

## **My life remembered**

Anthony Mould

### **Moving to Wood Green**

I was six years old when I moved with my parents from Ilford to Wood Green, in 1935. Our top floor flat there, with its numerous dormer windows, was 3 The Towers, at the beginning of Braemar Avenue, off Bounds Green Road.

Across the road was a Baptist church, built of red brick and edged with pale stone – a design that was repeated in the church at Muswell Hill Broadway. The far end of Braemar Avenue was blocked by Palace Gates railway station, from where Dad travelled to work every morning.

### **St Michael's Infant School**

I attended St Michael's Infant School in Bounds Green Road. A stone building, next to St Michael's Parish Church, it was opened in 1859 as a Sunday school and enlarged in 1863 to be used as a school for infants.

At the infant school I remember that we made model railway engines from cardboard, with the cardboard milk-bottle tops for the wheels. The milk-bottle tops were taken from the one-third of a pint milk bottles that we were given each day. I also remember learning to write on a small wood-framed slate, not paper.



*St Michael's Infant School, Bounds Green Road.*

### **St Michael's Junior School**

Later I moved to the St Michael's Church of England Junior School just across the road from the infant school. It was built in 1872. My headmistress was Miss Forsdike. She taught me elegant cursive 'copperplate' handwriting, although that influence seems now to have vanished. I do not remember the names of my other teachers. However, I do remember that the washbasins, two or three of them in a row, were in a short, dark corridor, and had intricate blue flower patterns fired into them. The

lavatories, as was customary in all of my schools, were open and outside in the playground.



*St Michael's Junior School, Bounds Green Road*

Free milk was introduced into schools in 1946. Before that there was a small charge for the characteristic one-third of a pint bottle. I remember all of the bottles being stood in a row around the solid fuel heating stove in the centre of the classroom, to take the chill off them by morning break time. I did not like the lukewarm milk, and that dislike has persisted. The junior school was next to the very large and imposing parish hall, with the vicarage on the other side of it.

I also remember the Sunday in 1938 when the 621 and 521 trolleybuses were first introduced, running via Wood Green to North Finchley. The trolleybuses were surprisingly quiet compared with the old petrol buses, which had taken over from the earlier trams.

### **Before the war**

The world's first television transmitter was built in 1936 at Alexandra Palace, within sight of my walk home from school. The steel mast, from which horizontal arms were extended, was erected on the north-east tower of the building. Coming home from school each day I used to look to see if another arm was in position. It usually was. The first programme was broadcast in November. 1936 was also the year when the Crystal Palace in south London burned down. Although I didn't see the fire I remember dramatic pictures in the newspaper.

One day Dad took me to the races at Epsom. The next day I drew a picture of jockeys as pin men on pin-shaped racehorses, so everyone must have known where I had been. Later, I drew a similar picture that won a consolation prize from the Sunday Dispatch. My name was in print! The prize was a book, but I do not remember the details.

I joined the Cubs while I was still in junior school. Later, war prevented any progression to camping or becoming a Scout. There was excitement when I took my public telephone test correctly. Even better, I returned the call money to Arkela, the Cub mistress. Two pennies were inserted into the phone to make a call. Button A was then pressed when the person at the other end answered, and then the money fell into the box. A previous caller had not got through but had neglected to get their money back by pressing button B.



*St Michael's Cub Scout Group, Wood Green, 1938  
Tony is in the middle of the front row*

A scout concert in St Michael's Church Hall was amazing; other Cubs and I all danced dressed as girls, clad in pink and blue dresses, with garlanded hoops in matching colours. I think I was mortified at having to wear knickers! Arkela, our producer, taught at RADA.

It was probably at the same concert that I sang solo, a forlorn song, 'I've gotta motta, always merry and bright'. I sang it purposely deadpan, with a mournful voice. I remember the words, but not the audience or their reaction. I have a feeling that Dad would have enjoyed it. No doubt, as usual, Mum would have made all of the costumes.

