the number had passed 700, making Milton the second largest school in the Federation and compelling the use of the hostel prep-rooms again! In the same year a Parent-Teacher Association was formed for the first time and began to plan fund-raising on a substantial scale with an eye to the impending golden jubilee and the proposed extensions to the Beit Hall. It was at this time, too, that the City Council gave Milton the use of twenty acres on the north side of Selborne Avenue; a borehole was sunk, a pumping plant installed so that grass pitches could be developed and, as already noted, Col. Thompson made a generous gift of trees and bougainvilleas for these fields.

The second half of the fifties repeated the story of the first — numbers again increasing faster than available accommodation; in 1957, a new art block came into commission and in 1958, when numbers topped 900, the games houses were reorganised for the first time since 1938; with over 200 boys per house, too many had no opportunity to play a part and so four new houses were created — Brady, Chancellor, Malvern and Rhodes. The provenance of all four names is too obvious to require explanation but it is interesting to note that this arrangement lasted only three years; in 1961, Malvern and Brady were dropped and the boarders competed as Charter and Pioneer again. These eight houses remained until the beginning of 1978, when Chancellor disappeared, its membership being distributed amongst the other five houses, and for competition purposes Charter and Pioneer combined as Boarders, producing six houses with a roughly equal number of boys in each.

In one sense, 1959 was the end of an era, for it marked the retirement of F. G. — 'Putt' — Jackson after thirty-five years at Milton, the last eleven as deputy headmaster. An anonymous Old Miltonian wrote at the time:

... 'Seldom does a man become a legend in his own lifetime. There are few humans so notable for devoted service, loyalty, wisdom and helpfulness as to become identified with the schools they serve. Yet it is remarkable that wherever Miltonians gather, the first question is, "How is old Putt?" and the second "How's Milton?".'

During the fifties, Milton's teams made several tours, the first in more than a quarter of a century; in 1927, the Cricket XI had visited Hilton and King Edward VII drawing the one match and losing the other by an innings, and the following year the Rugby XV had gone to Natal, played three schools, conceded 82 points and scored not one. Perhaps chastened by these experiences, it was not until 1956, that a Milton side ventured over the Limpopo, although the school had been strongly represented in a Matabeleland-Midlands schools team that had toured Western Province two years earlier. The 1956 side was one of Milton's strongest and in five hard-fought matches it only went down once, 11-16 to Maritzburg College, defeating Durban Boys' High (8-5), Kearsney College (18-10), Michaelhouse (6-3)

and Port Shepstone High (12-6). In the following years both cricket and rugby sides visited Northern Rhodesia and in 1959, the First XI toured Nyasa-land. During the sixties the First XV went on tour in South Africa more years than not, though never more successfully than in 1963, when all five matches in the Northern Transvaal were won convincingly —Milton scored ninety-three points and gave away only twelve. That same team, perhaps not surprisingly, went on to win all its other games,

including two victories over Plumtree, one of which was the hundredth match. The final tally was: played 16, won 16, points for 398, points against 98.

Milton had become the largest school in the Federation in 1960, when the enrolment went over the thousand — it was certainly one way of celebrating a fiftieth birthday. Partly out of sheer necessity and partly to commemorate the golden jubilee much building was going on or was under consideration. The headmaster, C. R. Messiter-Tooze, had been planning for the event almost since his arrival in 1956; one of the projects decided upon had been

improvements to the Beit Hall, which suffered two principal drawbacks: it lacked a stage and any technical facilities, which meant that Milton dramatics had either to move elsewhere or make do with primitive and improvised equipment; moreover the acoustics were poor, largely on account of the fine open-beam ceiling. So successful was the P.T.A.'s fund-raising that the hall was renovated in time for the jubilee when it had originally been intended to start work not much before then. It was provided with a spacious stage and a superbly equipped lighting-box; a plaster ceiling was added, although the original beams still survive above it, and the reconstructed hall was christened with a production of *Henry V* which made full use of the newly available facilities, although nothing could (or can!) disguise the fact that the hall was now rather too long and narrow.

Building in other areas was going on apace when the actual birthday arrived, an event somewhat marred by the collapse of Mr. Messiter-Tooze a month earlier from severe strain; as a result he was unable to take any active part in the celebrations although he was allowed to attend Speech Day, but not to make a speech. The celebrations included an impressive Cadet Inspection, followed by the presentation of the Cadet Standard, and a service (taken by the Rev. Rupert Cranswick, an Old Miltonian) and a Speech Day, at which the principal speaker was the Governor, Sir Humphrey Gibbs. It was felt that it would be wrong to take such an event away from Milton and accordingly both service and Speech Day took place in the Morgan Quad, between the Dining and Beit Halls; the weather had caused some anxiety as most of the week had been cold and windy but the sun smiled on Milton's birthday — almost too much so and some people without any shade became distinctly uncomfortable . . fortunately the speeches appear to have been brief.

