

### **How to use mathematics and physics to good advantage**

We lived at the top (closed end) of the cul-de-sac at No. 29. On the same side of the road, halfway up, was No. 13 in which Mr and Mrs Luncanheimer lived,. They were a very nice respectable couple though most of my peers were sure they were German spies. (My peers were older than me; about 10 years old at the time of which I write.)

It did not take me long to work out the safest way to get past their front garden with the best margin of safety. After all, I did not know when one of them would lean over their front fence and snatch me in order to put me in the Nazi boy troops. To survive and to keep my young sister alive, particularly when we were out after dark, I had to take her by the hand, swear her to blind subservience and creep silently up the road until we were almost at the Luncanheimer's front gate, then go into the road where we not likely to trip over, and run like the wind. We were never snatched and I often thanked Jesus in my prayers for keeping us safe.

I exhibited similar scientific brilliance when I had to pass my Headmaster's house in Crawford Avenue. He was a highly respected man. He had been an Army Major in the First World War, the sort who led his troops with bravery and toughness over the top in the pitiless trench warfare of France and Belgium. He had been injured in the War and walked with a limp. He had no sense of humour that I ever witnessed though he had a charming wife who somehow put up with the Old Man, as he was known to us (but not to his face).

The way to pass his house was to creep silently up to it on the same side of the road and when you were almost at his gate to run swiftly past on the same side of the road. That way you were in his line of sight for the minimum length of time. (He must have been permanently tired, keeping watch for any of his pupils who were not wearing their school cap.)

My mathematical and scientific calculations must have been good. The Old Man never caught me so I was never expelled from school.

Another place of great danger for me was in my own back garden when we lived at 19 Lancelot Road, Wembley. The garden was only about 17 feet wide and possibly 25 feet long. Running along the back of our gardens was a muddy footpath and it was this footpath that presented the great danger, for one never knew if my Headmaster would be walking along it looking for anyone not wearing his school cap. In retrospect I can see that the Old Man would have been most unlikely to prowl along that muddy track. It would have been too vivid a reminder to him of those ghastly muddy trenches of France and Belgium. My father, who had been in the Royal Navy for the duration of the War, could never understand why I had to wear my school cap even when he and I were working on our knees putting splints on the flowers we had knocked over playing cricket. This was a necessary job to hide the damage from my mother.