There is still a large Scout Park due west of Bounds Green tube station, where I once took part in an outdoor re-enactment of Hiawatha. My memory suggests that it was a big affair with a lot of Scouts and Cubs taking part. I was dressed as an Indian so I carried a tomahawk, but somehow managed to lose it there, somewhere.

A dim memory is of having some teeth taken out by the school dentist and of wearing a red rubber bib, and having an anaesthetic mask put over my face. The memory of its smell is still a frightening one. Sometime later a local dentist took seven milk teeth out under anaesthetic. When I left the surgery, near the Alexandra Palace, London's barrage balloons were flying for the first time, in a strong wind. That probably banished all thoughts of the dentist. It was the summer of 1939.

In the preparations for the war my parents and I went to collect our gas masks at the school opposite Bounds Green underground station. We had to have them fitted.

The feeling they gave when worn, of being closed in and needing positively to take a breath, was not a pleasant one.

In September 1939 we went to visit my grandparents, who lived in the village where I was born, near Canterbury. We listened to the wireless and heard Neville Chamberlain declare war on Germany. I stayed there in Kent for the next year as an evacuee, attending the local school, which I enjoyed. The school gave me my own small plot of land to garden and look after.

In 1940 my parents decided that war was getting too close, so I was sent to live with a relative in Exeter. Three weeks after I left Canterbury it was blitzed by the Germans. My parents had by then moved to a house in Highgate, North London. After another year I returned to live with them again. Just after I returned my former school in Exeter was demolished by bombing.

### **Trinity Grammar School, 1941–1947**

I attended Trinity Grammar School from 1941, even though over-age, because my father went and spoke to the Headmaster, Dr Emrys E. Jones. He was an imposing, stern, but kindly figure, always in black gown and mortar board, who made a lasting impression on me. He had been a 'pupil teacher' in Merthyr Tydfil and had gained his doctorate in Heidelberg. He taught us some hymns in German, even during the war.



*Trinity Grammar School, 1947. This view is boys' playground, on the west side. The girls' playground was on the cold east side. The assembly hall is behind the large ground-floor windows, with classroom windows above. Dr Jones's room was behind the top window on the right of the entrance. The lavatories were outside, beyond the projecting gable. The back entrance was also there, leading onto Trinity Road.*

Our house in Highgate was far away from Wood Green, so I travelled to school daily on a succession of three buses. The first was on the number 210 bus, a single-decker running between Golders Green and Finsbury Park. I got on near the junction of Hampstead Lane and Stormont Road and got off at the Archway, where I caught a number 41 to Turnpike Lane. The last bus was a number 521 or 621 trolleybus to

Jolly Butchers' Hill, near the school. On the bus journeys to school I passed about forty public houses.

At the top of Jolly Butchers' Hill, near the school, were the Printers' Almshouses, They closed in 1969 and were demolished in 1970. The Fishmongers and Poulterers Almshouses were also nearby, close to the parish church. They were demolished earlier, just after the war, as was my infant school, to make way for the new Civic Centre.

An aunt from Hastings, New Zealand, Mrs Emma Sissons, came to stay with us in 1938 for a year. She told us how she used to get blue clay from the stream to colour the hearth and how she panned for gold. Her Father was a relative of E.H. Mould who went to the southern hemisphere to rescue the ill-fated Shackleton Expedition.

Our flat in Braemar Avenue was above the Piccadilly underground line and our building shook a little each time a train went by far below us. This caused Aunt Emma to want to rush outside because she was conditioned to react to the trembling warnings of earthquakes. She went home to New Zealand in 1939, on the last boat to sail before the war started. Before she left we went to visit the vicar, The Reverend Mr Jones, for his signature on her passport renewal application. He had previously had a drawing of Donald Duck from me, and still had it in a drawer in his desk. I was keen on drawing Disney characters back then. Mr Jones went on to become vicar of the splendid classical church with caryatids, St Pancras New Church, opposite Euston railway station in London. While still in Wood Green he used to shin up the ropes suspended from the ceiling of the very lofty church hall opposite our school.