1961 was the limit with regard to both numbers and the building programme; something over 1 180 boys were taught by 70 members of staff and the last 17 years 11.4\% seen a steady retreat from those

figures. The most impressive of the new buildings was undoubtedly the department of sixth form studies; this had been constructed as two separate blocks – arts and science. The superbly equipped science block was in use in the first term of 1960, containing separate labs for all the sciences. The arts block was completed by July 1961, and included a well-stocked reference library. The whole complex was officially opened on 30 September 1961 by the Minister of Education, the Hon. D. B. Goldberg. 150 Milton boys had moved into this splendid isolation where they were subsequently joined by sixth-formers from girls' schools unable to offer the required courses. As well as being the Federation's largest school, Milton was now the best equipped and offered the widest range of subjects — a total of twenty-six.

The new sixth form block was, however, only one of several ambitious projects which went on at this time: 1961 also saw the completion of both a new economics and commerce department with, above it, a staff-room and the double-storey administration block. It is interesting — but ultimately futile! — to speculate on the motives of architects who lovingly prepared plans for an economics department that harmonised perfectly with the original surroundings and at the same time planted a double-storey concrete coffin firmly across the fourth side of the Brady Quad! During 1966, a new technical block was built, comprising a light-engineering and metal-work shop, an additional woodwork shop, a special technical-drawing office and storerooms. Locking cycle-sheds were constructed, a rifle-range was built and on the playing-fields, stands were built, roads and parking-places laid out and six pitches planted (two each for cricket, rugby and soccer).

At Speech Night in 1961, the headmaster was concerned to point out to parents that Milton's present size was neither accident nor the result of expediency but a planned experiment by the Ministry of Education; he attempted to calm their fears "that the administration may become impersonal and that your children will not receive individual attention and personal care," pointing out that to this end, the school was divided into three parts, each with its own head of division who would take a personal interest in each boy. "You can be happy that there is no danger of this school developing into a soulless machine failing to take a personal interest in the problems of its individual members."

In fact, a slow retreat from the peak of 1961 set in almost immediately and consequent rezoning and the abandonment of the policy of heads of division suggested a tacit admission on the Government's part that schools were becoming too big. The end of Federation obviously played its part in this too and it certainly deprived Milton of one additional building; in 1962, the headmaster reported that: "Plans for 1963 provide for a double-storey block of eight class-rooms• of a somewhat unusual design. This Audio-Visual block will be dual-purpose in that the rooms or studies can be used as ordinary class-rooms or for closed-circuit television instruction."

Unfortunately the following year a postponement was announced and, as numbers began to fall (1 178 in 1962, 1088 in 1963 and 1008 in 1964) and the retrenchment consequent upon the breaking-up of the Federation set in, the plans, although apparently complete, were mentioned no more and Milton lost what undoubtedly would have been a remarkable complex. There was another loss in 1962, — Fred Hambly's departure was confirmed: he had come to Milton in January 1939 to teach Latin — and to take over the 1st XV, a task which he did not relinquish in the twenty-two years he spent at Milton. He became deputy headmaster on the retirement of 'Putt' Jackson in 1959, but in September 1961, was seconded to the Ministry of Education as the Deputy Regional Director of the Matabeleland Region, an appointment which was confirmed a year later. However, he continued to support Milton rugby and it is remarkable to record that he never missed a home match of the 1st XV from the day of his arrival in 1939, to the day of his death in 1971. (When his daughter was getting married, Fred insisted that the wedding should be on a Saturday morning so that he would not miss a home game that afternoon!) On 10 August 1968, some forty years after it was first used, the main Milton rugby-field was given a name and it seemed only fitting that it should be the name of a man who had given so much of his time to the school's rugby and who was known and loved by generations of Old Miltonians: "In the knowledge that future Milton boys will honour and remember a great schoolmaster, the field was duly named the Hambly Field."

