

SECRETS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

There are secrets and there are secrets. The work done during the Second World War at Bletchley Park, a Victorian mansion fifty miles north of London, was so secret that the people who worked there didn't talk about it even to their friends or family. The work done at Bletchley Park is now well known: in recent years there have been major films, documentaries and books, and today it is a tourist attraction. So what took place there during the war?

Bletchley Park was purchased by the British government in 1938 as a location for its code-breaking school. The mansion was not really **suitable** for the task because the house was too small for all those who worked there, so many worked in "**huts**" around the main house. Bletchley Park was Britain's top code-breaking centre and security was very **tight**. The government feared that a Nazi agent would infiltrate the centre and ruin everything.

Station X, as Bletchley Park was known, was so efficient that it could read coded messages from German generals on the battlefield before they were even seen by Hitler in Berlin. Historians now believe that the code-breakers shortened the war in Europe by two years.

The Germans had invented Enigma, the most complicated encoding machine the world had ever seen. It resembled a large typewriter with lights and could, letter-by-letter, turn a normal message into entirely unintelligible nonsense that could be decoded only by using another Enigma machine. The design of Enigma machines allowed for millions of different configurations. Enigma machines were initially decoded by Polish mathematicians in 1932. When the Poles broke Enigma, the Germans changed the code only once every few months. Over the years, the Nazis continued to improve Enigma to increase the number of possible configurations to the billions, and with the **advent** of war, codes were changed at least once a day. Only a few weeks before Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Polish mathematicians showed their code-breaking machine, called a *bombe*, to the British. This information was extremely valuable, as the British had previously been unsuccessful at decoding German messages.

As the Second World War progressed, Station X became a hidden city with 10,000 people working there. About 75 % of the people working at Bletchley Park were women. Many of the code-breakers were Cambridge mathematicians, both experienced professors and recent graduates, but some were **recruited** because of their linguistic skills, knowledge of hieroglyphics, or brilliance at chess. Two of the best known code-breakers were Alan Turing and Gordon Welchman. Turing had significantly improved the design of the Polish machine, and Welchman then refined Turing's design. The result of their collaborations was the *Turing-Welchman Bombe*, named after the original Polish machine. The new Bombe went through all the possible Enigma configurations in order to reduce the possible number of settings to a **manageable** number that could be analyzed, and then decoded, by people.

The importance of code-breaking was recognized early on by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. In 1941, Turing and Welchman wrote directly to Churchill to ask for more resources. Churchill's now famous response was "Make sure they have all they want—extreme priority—and report to me that this has been done."

In 1945 Churchill ordered that all records of Bletchley Park be destroyed. The public first became aware of Bletchley Park because of a book published in 1974 that was authored by one of its former employees. Bletchley Park even has its own royal connection: in 2014 the visitor centre was opened by Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge (Kate Middleton), whose own grandmother had worked there during the war.

Text adapted from an article in *The Telegraph* (July 16, 2016)
and from information on the Bletchley Park Trust website

suitable: adequat / adecuado
hut: barracó / barracón
tight: estricte / estricto
advent: començament / comienzo
recruited: reclutat / reclutado
manageable: manejable

Part 2: Writing

Choose ONE topic. Write about number 1 or 2. Minimum length: 100 words.

[4 points]

1. Many of the people working at Bletchley Park were good at languages and all had to be able to keep secrets. Imagine you are applying for a job as a code-breaker at a modern equivalent of Bletchley Park. **Write a formal letter** to the director explaining why you would be an excellent worker. Remember NOT to use your own name in the letter.
2. Black Friday in November has quickly become the biggest shopping day in many countries and not just in the United States, where it originated. Is it a good idea for shop owners to offer large discounts before the Christmas holidays? Do you think it is necessary to have such a day, or is it only a new form of consumerism? **Write an opinion essay.**

Grammar	
Vocabulary	
Text	
Maturity	
Total	
Nota de la redacció	