*1941 – Tony aged 12 in his school uniform with his parents and a Free French naval officer*

My hobby was making model aeroplanes. The grand old man of modelling, C.A. Rippon, taught me how to carve a convincing propeller from a solid block of balsa wood. Mr Rippon had a shop at the bottom of Hornsey Rise, N19, which stocked all the necessary modelling material. I made other models too. One was Louis Kentner, the pianist, whom I had seen playing at a concert. He was made in painted balsa wood, together with his Bösendorfer piano. The keyboard was about three inches long. There were also lots of animal models, such as a band of rabbits playing a variety of instruments.

## **Wartime Dangers**

Because of the war, many school hours were spent sitting in the windowless lower corridors of the school during air raids. Different classes were there and it was not possible to have normal lessons. I remember reading some of *War and Peace*; it seemed an apt title, but heavy going. Near the end of the war air-raid warnings and explosions seemed to come simultaneously. I remember sitting under a desk during one raid and continuing to eating rice pudding.

Nights were often spent in the half-buried Anderson air-raid shelter in our garden. It was made of arched steel segments and with vertical end panels, all covered with earth. There was probably no real attempt at making the floor waterproof, so the interior must have been damp to sleep in, as well as cramped and cold.

I watched German aircraft caught in searchlights, and heard the bombs and anti-aircraft shrapnel raining down.

As the London Docks were closed, my father, who had worked there, was directed to chauffeur a construction company director who was prospecting for new airfields all over the country. As a chauffeur my father drove through the Blitz in London. It must have been a terrifying experience; buses had fallen into bomb craters and there were fires and destruction everywhere. Later Dad had to drive a bread-delivery van.

One night, while we were living in Sheldon Avenue, a landmine dropped on the Council Depot near the bottom of North Hill, Highgate. The depot contained a coal dump, the contents of which were blown up into the air and came down as coke and ashes over the surrounding district.

Near the end of the war the V-1s – pilotless low-flying bombs – came over, with their unmistakable harsh-sounding propulsion engines. I watched and made a drawing of the first V-1 that I saw; my drawing was pronounced as accurate by the local Royal Observer Corps. It was alarming to hear a V-1's engine stop, because the machine then dived quickly to the ground and exploded. The popular name of 'doodlebug' did not reflect this fear. Eight thousand of those bombs landed on London, causing many casualties and much damage.

I recall two other incidents. One afternoon I was on my bicycle near the Spaniards Inn, when a V-1 flew over. The engine cut out and seconds later it hit the ground and exploded in the Highgate School playing field, by Bishopswood Road, causing little

damage. Later on, the second V-2 to fall in London (the first was in Chiswick) landed on the Highgate Magistrates' Court, next to the Police Station. It was 6.00 a.m. on a Saturday morning. Naturally, we heard the explosion as it was not far away.

## **Wartime Pleasures**

During the war period there were some memorably pleasant things going on. On quite a number of occasions I went to hear the famous pianist Myra Hess play in the National Gallery. The emotions woven into the classical music of the masters, especially the German and Austrian ones, were particularly evocative for those engaged in the war.

The first classical concert that I attended was in the Cambridge Theatre. Louis Kentner was the soloist. He played Beethoven's fifth piano concerto, *The Emperor*. Beethoven's fifth symphony was also in the programme. Now that I think about it, both pieces of music were from the composer's revolutionary period, so apt at that early and dangerous period of the war.

I witnessed the historic inauguration of the Free French by General De Gaulle. It was in a theatre in Charing Cross Road in London. First, a French film was shown of Louis XIV eating tomatoes for the first time. Once the French fervour had been roused, the General himself strode onto the stage and addressed the audience; the Free French forces were well and truly launched that Sunday afternoon.

Near the end of the war I fell into conversation with a Canadian physicist in a coffee bar in Charing Cross Road, opposite the National Portrait Gallery. He told me that he was working on an atomic bomb. This meant little to me at the time, but on reflection it was a clear breach of security. It was not until later that the first atomic bomb burst so momentarily upon the world.