The end of the Federation brought many changes in its wake, of which the most immediate was perhaps the departure of Mr. Messiter-Tooze who took abolition of office and went to join Anglo American in Northern Rhodesia. It fell to Mr. P. M. Brett to steer the school through the difficult years that encompassed UDI and a retreat from the spectacular days of Federation. There could be no further building, no new outward signs of pomp and circumstance — by 1966, the school's numbers had settled at around 900 and there was for once ample room — but there could be an emphasis on scholastic excellence and that is the lasting achievement of Mr. Brett's years at Milton. As the deputy headmaster, D. H. M. Wright, wrote in his appreciation of Mr. Brett on his departure to take up the position of principal of the Gwelo Teachers' College:

... 'When, at the end of his six-year term at Milton, the group of boys who had joined the school with him produced some of the best scholarship results in the school's history, it provided for him the finest token of gratitude for his services to the school that could have been devised. The most hallowed spot for him at Milton, I believe, will always be the Beit Hall with its scholarship honours boards. His achievement is engraved there in gold. Not that the later sixties were lacking in other achievements: in 1965 alone, Milton won the inter-schools Crusader Shield for water polo after going through the tournament unbeaten, the first prize and the overall group prize in the senior class at the Young Scientists Exhibition, the Mim du Toit Tennis Trophy (for the first time in fourteen years), and the Van der Byl inter-schools Judo Trophy and defeated Hamilton in the final of the RTV inter-high schools Quiz!'

For the Old Miltonians too these were years of achievement; after the end of the war, the Association felt it necessary to establish its own sports grounds and clubhouse. With this in view, ground west of the Parkview Sports Club was bought and levelled but at this stage the Bulawayo Agricultural Society offered their arena for practices and the Kennel Club as headquarters until the showground clubhouse was completed. This arrangement worked well for some years but was ultimately unsatisfactory in that the O.M.'s could not have unrestricted access to the facilities; accordingly, when there was the chance of a leasehold on an extensive site on Townsend Road, just across Third Street from Milton, the committee decided to take it and vacated the showground premises. The move was somewhat premature as the Association now had no home of its own, no consolidated headquarters and, although the sporting sections of the club somehow managed to stick together, there was a real danger of complete disintegration. However, as a result of untiring work by members and committee and particularly the chairman, D. C. Harrison, sufficient funds were raised to enable the first part of a new clubhouse to be built in 1964; the architect himself was an Old Miltonian as was Les Playford, the builder, the oldest Old Miltonian of them all, for his name had topped the enrolment register when the school opened in 1910. Thereafter development went by leaps and bounds and by 1970, there were rugby and hockey grounds, a cricket oval and practice nets, basketball court, baseball diamond, three bowling-greens, four tennis-courts and a further two under construction. The clubhouse, too, had been extended and expanded with kitchens, bars, changing-rooms, showers, etc. and on 15 August 1970, a new hall was opened by Dr. Verwoerd's widow; it is known as The Memorial Hall and is dedicated to all Miltonians who have given their lives for their country. It was with justifiable pride that Mr. Harrison wrote: "The Old Miltonians' Club is proving to be one of the most active and successful organisations both on the sporting fields and in the social spheres of the country."

The diamond jubilee of 1970 was marked by, among other things, a change in headmaster: at the beginning of the year Mr. R. K. Gracie came in good time to prepare and preside over celebrations no less impressive than those of ten years earlier. The official jubilee events began with a sponsored hundred-mile relay from Gwelo to Bulawayo, run by two masters and ten boys; their journey finished at the Fountain where they were welcomed by a large crowd including the Mayor who formally declared the jubilee celebrations open. A feature of this sixtieth birthday was that it was very much a family affair: Milton and Eveline combined produce both a play 'The Admirable Crichton' and day special 156-page jubilee magazine; they also shared the same Celebration Speech Night on the exact birthday, on 25th July. The guest speaker was the Secretary for Education, J. A. C. Houlton, and the evening also included reminiscences from both Old Miltonians and Old Eveline Girls, among them Mrs. Celia Davies (the headmistress of Townsend since 1968,) and Mr. Justice Greenfield.

To commemorate the diamond jubilee, Milton appealed for funds for two projects. One was the Scholarship and Bursary Diamond Jubilee Trust with a target of \$30000, its aims being to assist Miltonians in further education and, in certain circumstances, while still at school. This sum was successfully raised as was a further substantial amount for the jubilee Pavilion. The cricket pavilion of

1940, was both too small and somewhat remote and there had been a long-felt need for better facilities; the new building was finally opened on Sports Day (31 March) 1973, and in its short existence has served a multitude of purposes: as well as the expected functions, it is the school's main cinema and a most convenient 'small hall' for events for which the Beit Hall would be too large.

