

## Mr. Bruce Seville. 1931 - 2001.

**Former SGS maths master Bruce Seville died suddenly at his home in Corfe Castle on January 5, 2001, aged 69.**

During the late 1950s the somewhat rarified atmosphere of the SGS masters' staff room received from the outside world a breath of fresh air in the form of two memorable additions, bearing very similar surnames. In addition to causing much heart-fluttering amongst the senior girls, and doubtless the mistresses' staff room too, the two young men ushered in a generation of change to this dear old Purbeck backwater. I refer of course to the arrival of Messrs Seville and Saville. The latter, local lad David and recent former SGS pupil, was already well known to most of his teaching colleagues. This may not have been to his advantage as most of them were a generation older; some indeed had begun teaching at the school before David was born! Northerner Bruce Seville on the other hand had no such advantage and splashed into the deep end. Being young and approachable, like David Saville, he immediately made a friendly and memorable impact with staff and pupils alike. Though shy, Bruce was bright and breezy, bursting with nervous energy and invariably, in my day at least, began lessons with a joke. I recall that his favourite expressions were "fair do's", often made following a minor difference of opinion with a pupil and all maths problems were a "piece of cake". He managed to tread that difficult line of being well-liked without losing the respect of his charges. For Fifth Form Set II maths duffers such as myself his lessons were enlightening and always enjoyable and certainly never boring. I only regret that his ever-patient explanations of the mysteries of maths, through no fault of his, remained a mystery to this particular duffer!



*Bruce Seville pictured in the 1950's shortly before he arrived to take up his post at Swanage Grammar School.*

Bruce Seville was born in Kendal, Cumbria on October 2, 1931. At the age of 18, just before he began a four year Maths and Physics course at Durham University, his mother died. Bruce's first teaching job after university was at Stanley Grammar School, County Durham. This was interrupted by two years' National Service in the Royal Air Force, during which time he instructed in Morse Code. On completing his National Service as an Acting Flight Lieutenant Bruce returned to teaching and spent a year at Dartmouth Grammar School. In 1957 he arrived at Swanage to join S.C.Sellick, Rees-Jones and Miss Cawley teaching maths. During his early years at Swanage Bruce lived at the Wolfeton Hotel in Victoria Avenue. A keen violin player he and his fiddle were much in demand playing at Scottish dance evenings at Corfe. It was while playing at one of these evenings that he met local girl Jean Grant who worked at Swanage Town Hall. Bruce and Jean were married at St. Mary's Parish church in Swanage on September 29, 1962 and began married life in a flat at Langton Matravers. Daughter Alison was born in 1964 and in 1966 the family moved to Corfe Castle.

Bruce remained at SGS until it closed in 1974, when he and other members of staff were absorbed into the newly-built Purbeck School at Wareham. He continued to teach maths and was Pat Salmon's deputy in the year office for 13 years until his retirement in July 1991 after 34 years teaching in Purbeck. Pat recalls that Bruce was a brilliant mathematician and able to hold a conversation on almost any subject. Bruce was particularly knowledgeable about astronomy, politics and motor cars. He could quote great chunks from Shakespeare and was passionately fond of music, particularly Mozart operas for which he had many of the scores. He enjoyed singing bass in the parish church choir and at the other end of the musical scale he enjoyed playing light dance music. Bruce had earlier been an active radio ham and spent many hours receiving and sending messages from his garden shed, no doubt puffing on his ever-present pipe in a haze of burning Gold Block tobacco! His great love was his garden in which he grew vegetables. His interest in garden produce did not end there, he was an excellent cook to boot. There was also an engaging eccentricity about Bruce; for example he could tell from looking at every car number-plate the vehicle's town of registration.

Although Bruce enjoyed good physical health during his last 20 years and never required a doctor, about a year before his death he suffered a bout of influenza from which his health never really recovered. His funeral was held at Corfe Castle church and was attended by many former colleagues and two headmasters. Following cremation at Bournemouth, Bruce's ashes were interred at his beloved Corfe, in the surroundings that he knew and loved so much.

**By Dick Riding**      *(Thanks to Jean Seville, Chris James and Pat Churchill for help in compiling this appreciation)*

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