During the war the government instituted British Restaurants for the public. One was established in the staff canteen of the Standard Glass Bottle Factory. I ate there several times. The factory stood at the junction of Bounds Green Road and Pinkham Way, North Circular Road, New Southgate. I also remember going to a British Restaurant in Victoria.

The school had no access to its playing field, which was occupied by an army searchlight unit, so no games were played. I still have no interest in sport. Our chemistry master, Mr Ellison, had been the first man to retaliate against the Germans with poison gas in the First World War. He opened the tap. Naturally, being a chemistry master, he was known as 'Stinks'.

The TV actor, the late James Grout, also attended Trinity school, but was a year ahead of me. His parents had a shoe shop on Woodhouse Road, between Horsham Avenue and the Orange Tree pub in Friern Barnet. There used to be allotments opposite the shop, but later the land was developed. Dad's school friend from his Friern Barnet Grammar School days was Harold Pope, who ran The Triumph public house at the junction of Woodhouse Road and Summers Lane.

Memories abound of that time. There was a craze for yo-yos, with young men demonstrating and selling them outside the school gates. Walt Disney films arrived, such as *Snow White*, and Mickey Mouse with Donald Duck in *The Band Concert*. Then there was Shirley Temple singing 'Animal crackers in my soup', and 'The donkey serenade'. Another memory is of the Silver Jubilee of George V and Queen Mary. At school we were all given a jubilee mug as a souvenir.

## Teachers

Mr Peacock wrote books, I remember him very well. He lived near me in Torrington Park, North Finchley, adjacent to Friary Park. Miss MacCrae sat next to Dr Jones in the staff photo. I cannot remember her companion's name but they both travelled in a small Austin car. Miss MacCrae talked to us about staying in Stockholm and the summer heat there.

I knew Mr L.A. Swinden as well. He was deputy when I was at Trinity. Later, when I had left the army, he told me that when he left the army in 1918 there had been no grants for ex-soldiers, such as the one that I had received.

Mr MacFee was unable to fulfil his physical training role, as the sports field was not available for outdoor events. As previously mentioned, it was occupied by an Army searchlight division.



*Trinity Teaching Staff, 1949*

### **Teaching staff at Trinity Grammar School 1941–1947**

Dr E.E. Jones, *Headmaster*;

Mr Swinden, *Deputy Head (Boys)*; Miss Andrews, *Deputy Head (Girls)*;

Miss Aldridge; Mr Brandon, *Latin and English*;

Mr Chick, *Woodworking*; Miss Catlin, Miss Catlin, Miss Chisholm;

Mr Dean, *French*; Mr Dinmore, *Physics*; Miss Downey;



Mr Edmonds, Mr Eustance, *English*; Mr Ellison;

Mr R.A. Jones, Miss Jobson, *Art*;

Mr MacPhee, *PT*; Miss Macrae, *History*;

Miss Parsons, *Applied Maths*; Mr Peacock, *Geography*; Max Penney, *Art*;

Dr Saunders, *Music*; Miss Schofield, *Biology*[?]; Mr Taunt, *Maths*.



*1947 Trinity prefects*

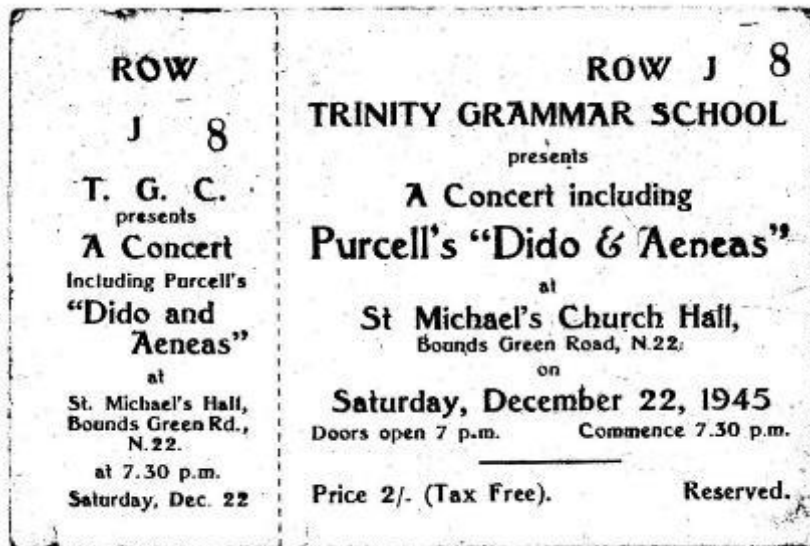
*Front row, from left:* 1 Stan Rayner, 2 John Kemp (later a schoolteacher), 3 Mr Taunt, 4 Dr E. Jones (Headmaster).