The years since 1970 have been a period of consolidation: numbers have continued to drop from the peak of the early sixties (thankfully!) and the emphasis has been on internal growth and change with results less obvious than a plethora of new buildings, but no less important. Not that the seventies have been in any way uneventful - Mr. Lionel Reynolds (the master in charge of P.E.) added a touch of originality to Milton's achievements by leading three remarkable expeditions: in 1970, he led the first canoe voyage down the length of Lake Kariba; in 1971 he led a 70-mile safari along the Zambezi valley and in 1972, it was back to the canoes for an eleven-day, 200-mile trip through the Okavango Swamps.

1972 saw one of the most noteworthy of all additions to Milton's year — the Milton Address, an appropriate way for a distinguished school to celebrate its birthday and, with Speech Day, the high-light of the year. The address was instituted in an attempt to provide an essential element in education that is all too easily overlooked in the routine of school life — a challenge; it is given by someone of stature within the community and provides an

opportunity for reappraisal and a re-examination of what is truly worthwhile. Sir Henry McDowell delivered the first such address, an erudite, eloquent and memorable disquisition on the school's motto; he concluded with these words:

... 'Milton School's motto is calling us all — male and female, young and old — to play the man, in saying that each of us must use his or her intelligence, tuned to as fine a pitch as we can manage, to set for ourselves the highest standards we can conceive in all we do, or all we say and think, and also that we must let nothing inside us, and nothing outside us, divert us from applying our standards in doing what we think is right. In this way we shall truly be men; this is the way in which your motto calls on us to live. It is a splendid message for a great school to pass on to its pupils.'

In subsequent years the address, always given as close to 25 July as possible, has been given by, among others, Professor Robert Craig, Dr. G. R. Bozzoli, Mr. R. S. Walker, Dr. Mark Webster, Mr. W. Margolis and Mr. C. G. Tracey, all of whom have given much food for thought in a convivial atmosphere at a gathering which embraces the senior school and some hundreds of invited guests and includes a sundowner and dinner — truly a birthday party worthy of Milton's great traditions.

Academic standards have remained high and there have been continued and outstanding scholarship results over the last few years. Despite the ever-increasing demands on time made by sporting fixtures and widening public examination syllabi, those activities usually described as extramural have gone from strength to strength; Milton's dramatic productions in recent years have covered a vast range, from the pure farce of *The Happiest Days of Your Life* to the stern seriousness of *The Strong Are Lonely* by way of such different plays as *Tea House of the August Moon*, *Time for Murder*, *Breaking Point* and *Hobson's Choice*; all have set an enviable standard in all departments both front and backstage. House plays are an annual event that provide an opportunity for all potential actors to show their paces and are a valuable breeding-ground for new talent; they also give much amusement and entertainment! Debating and public speaking have also always been prominent — there can be few schools that timetable debating — and Milton has regularly featured strongly in the Lion's Public Speaking Competition, never more notably than in 1976, when Anthony Hall won first place with some words that deserve to be remembered:

... 'You are as old as your doubts, as young as your faith; as old as your fears, as young as your self-confidence; you are as old as your despair, but as enduringly young as your hope.'

Milton sport too has continued to flourish and teams have won many laurels: since a successful tour of the Cape in 1974, the 1st XV has had rather a lean spell but some of the younger sides have produced enviable records in the last two years, as have other teams — cricket, hockey, soccer, basketball, athletics, swimming, squash and badminton have all brought Milton much credit, whilst the magnificent achievement in tennis harks back to the great days of the thirties — the *Mim du Toit* trophy came back to Milton in 1975 when all five matches were won by sixteen games to nil, an achievement that had never been equaled before . . . but was in 1976, when Milton repeated the feat. It is confidently expected that the *Mim du Toit* trophy will remain at Milton for several years to come since the lower age-groups bristle with potential triple crown winners! There can be few Rhodesian schools which play as many sports with as much success as Milton — and none with finer fields: the devoted efforts of caretakers and ground staff and the extensive reticulation system, made possible by the use of reclaimed water, have given Milton fields which are the envy of all her rivals and the pride of all her sportsmen.

Nine years later, Milton has taken stock and possesses the faith to stand firm, facing any challenge that the future might hold, secure in the knowledge that its reputation endures and that those who had the privilege of attending the school will, in the years ahead, whatever they may hold, remain faithful to their proud motto —

... "QUIT YE LIKE MEN".