

Robert Heywood Seville

26th May 1920 – 16th January 2002

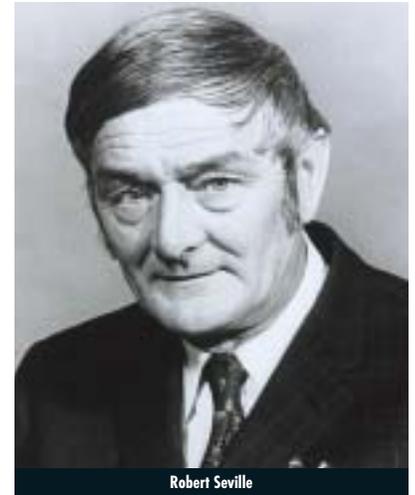
Bob Seville, Consultant Dermatologist at Lancaster until 1980, was born on 26th May 1920 at Oulton near Leeds. His father was a civil engineer, but other members of the family, including an uncle, were in the medical profession. He was educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield, going on to study medicine at Leeds University, where he qualified MB ChB in 1944. He gained his MD in 1948, at Leeds, where he later came under the influence of Professor J Ingram, which helped direct his choice in pursuing a dermatological career. Junior medical posts in Leeds were followed by service in the RAMC in the UK, and he was also in the India Command from 1944-46, later becoming Senior Medical Officer on troop ships with a rank of Major. After his army service, he moved to London where he was senior registrar to Geoffrey Dowling, and he later became an enthusiastic member of the Dowling Club – organising the club visit to Lancaster in 1973. In addition to attending Royal Society of Medicine dermatology section meetings and lectures at the Royal College of Physicians in London, he was a strong supporter of the North of England Dermatological Society – becoming its President in 1975.

He was appointed Consultant Dermatologist in 1953, working at Lancaster, and as a single-handed specialist covered a wide geographical area extending from Blackpool, around Morecombe Bay, to Barrow in Furness. He was instrumental in developing a specialist dermatology unit in Lancaster in the 1960's, and was later joined by another Consultant Dermatologist in 1972, providing the basis for the development of the speciality in the

area, and he was then able to concentrate on delivering a service primarily in Lancaster and Kendal.

His two main interests in dermatology remained the topical treatment of psoriasis with Dithranol (helping extend Ingram's pioneering work from Leeds and Newcastle) and in his search for better ways of treating patients he involved all the unit staff in working out the best treatment for patients with psoriasis. His other deep interest was in the link between psoriasis and stress – "Bob Seville's pioneering role in understanding the psychosocial disability suffered by patients with psoriasis was ahead of its time and was fundamental to our understanding of the important relationship between skin and psyche" (Professor C E M Griffiths, Manchester). In 1981, Bob Seville wrote his book "Dermatological Nursing and Therapy", Blackwell Scientific Publications, which helped particularly to promote dermatology nursing, which he recognised as an important aspect of dermatological care. Throughout his professional life, Bob Seville was primarily interested in the problems associated with psoriasis. With his enthusiasm for the speciality, he would be most interested in developments in our understanding of this disease.

Devoted to dermatology, his patients and staff, he still found time for outside interests. His home had a view across Morecombe Bay of the Lakeland Fells. He was an active member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club and was always on the hills, as time or medicine allowed. He pioneered a new climbing route on Shepherd's Crag in 1955 and my first meeting with Bob Seville was on a remote hill in County Durham after a clinical meeting!



Robert Seville

He was interested in railways and if time allowed he would often travel to and from clinics and meetings by train. This interest extended into the house, with a model railway, and he would sometimes take his children to record the sound of steam trains going over Shap summit on the Settle/Carlisle line, before the driving engines were replaced by diesel traction. He played the piano, usually classical pieces, but had a liberal taste in music.

In 1950, Bob Seville married Elizabeth Gibb and they had two sons, one of whom predeceased him. The other son, Malcolm, is a General Practitioner in Morecombe. Bob and Elizabeth divorced in 1974 and in 1980 he married Hazel, who survives him, with whom he shared many interests, particularly travelling abroad. In particular, Hazel provided immense support throughout his recent illness, lung cancer, a condition which Bob endured with immense courage and dignity, but reached ultimate peace with his strong Christian belief.

Dr Philip Harrison

Lancaster