

# Saving Bletchley Park: How

## Women in Bletchley Park

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About 7,500 women worked in Bletchley Park, the central site for British cryptanalysts during World War II. Women constituted roughly 75% of the workforce there. While women were overwhelmingly under-represented in high-level work such as cryptanalysis, they were employed in large numbers in other important areas, including as operators of cryptographic and communications machinery, translators of Axis documents, traffic analysts, clerical workers, and more.

Most of the female workforce were enlisted in the Women's Royal Naval Service, WRNS, nicknamed the Wrens.

The Wrens performed a vital role operating the computers used for code-breaking, including the Colossus and Bombe machines. Working around the clock in three eight-hour shifts, they were the beating heart of Bletchley Park.

Women were also involved in the construction of the machines, including doing the wiring and soldering to create each Colossus computer.

In January 1945, at the peak of codebreaking efforts, nearly 10,000 personnel were working at Bletchley and its outstations. About three-quarters of these were women.

## Bletchley Park

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Bletchley Park is an English country house and estate in Bletchley, Milton Keynes (Buckinghamshire), that became the principal centre of Allied code-breaking during the Second World War. During World War II, the estate housed the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS), which regularly penetrated the secret communications of the Axis Powers – most importantly the German Enigma and Lorenz ciphers. The GC&CS team of codebreakers included John Tiltman, Dilwyn Knox, Alan Turing, Harry Golombek, Gordon Welchman, Hugh Alexander, Donald Michie, Bill Tutte and Stuart Milner-Barry.

The team at Bletchley Park, 75% women, devised automatic machinery to help with decryption, culminating in the development of Colossus, the world's first programmable digital electronic computer. Codebreaking operations at Bletchley Park ended in 1946 and all information about the wartime operations was classified until the mid-1970s. After the war it had various uses and now houses the Bletchley Park museum.

## Tommy Flowers

*Retrieved 4 March 2017. Black, Sue; Colgan, Stevyn (10 March 2016). Saving Bletchley Park: How #socialmedia saved the home of the WWII codebreakers. Unbound*

Thomas Harold Flowers MBE (22 December 1905 – 28 October 1998) was an English engineer with the British General Post Office. During World War II, Flowers designed and built Colossus, the world's first programmable electronic computer, to help decipher encrypted German messages.

## The Imitation Game

*home break-in. During his interrogation, Turing talks of his work at Bletchley Park during WWII. In 1928, the young Turing is constantly bullied at boarding*

The Imitation Game is a 2014 American biographical thriller film directed by Morten Tyldum and written by Graham Moore, based on the 1983 biography *Alan Turing: The Enigma* by Andrew Hodges. The film's title quotes the name of the game cryptanalyst Alan Turing proposed for answering the question "Can machines think?", in his 1950 seminal paper "Computing Machinery and Intelligence". The film stars Benedict Cumberbatch as Turing, who decrypted German intelligence messages for the British government during World War II. Keira Knightley, Matthew Goode, Rory Kinnear, Charles Dance, and Mark Strong appear in supporting roles.

Following its premiere at the Telluride Film Festival on August 29, 2014, *The Imitation Game* was released theatrically in the United States on November 14. It grossed over \$233 million worldwide on a \$14 million production budget, making it the highest-grossing independent film of 2014. The film received critical acclaim but faced significant criticism for its historical inaccuracies, including depicting several events that had never taken place in real life. It received eight nominations at the 87th Academy Awards (including Best Picture), winning for Best Adapted Screenplay. It also received five nominations at the Golden Globes, three at the SAG Awards and nine at the BAFTAs. Cumberbatch and Knightley's highly acclaimed performances were nominated for Best Actor and Best Supporting Actress respectively at each award.

## Testery

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The Testery was a section at Bletchley Park, the British codebreaking station during World War II. It was set up in July 1942 as the "FISH Subsection" under Major Ralph Tester, hence its alternative name. Four founder members were Tester himself and three senior cryptanalysts: Captain Jerry Roberts, Captain Peter Ericsson and Major Denis Oswald. All four were fluent in German. From 1 July 1942 on, this team switched and was tasked with breaking the German High Command's most top-level code Tunny after Bill Tutte successfully broke Tunny system in Spring 1942.

## Premium Bonds

*consistent with randomness. At the end of its life it was moved to Bletchley Park's National Museum of Computing. ERNIE 5, the latest model, was brought*

Premium Bonds is a lottery bond scheme organised by the United Kingdom government since 1956. At present it is managed by the government's National Savings and Investments agency.

The principle behind Premium Bonds is that rather than the stake being gambled, as in a usual lottery, it is the interest on the bonds that is distributed by a lottery. The bonds are entered in a monthly prize draw and the government promises to buy them back, on request, for their original price.

The government pays interest into the bond fund (4.15% per annum in December 2024 but decreasing to 4% in January 2025) from which a monthly lottery distributes tax-free prizes to bondholders whose numbers are selected randomly. The machine that generates the numbers is called ERNIE, an acronym for "Electronic Random Number Indicator Equipment". Prizes range from £25 to £1,000,000 and (since December 2024) the odds of a £1 bond winning a prize in a given month are 22,000 to 1.

