

## DOSSIER ON BRUCE STEWART

Bruce Stewart, born in 1928, was here from 1942 to 1945. He was good academically, and although in Science classes all the way through, his best subject was English.

This stood him in good stead as he went on to be a noted radio actor and prolific scriptwriter.

Initially he studied to become a Marist Brother and hoped to study for the priesthood. Realising that he did not have a vocation he turned to his other love; acting. He appeared with Pacific Forces concert parties as a singer, pianist and storyteller.

He moved to Sydney and came to prominence as Majory Gregory Keen of M15, a pre-James Bond action man. Keen first appeared in the cult 1940s radio serial *Dossier on Demetrius*. The 104, 12-minute episodes are still available. The show was so popular that New Zealand's Parliament rose early so that members could listen to the last episode.

Two other 104 episodes of Gregory Keen adventures, again with Bruce as Keen, were produced, *Deadly Nightshade* in which Keen travelled to Australia to search for a missing scientist, and *Twenty-Six Hours*, set in Berlin.

In 1954 he moved to the UK and continued to work as an actor and soon began scriptwriting. His television play *Shadow of a Pale Horse* was an international success, winning awards in the US and the UK.

He went on to write as many as 200 scripts for radio, television and the stage in various genres.

Bruce penned 19 of the 26 episodes of the 1970s children's science-fiction series *Timeslip* (which still has an official website). Earlier, he had written the screenplay for *The Hand of Night*, a 'vampire film without blood'.

He contributed episodes to *The Onedin Line*, *Secret Army*, *Crown Court*, *Sergeant Cork*, *Sherlock Holmes* and many other scripts in a 40-year association with the BBC.

Ever versatile, his play, *The Hallelujah Boy*, about worker-priests in France had a run in the West End.

Two of his novels, *A Disorderly Girl*, about three generations of women from Australia's convict era, and *The Hot and Copper Sky*, about a New Zealand family in the Great Depression did 'respectably'.

The Stewarts, Bruce and Helen, and their six children lived most of their lives in Surrey.

Bruce Oliphant Stewart died peacefully in his sleep on 29 September 2005.

*Per Angusta Ad Augusta*

Brian Murphy