

Mr. S.C."Pres" Sellick

Rachel Lawford (nee Sellick), with the help of her brother Roger, outlines the life of her father, S.C.Sellick BSc Hons, Senior Master at Swanage Grammar School from 1932 until his retirement in 1968.

My father was born in Cardiff on February 16, 1905 - he had a sister, Audrey, who was two years older. Unfortunately his father died not long after he was born and his mother supported her young family by running a post office and haberdashery shop in the Splott area of the city.

My father went to school in the Albert Road area of Cardiff - the building still stands. He then went on to Cardiff University where he read Physics and Mathematics. After gaining his degrees he left Wales in 1926 for Somerset and took up his first teaching post at Langport Grammar School, where he remained until the school closed in 1932, by which time he had become Senior Master. It was during his time in Langport that he met local girl Eileen Webb, who went on to study music at the Royal Academy of Music in London. They married in December 1932.



"Pres" Sellick in 1929 aged 24



"Pres" Sellick and sister Audrey in 1921

Shortly after their marriage my parents moved to Swanage where my father had obtained a post as Senior Master at the grammar school. He initially taught Physics but changed to Maths during the war when there was a shortage of Maths teachers. Though my father was not called up for military service during the war he was put in charge of the school's Army Cadet Force and became a member of the Swanage Home Guard, better known today as Dad's Army!

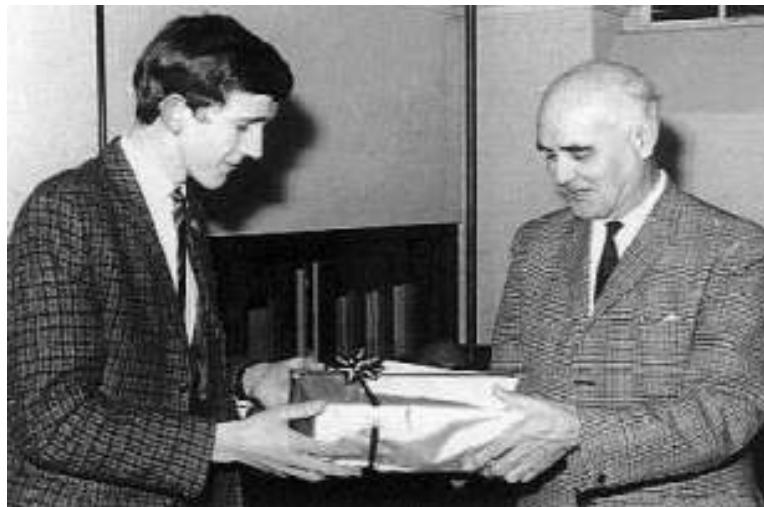
Many of my father's pupils will remember that he took a great interest in sport - especially football, cricket and athletics. Do you remember when the school had Saturday morning games? He also took music classes and trained the school choir for the annual Commemoration Service and Prize Giving. It was also his job to set the music for the School Festival every Spring Term, a task that would occupy him most of the Christmas holidays.

One of my father's duties as Senior Master was to arrange the school timetable, a substantial task that took up several weeks of each summer holiday. Our dining room table used to be covered with huge sheets of paper and dozens of smaller coloured pieces cut out of school exercise books, each representing a different member of staff. The task was made more complicated when in September 1952 the school changed to a six-day timetable. In time, as more and more part-time staff were employed, the timetable became increasingly difficult to arrange because the part-timers did not want to work on Mondays or Fridays! This, of course, was all before the days of computers.

On arriving in Swanage my parents first lived in a flat in Station Road, above what is now Barclays Bank, from which they had a good view of the "great flood" of November 17, 1935. In 1936 they had a house built within easy walking distance of the School in Vivian Park, which they called Windwhistle and where they were to remain for the next 41 years. Shortly after moving to Windwhistle my brother Roger was born in 1937 and I arrived in 1940.

In 1977, having reached their Seventies, my parents decided to move nearer the town into somewhere with less of a garden to manage. Not wanting to move away from Swanage - I can understand why - they made their last move to a flat in Rabling Road.

My father had a great love of music and played the piano. My mother was an accomplished pianist and they played many pieces arranged for two pianos. In his younger days my father played the cello but on his retirement from the grammar school at Christmas 1968 he was presented with a clarinet. Although he took up this instrument his arthritic fingers later made playing impossible. Throughout his life my father attended the Methodist church, as his mother did before him. He never drank or gambled.



SGS Head Boy Roger Hartley presents SCS with a clarinet on the occasion of the Senior Master's retirement in December 1968.

My father loved going on holiday, spending many weeks beforehand planning where to go and what to see. He was fortunate to have 15 years of retirement in which to enjoy these ventures before his death early in February 1984. My mother lived in Rabling Road until she died on November 6, 1992.

Finally, many of you used to ask me what his initials S.C. stood for, and probably never believed me when I told you! The fact is that Sentel was his father's name and Comley was his mother's maiden name. He was always called Comley.