

FORTY YEARS ON

Often referred to as the Harrow Song and dating from 1872, the song 'Forty Years On' originally had four verses. It was the first of many songs written for Harrow School. Words were written by Edward Bowen, later a housemaster of Harrow School; music was composed by John Farmer, the school's music master. A fifth verse was written for the ninetieth birthday of Sir Winston Churchill, an Old Harrovian, and first sung on 28th November 1964.

In its early days Holloway School and the Old Camdenians' Club adopted verses 1 and 4 of the song with choruses. Old Camdenians continue to sing these verses, here taken from the Harrow School website, which also includes the score, at their annual dinner. In its grammar school days all present at the annual speech day were invited to join in the singing of Forty Years On.

Verse 1 Forty years on, when afar and asunder
Parted are those who are singing today,
When you look back and forgetfully wonder
What you were like in your work and your play,
Then, it may seem, there will often come o'er you,
Glimpses of notes like the catch of a song -
Visions of boyhood shall float them before you,
Echoes of dreamland shall bear them along.

Follow up! follow up! follow up! follow up! follow up!
Till the field ring again and again,
With the tramp of the twenty-two men.
Follow up! follow up!

Verse 4 Forty years on, growing older and older,
Shorter in wind, as in memory long,
Feeble of foot, and rheumatic of shoulder,
What will it help you that once you were strong?
God gives us bases to guard or beleaguer,
Games to play out, whether earnest or fun;
Fights for the fearless, and goals for the eager,
Twenty, and thirty and forty years on!

Follow up! follow up! follow up! follow up! follow up!
Till the field ring again and again,
With the tramp of the twenty-two men.
Follow up! follow up!