

AFTERWORD

The Seventy-fifth Birthday

*'Come, ye sons of art, come away
To celebrate this triumphant day'*

attributed to Nahum Tate.

IT IS perhaps no part of a history's task to peer into the future, but equally it seems inappropriate to end without some reference to the seventy-fifth birthday celebrations of which this book is a part. Preparations have been in hand for almost a year at the time of writing and the seventy-fifth birthday will be celebrated quite as splendidly as any of its predecessors.

The permanent mementos of the occasion will take several different forms including the usual t-shirts, beer mugs, ash trays and so on, all featuring a logo specially designed by Lorraine Coates; it also features on hoardings displayed around the school, and throughout the term stickers will carry the birthday message all over the country and far beyond.

The main permanent reminder of the occasion will be a school museum which has been established in perhaps the finest room in the school, the library over the main entrance of the original part of the building. It is intended that the museum should be a living and growing archive of the school's history, containing such treasures as Sir William Milton's silver key and the silver trowel with which the Earl of Athlone laid the foundation stone of the present school, discontinued cups and trophies, school magazines and newspapers, photographs, old uniforms and, indeed, anything of interest associated with the school's past. In one sense it will never be "complete" but equally it is intended that its main lines of development will be laid out in time for a formal opening as part of the birthday celebrations. An even more readily visible reminder of the occasion will be a large mosaic of the school's crest and motto, to be designed and made by Lorraine Coates, in a niche on the north wall of the Dining Hall; this was intended on the original plans for the School War

Memorial as there was, of course, initially no provision for a hall. As a result this niche, right in the middle of the wall between the two pairs of doors, has stood empty for nearly sixty years. Again, the mosaic will be ready for the birthday, and it will carry the dates 1910–1985 to show why it was commissioned.

The approach of the 25th of July will be heralded by a Chronicle supplement on the school which will concentrate on the present and future rather than the past and contain details of the events around the birthday itself. The more ephemeral part of the celebrations will begin with a procession of the whole school — and supporters! — from St. Gabriel's, home of the original St. John's, along Abercorn Street and via Fife, Twelfth and Borrow to Milton Junior and thence up Selborne to the present school, where the marathon from Plumtree should arrive at about the same time. That evening the Sixth Form will celebrate with an Edwardian Ball in the Dining Hall where costumes should approximate to those on view seventy-five years ago. Over that weekend there will, despite the time of year, be cricket — Old Miltonians versus Old Prunitians on the Saturday and Old Miltonians versus the School XI on the Sunday.

The day itself will be marked by an assembly and service for the school at midday to which it is hoped old boys and others will come as well, and, in the evening, as always on the birthday, the Milton Address, to be given by Senator the Hon. R.S. Garfield Todd. There will also be a speech from one of Milton's most distinguished old boys and long-standing friends, the Hon. A.E. Abrahamson, and it is intended that there will be reminiscences from old boys, going right back to the first day of school, 26 July 1910.

Saturday will see a sports festival — soccer, hockey and tennis leading to a rugby festival involving five schools with long associations with Milton: Chaplin will play Mutare, Plumtree Falcon, and finally Milton will meet St. George's, a break with tradition for Milton not to play Plumtree on such an occasion but St. George's is our oldest *Bulawayo* rival — and even older than St. John's! In the evening there will be the Milton Ball, with two bands in attendance, and the following morning a service of thanksgiving in St. John's, to be conducted by the Bishop of Matabeleland, when the sermon will be preached by Canon Chris Ross, sub-dean of the cathedral and a member of the Milton staff from 1956 to 1961. Finally, to round everything off on a light note, there

will be a play that should enable everyone to enjoy themselves — the classic farce, “Chase Me, Comrade”.

And, when “the tumult and the shouting dies”, what will it have been all about? Two things really: firstly, Milton is proud of its history and traditions and, through its celebrations, intends to remind Bulawayo, and, indeed, Zimbabwe, that its record remains second to none; and also, by so splendidly celebrating the birthday, to make plain that it has great confidence in what it still has to offer and, to use a remark of Edward Elgar just two years before Milton opened its doors, “a *massive* hope in the future”.