

DAILY TELEGRAPH CROSSWORD STORY

Interview with Mr. Leonard Sidney Dawe

Mr. Dawe a fifty-four year old headmaster of a London grammar school - Strand School - at Tulse Hill, London. Has worked with another school master - Mr. Melville Jones - preparing crossword puzzles for the London Daily Telegraph since 1925. Dawes teaching subject is physics; Jones is the classical master at St. Paul's School Hammersmith.

On June 2, 1944, a Saturday, Mr. Dawe was walking his dog along the quiet suburban street near his home at 20, Beaufort Road, Ealing, W. 5. The crosswords were finished for the week and as usual he and Mr. Jones were many weeks ahead of their schedule. Neither of them ever knew which crossword would appear in the Telegraph, often puzzles which they had completed two months before would appear, while, on the other hand, sometimes a puzzle that they had finished a week before would suddenly pop up. They alternated Jones doing one week's puzzles, Dawe doing another and so-on.

On this quiet Saturday morning as he walked back towards his house, he saw that a car had pulled up outside the gate. As he got to the gate, and walked up the pathway he stopped for a moment to admire his white and pink tea roses and then went indoors where he found two gentlemen waiting for him.

Dawe who is white-haired, slightly built and wears glasses was a little taken aback when the elder of the two men waiting for him said, "You are Mr. Dawe, aren't you? We are from MI5 ... Could we talk for a moment?" They sat down and the elder of the two men showed him a completed crossword puzzle in that morning's paper in which was the word 'Overlord'. Mr. Dawe hadn't a clue as to why he was being questioned. "Can you tell us why you used the word 'Overlord', it is not a common word, is it?" Dawe said "No, I've never used it before, but what is this all about," he asked. He was then told that Overlord was the code name for the allied invasion of Europe and furthermore the men from MI5 then produced a list of names which included such code names as 'Neptune' - code name for the naval aspect of the D-Day assault; 'Mulberry' - code name for the artificial harbour plan; 'Pluto' - code name for the under channel gasoline pipeline plan. All of these code names had appeared, with others, in the Daily Telegraph crossword puzzles in the previous two weeks. Dawe was quite shocked. He had no idea even when these crossword puzzles had been completed. Many, he knew, had been developed months before and all of them he realised by himself and not his senior colleague, Jones. "Well, I wish you people had told me about these code names and I wouldn't have used them by accident," he said. He had no explanation for the coincidental use of these words and added, "I hope I don't give you any more headaches." To which one of the MI5 men said, "Well, it's too late now anyway." This was the first indication that Mr. Dawe had that the invasion was under way.

(Correction - Jones had done some, Dawe others.)

There was no explanation for the use of these 'highly confidential' code words at all, and MI5 accepted his explanation of their coincidental use.

But says Dawe "What made it more awkward was that I was sharing a house with my brother in law, who occupied a very high position in the Admiralty. They turned me inside out and Naval Intelligence grilled my brother in law. They went to Bury St.Edmonds where my senior colleague Melville Jones was living and put him through the works." It was not the first time that Mr.Dawes' crosswords had created a problem. Many a time according to the London Daily Telegraph " a double entendre had crept in and rocked the Stock Exchange" and on one occasion the Art Editor pleaded with him to cultivate a more worldly mind."

Check whether he was at his own home or at Effingham, Surrey. Also check if his age was 54 on D-Day and if Mr. Jones was 61.

CORRECTION In Paragraph 2 the address is wrong. Mr.Dawe was living at Leatherhead sharing a house with his brother in law. He was there because his school had been evacuated out of London.

Jones' age was 63.

61 MR MELVILLE JONES Classical Master at St. Pauls, Hammersmith 54 MR LEONARD SYDNEY DAWE Head Master of London Grammar School - Strand School - Tolshill, London evacuated to Effingham Glasses - whitehaired - slight Since 1925 (Physics)

On Sat June 1944 came back from taking dog for a walk "We're from M1-5 are you Mr Dawe"