

Richard Taylor's recollections of staff in the early 1950s

[Ed: See also Richard's message, on the message Board, seeking contact with former colleagues from his days at SGS]

I was at the SGS between 1952 and 1954 and set out below my recall of some of the staff members at that time:

Mr. **Ellison** – was he Deputy Head at the time and did he also have some connection with the drama society?

Mr. **Wassell** (Reg?) - music.

A quietly spoken Welshman with a typically Welsh name - **Jones/Davies/Jenkins**? It's too long ago for the old memory cells.

Peter "Drip" **Dwerryhouse**. He had that nickname when I started - don't blame me!! In those days it was not in reference to schoolboy slang (a "drip" being someone who was deliberately stupid or boring), rather that the poor chap was a martyr to winter colds - had a perpetually red nose, hence the drip.

I noticed the obituary for Mr.**Steed**, a patriarch figure in my time. He was quietly spoken and a gentleman. I cannot now recall his main subject.

I was sad to learn of the passing of Mr.**Parnell**, he would have been a comparatively young man when he died in 1957. He lived one or two roads away when I was at the SGS. Those were the days of doffed caps when one saw a teacher in the street. At weekends when in mufti, a sort of half-salute/tug of the forelock motion was considered adequate. I remember that Mr. P always appeared vaguely embarrassed by this attention. He would chat if we were both heading in the same direction - no condescension whatsoever, just a nice chap.

Mr. **Burnett** was, to me, "Mr.Chips" personified. A kindly and caring man, in fact everything a school-master should be - and which few achieve. He was my form master at a time when I had occasion to be called to the front of the class for a "wiggling" for homework poorly presented or some such. The subject was probably maths, at that time - certainly my poorest. The master -who shall remain nameless - was particular scathing, and finished his rant with a comment to the effect "your father would be ashamed of you" - despite the fact that, at that time, my father had been gone for about nine years. I fell apart at the seams. The indignity of being exposed as a blubbing "sook" at the advanced age of twelve, and in front of about thirty other 12 year old boys, was just too much.

The grapevine moved in its usual "wondrous way" and Mr.Burnett. took me to one side at the end of that school day. His kindness, advice and on-going "nudges" in the right direction were not only of great help during my time at the school but have remained in my memory since that time.

Sadly it seems that there are a lot of gaps in the general picture of SGS life in the fifties. Hopefully my contemporaries from that time, who will now either be retired or close to retirement, will now have time to dredge up recollections of their time at SGS. My brief stay was the most fruitful of my school life - I wish it could have been for longer.

Richard Taylor
2010