Investors can buy bonds at any time but they must be held for a whole calendar month before they qualify for a prize. As an example, a bond purchased mid-May must then be held throughout June before being eligible

for the draw in July (and onwards). Bonds purchased by reinvestment of prizes are immediately eligible for the following month's draw.

Numbers are entered in the draw each month, with an equal chance of winning, until the bond is cashed. As of 2015, each person may own bonds up to £50,000. Since 1 February 2019, the minimum purchase amount for Premium Bonds has been £25. As of January 2025 there are over 128.7 billion eligible Premium Bonds, each having a value of £1.

When introduced to the wider public in 1957, the only other similar game available in the UK was the football pools, with the National Lottery not coming into existence until 1994. Although many avenues of lotteries and other forms of gambling are now available to British adults, Premium Bonds are held by more than 24 million people, equivalent to more than 1 in 3 of the UK population.

Stevyn Colgan

*Problem Solving Unit for paperback release in 2018. He co-wrote Saving Bletchley Park with Dr Sue Black OBE, published in 2015. His first novel, a comedy*

Stevyn Colgan (born 11 August 1961) is a British writer, artist and speaker.

Colgan was a police officer in London 1980–2010. He was then a researcher and scriptwriter for the BBC TV series QI and the regular QI Annuals, and for QI's BBC Radio 4 sister show The Museum of Curiosity until 2018. He co-presents the We'd Like A Word books and authors podcast. He is a keen forager and has been a lifelong student of British folklore and folk culture.

U-571 (film)

*before the German invasion of Poland. Gordon Welchman, head of Hut 6 at Bletchley Park, wrote: "Hut 6 Ultra would never have got off the ground if we had not*

U-571 is a 2000 submarine film directed by Jonathan Mostow from a screenplay he co-wrote with Sam Montgomery and David Ayer. The film stars Matthew McConaughey, Bill Paxton, Harvey Keitel, Jon Bon Jovi, Jake Weber and Matthew Settle. The film follows a World War II German U-boat boarded by American submariners to capture her Enigma cipher machine.

Although the film was financially successful and received generally positive reviews from critics, winning the Academy Award for Best Sound Editing, the fictitious plot was subject to substantial controversy and criticism.

Dieppe Raid

*rooms and from there to the airfields. An RAF officer from Hut 3 at Bletchley Park was seconded to the 11 Group Operations Room to filter material to the*

Operation Jubilee or the Dieppe Raid (19 August 1942) was a disastrous Allied amphibious attack on the German-occupied port of Dieppe in northern France, during the Second World War. Over 6,050 infantry, predominantly Canadian, supported by a regiment of tanks, were put ashore from a naval force operating under the protection of Royal Air Force (RAF) fighters.

The port was to be captured and held for a short period, to test the feasibility of a landing and to gather intelligence. German coastal defences, port structures and important buildings were to be demolished. The raid was intended to boost Allied morale, to demonstrate the commitment of the United Kingdom to re-open the Western Front, and to support the Soviet Union, which was fighting on the Eastern Front.

The Luftwaffe made a maximum effort against the landing as the RAF had expected, and the RAF lost 106 aircraft (at least 32 to anti-aircraft fire or accidents) against 48 German losses. The Royal Navy lost 33 landing craft and a destroyer. Aerial and naval support was insufficient to enable the ground forces to achieve their objectives. The tanks were trapped on the beach and the infantry was largely prevented from entering the town by obstacles and German fire.

After less than six hours, mounting casualties forced a retreat. Within ten hours, 3,623 of the 6,086 men who landed had been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. 5,000 were Canadians, who suffered a 68% casualty rate, with 3,367 killed, wounded or taken prisoner. The operation was a fiasco in which only one landing force temporarily achieved its objective, and a small amount of military intelligence was gathered.

Both sides learnt important lessons regarding coastal assaults. The Allies learnt lessons that influenced the success of the D-Day landings. Artificial harbours were declared crucial, tanks were adapted specifically for beaches, a new integrated tactical air force strengthened ground support, and capturing a major port at the outset was no longer seen as a priority. Churchill and Mountbatten both claimed that these lessons had outweighed the cost. The Germans also believed that Dieppe was a learning experience and made a considerable effort to improve the way they defended the occupied coastlines of Europe.

## Grand Union Canal

*in the 1970s saving a disused road bridge that stands isolated in a car park. Warwick's narrowboat moorings are on the Arm by a public park partly in view*

The Grand Union Canal in England is part of the British canal system. It is the principal navigable waterway between London and the Midlands. Starting in London, one arm runs to Leicester and another to Birmingham. The Birmingham canal is 137 miles (220 km) with 166 locks. The Birmingham line has a number of short branches to places including Slough, Aylesbury, Wendover, and Northampton. The Leicester line has two short arms of its own, to Market Harborough and Welford.

It has links with other canals and navigable waterways, including the River Thames, the Regent's Canal, the River Nene and River Soar, the Oxford Canal, the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal, the Digbeth Branch Canal and the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal.

The canal south of Braunston to the River Thames at Brentford in London is the original Grand Junction Canal. At Braunston the latter met the Oxford Canal linking back to the Thames to the south and to Coventry to the north via the Coventry Canal. "Grand Union Canal" is also the original name for what is now the Leicester line of the modern Grand Union, running from short east of Braunston to Leicester, and which is now sometimes referred to as the Old Grand Union Canal to avoid ambiguity.

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