

15 July 2019

Bletchley Park is delighted that Codebreaker Alan Turing will be the new face of the £50 note

Following the announcement by the Bank of England today, Bletchley Park is delighted that pioneering computer scientist and Bletchley Park Codebreaker, Alan Turing, is the new face of the £50 note. This is the first time a computer scientist and LGBTQ+ individual has been recognised in this way.

Sir Dermot Turing, nephew of Alan Turing and Trustee at Bletchley Park Trust said:

"Today's announcement follows many years of work by various individuals and organisations to honour and remember the life, work, and tragic death of Alan Turing. I am touched by all those who nominated Alan to be the face of the new £50 note, and hope today's news will inspire more people to learn about his story and contribution to computer science."

Iain Standen, Chief Executive of Bletchley Park Trust added:

"It is very fitting tribute to the life and work of Alan Turing that he will be the new face of the £50 note. During World War Two, he and a team of like-minded men and women, played a crucial role at Bletchley Park. Today he is rightly considered one of the pioneers of modern computing, and artificial intelligence, and his legacy continues to inspire new generations."

The design for the new £50 note features inspiration from Alan Turing's time at Bletchley Park, with an illustration of Alan Turing against a technical drawing of a Bombe machine. The machine was designed by Turing to help break Enigma-enciphered messages. The new note will include a copy of his signature taken from our 1947 Visitors Book of the household of Max Newman (a fellow Bletchley Park codebreaker and Turing's teacher, colleague and friend) currently on display in our permanent Turing exhibition here at Bletchley Park. The note also features a section from his seminal 1936 paper "On Computable Numbers". The paper is widely recognised as being foundational for computer science and introduced the concept of a Turing machine as a thought experiment of how computers could operate.

After the war, Turing received an OBE for his wartime services, and was well-known for his pioneering computer work in his lifetime, but wider awareness of his vital contribution to Allied codebreaking during World War Two only came to light in later years when the true story of Bletchley Park was revealed to the public.

In 2009 the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, made an official public apology on behalf of the Government for the way Turing was treated after his conviction for 'gross indecency' in 1952. He tragically committed suicide two years later. In 2013 he was granted a posthumous royal pardon, which was later extended to all those convicted under long-repealed legislation outlawing homosexual acts. This legislation has become known as 'Turing's Law'.

In February 2019, Alan Turing was nominated by the public as the overall winner of the BBC Icons series, 'the greatest figure of the twentieth-century', beating Nelson Mandela, Ernest Shackleton, David Bowie, Martin Luther King Jr, Muhammad Ali and Pablo Picasso.

Visitors to Bletchley Park can see a reconstruction of Alan Turing's wartime office in Hut 8 and learn about his pioneering work on the Bombe machine, based on pre-war work by Polish

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codebreakers, in Hut 11A: The Bombe Breakthrough, exhibition. There is also a permanent on-site exhibition about Turing's life and death which includes a signed copy of the 2013 apology.

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For further information, please contact the Bletchley Park Communications team on communications@bletchleypark.org.uk | +44(0)1908 272661

For visitor information, please visit www.bletchleypark.org.uk

Notes to Editors

About Bletchley Park

Bletchley Park is a place of exceptional historical importance, open to visitors daily. It is the home of British codebreaking and a birthplace of modern information technology. It played a major role in World War Two, producing secret intelligence which had a direct and profound influence on the outcome of the conflict. Over the past twenty-five years Bletchley Park has become an internationally renowned site, visited by people from around the world. It is an accredited museum dedicated to telling the story of BP, its achievements and the people who worked there during World War Two.

Social Media

Join the discussion about Bletchley Park at:

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About Alan Turing

An online biography of Alan Turing is available on his Bletchley Park Roll of Honour entry here:

https://bletchleypark.org.uk/cms/record_attachments/1800.pdf

About the Bank of England's new £50 note

After receiving 227,299 nominations from the public for a scientist to appear on the new £50 note, and consideration by the Banknote Character Advisory Committee, Turing was selected from a shortlist of UK scientists by the Governor of the Bank of England. For more information, visit www.bankofengland.co.uk