

Professor Samuel Julius Gould

Bletchley Park 1944 –1945 – Block F Intelligence Corps in the Japanese Military Attaché section. Interviewed 25 February 2016.

I was a classics scholar at Balliol College, Oxford, after winning a major award in 1941. I started my course in 1942, finishing my Part 1 in 1943. During that year, somebody in the college-perhaps the Dean or someone of that kind-mentioned to me that they were looking for people to study Japanese, although obviously they didn't tell me why.

Eventually, I got a letter summoning me for an interview. I was told to go to a place called Bletchley for the interview, so I went on the train from Oxford to Bletchley and walked up the hill to Bletchley Park, of which I'd never heard of before. I was ushered in through the gates into a large wooden hut, where I was interviewed by a very remarkable and gifted man named Brigadier [John Hessel Tiltman](#); I was a mere civilian of 19 years old. He was sitting in the wooden hut and he introduced me to the man next to him, a kind of secretary called [Captain Kaye](#).

They got me talking by asking me questions about what my interests were, things like crossword puzzles and so on. This took about half an hour while they assessed me, after which they said I would be hearing from them in due course.

A month later, I got a letter from Captain Kaye telling me that I had been chosen and that the procedure was that I would be called up into the army, and if I passed the medical exams and so on, I would go to Bletchley Park; the letter didn't say what I was going to do or why. In January 1943, I was called up to the Army to the Intelligence Corps and spent 6 weeks doing basic training at Bury St. Edmunds, after which I went to the training school at Bedford which was at 52 De Parys Avenue.

There were about 20 of us; we were all Privates in the Army, we were billeted to different places and we did Japanese studies every day. The oldest of the teachers was [Captain Oswald Tuck](#), an old fashioned captain of the navy, with a twinkle in his eye and a short white beard. He was the most experienced of the lot. With him there were several teachers; the main one was [David Hawkes](#), a civilian and a good scholar, and in the background was an Army Captain named [Eric Ceadel](#) - he later went on to be the librarian at Cambridge University. I eventually made Sergeant.

We were not told a great deal, but we were told whilst at Bedford that we would be translating intercepted materials. I arrived in Bletchley in summer

1944 and I worked in the wooden hut, where we were translating military attaché messages that had been sent by a Japanese person to Tokyo. We didn't really know how the messages were being picked up, whether by wireless, telephone or intercepted in the channel; we simply got pieces of paper and worked on them. We never got feedback on the work we had done, so didn't know if we had contributed to any operations. The famous people such as [Turing](#) and [Welchman](#) lived in a separate world, in different huts and I never came across them socially or in terms of my work.

I was billeted at the Shenley Road Military Camp. Every day I would just walk in and out through Shenley Road entrance, which was on the opposite side of the park to the main entrance, beyond the big house. The camp was the most extraordinary place, under the control of a very extraordinary man called [Colonel Fillingham](#) who ruled it with a rod of iron, but we didn't suffer. He was very concerned with our physical welfare, washing and eating arrangements. We lived there and trotted in and trotted out on a daily basis and were in shared dormitory accommodation. I was paid the standard salary for my military rank. I was a Private, then Corporal, then Sergeant. The food was adequate. One of the things the Colonel did that was good was he kept the food and hygiene very good; it wasn't the Savoy Hotel, but it was good.

The military camp had a programme of events run by the colonel, who was rather a difficult man. He had a fierce red face and a very heavy jowl, and I think blood shot eyes. He would give the newcomers a slightly crazy interview. He asked me if I was at Oxford, to which I said "Yes, in Philosophy and Economics". He asked, "What was Plato's idea of the intellectual?" I had no idea how to answer that, so for a second or two I hesitated, and he intervened immediately saying "Plato's theory was"-and I quote- "that the intellectual, pure and simple, was a spineless bugger – wasn't that his theory?" I sort of nodded vaguely- he was not the sort of man you would want to get into an argument with-but he didn't like my answer one bit and he shouted to his lieutenants "Take this man to the guard room". This was my first day in Bletchley Park in the camp and I was marched to the guard room!

All the other 20 people who'd come with me from Bedford were marched in as well, and the Colonel gave a harangue about Plato, which he thought was "a load of nonsense", and the fall of France, which he said was due to "the work of homosexuals" and various other forms of lunacy. Then, we were released and glad to be out of it, it was horrible. He had bad habits; for example, he'd walk around the camp expecting to be saluted by everybody. Now, one of the people in the camp in the officers mess was [Captain Roy Jenkins](#), later to become a politician, and the Colonel noticed that he hadn't

been saluting him. He became very cross with him and so threw a stone at him. Another of his habits was to stop people in the camp and say "Private 'so and so', I want you to run around the block immediately and come back to me here". He would check the time taken with his stopwatch, and if you came back to him within the approved time, whatever that was, he would instruct his attending lieutenants and captains to "Give the man a sixpence"- although I never had to do this. Very, very strange behaviour. He laid on various kinds of so-called entertainment. One was to get us to put on boxing gloves and fight each other in a big hall containing all the soldiers; I had to do a bit of that. Then there was a visit from the Ballet Rambert, which I found very tedious and put me off ballet for the rest of my life. He organised visiting speakers; one of which was an address by the "Red Dean" [Hewlett Johnson], the then-Dean of Canterbury, who talked to us about the 'Wonders of the Soviet Union'. Prodigious lies they were, those stories. That was his way of keeping us entertained; he was a very strange man with a great deal of power. His big problem was that he was never allowed inside Bletchley Park. He never set foot in the place.

I would spend my free time in the evening in the bar, and at weekends, if I had no duties, I would go to Oxford to meet up with my old friends or visit my parents who lived in Liverpool, which is where I was born. I never told friends or family about what I did and if they asked, I would just say "No, I cannot tell you what I do". There wasn't a lot of women around because they were mainly billeted at Woburn Abbey, and I don't remember anything much about the concert and theatre societies; I may have gone to a concert, but I really don't remember. Sometimes we would go into Bletchley town, or to the closest cinema, which was in Fenny Stratford. Sometimes, we would go into the restaurant of the railway station and eat the best egg and chips you could find in the area. When we wanted to make a call, we would use the telephone at the big house. You rang a number - I don't remember what the number was - and you were put through to a London number. I think it was the central desk at MI6. I'd say who I wanted to call, and they'd put me through. It was obviously a channel to the outside world; there were no other public telephones.

At the end of the war, I went to Eastcote. I was there until I was demobbed. After that, I went back to Balliol College, Oxford to finish my course and then became an academic.

I've felt reasonably comfortable talking about Bletchley Park after other people started to talk about it, which was after the book by [Winterbotham](#) was published in the mid-1970's and items started appearing in the newspapers.

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