*Second row, from left:* 1 Norman Whatmough (later an architect) 2 Roy Augood.

*Third row, from left:* 1 Tony Mould (later an architect). 5 Rosemary Moore.

### **1945 Concert**

I attended the practices but did not participate in the concert as I was ill at the time. I became ill with pneumonia and was given 'M & B' tablets, the ones that saved Winston Churchill's life. The concert went ahead. It was Dido and Aeneas.



James Grout, cast as one of the principals, later became a frequent actor on television.

The music master later became Head of Music at Nottingham County Council

### **Scholars remembered**

Roy Augood, Audrey Bambridge, Joe Barling, Anita Bernstein, Barbara Boak, Evelyn Clack, Noreen Fowler, Christine Frost, James Grout, John Kemp, Audrey Morris, Rosemary Moore, Norman Whatmough.

### **Friern Barnet**

In 1945 my parents moved to Friern Barnet, where my father had spent his youth. I lived there until 1954, when I got married. We lived in a three-storey terraced house, 151 Friern Park, opposite the end of Torrington Road. My father's parents already lived in the top floor flat. My father had bought the house from Miss Maud Angell, a professional watercolour artist, who then went to live in a nursing home. Friern Park stretched west to North Finchley.

I was conscripted into the army in 1947 and later trained as an architect at the Northern Polytechnic in Holloway Road. After I married my parents moved to 33 Ashurst Road, N12, where my father died in 1968. Mother then came to live with me in North Wales, but eventually went to live in the Lawrence Campe Almshouses in Friern Barnet Lane.

### **Places and Events**

A number of memories about Friern Barnet are worth mentioning. One is the celebration of VJ Day in 1945, when a 'grandstand' was erected for the purpose in Friern Park on the slope above Torrington Park. Its chest-high base was built with concrete-filled sandbags, and there was a simple metal roof structure.

The pond in Friern Park was due to be opened by Edward VII, but as he had appendicitis at the time, the pond did not receive the royal blessing. In post-war years it was emptied due to the outbreak of poliomyelitis.

## **Army Service and Career as an Architect**

I was in the army for two years, from 1947 to 1949, Those years gave me a perspective on life.

I was initially put in charge of a 25-pounder gun (see photo). Later I trained as a Technical Assistant RA (TARA) and plotted gunnery targets and ranges on the makeshift table in the photo. The fabric shown was meant to keep the paper dry and secure when folded and hastily thrown into the back of a vehicle to go to the next gun site. We tried to keep out of areas where crops were growing, as compensation had to be paid if we damaged any crops. This was long, long before computers. What a change from being a school prefect the year before!

We were ordered to advance and camp close to the path of the Berlin Airlift. We slept in tents just below the flight path, with aircraft flying low overhead every few minutes.

I recently contributed to an exhibition in Dusseldorf about the lasting effects of the Rhine Army administration of West Germany.



After leaving the army and completing my training as an architect I worked in London, Ipswich, the Building Research Station in Watford, Leicester and Coventry, but spent most of my career in the Electricity Council Research Centre in Capenhurst. During my time there I was seconded to work in Baghdad for a year, as a UN Expert.



*University of Sulaimaniya, Iraq*

While at Capenhurst I visited Sweden several times to research their low-energy housing and controlled-ventilation systems. The house that I designed for myself was made in Sweden and delivered to Chester on two lorries, one carrying the concrete basement and the other the timber framed upper floor structures.



*Tony Mould's house in Chester*