

Back in London, it was essential to find a flat and a job. I was lucky with the flat, but unlucky with the job, at least at first. I had kept in touch with friends from Internment and one of them, Hans-Peter Binswanger, who had been a member of the Cambridge Group in Canada, was also looking for a flat and thus we combined our efforts and decided to share Number 7 Park Road, Basement, which was offered to us at a very reasonable rental. We lived there for a few years from 1942 on. Park Road begins where Baker Street ends in the North, opposite Regents Park. Mythology has it that 222 Baker Street, the home of Sherlock Holmes, was near that corner, although such a number never existed in reality.

To find a new job in wartime London was relatively easy as the Government had by 1942 set up a Central Register for Scientists to whom employers and job-seekers alike could apply, in fact a 'Marriage Agency'. I was advised by them to apply to a Paint Factory in South London who were looking for a works chemist of some experience. Was I not the right person, having worked in an oil refinery? Oils and paints were then both organic chemical liquids, both had been much improved by advanced chemical knowledge and both were essential war materials.

I was much surprised when I reached the 'works' after a trip of about 45 minutes in the Underground, the Tube. It was a large park, not really a factory, and in the park there were a number of different houses in which the paints were made. I was astounded by this arrangement but at first thought it might be a great advantage in wartime as any bomb hit would only destroy one small part of the whole. One of these houses was 'the laboratory' in which the young 'chemist-in-charge' was composing various hues of colour for the paints required. I had to learn his technique, with a large spatula, to rub pigments together with different oily liquids, which were cooked linseed oil. It was certainly a change from the MOR Pilot Plant.

The linseed oil was cooked in large conical metal containers heated by gas, the temperature control being carried out by an old workman, who had done this job 'by experience for many years', so I was informed. When I questioned the accuracy and suggested automatic temperature control by thermometers and sensors, and when my idea was put to the works manager, I was sacked. "This is not our way of doing things" and so I left after three months and a few weekly envelopes with my wages. I went back to the Central Register to try my luck again.