

New Bletchley Park Oral History project seeking stories of those who lived alongside top secret Codebreaking station

Supported by Milton Keynes Council, Bletchley Park's latest Oral History project is looking to discover what life was like for those who lived near the top secret establishment during World War Two. Whether you lived near the park and wondered what was happening there, had a Bletchley Park worker billeted in your home, or have stories about you and your family's own contribution to the war effort, the Bletchley Park team would love to hear from you to understand the wider impact that the war and the top secret activities at the park had on the local community.

Bletchley Park's Oral History Officer, Jonathan Byrne, explains: 'Over the past seven years we have interviewed over 400 veterans of Bletchley Park's wartime work and have gathered vital material for our exhibitions and publications. However, we know much less about the community that supported and was affected by the secret work here. Many local families had Bletchley Park workers living with them, and local men and women provided essential services like cooking, cleaning and driving. Others may have been friends with someone who worked at Bletchley Park, or may just have wondered what this strange new place was all about, though, with the country at war, they knew not to ask about it'.

Cllr Pete Marland, Milton Keynes Council Leader said: 'We are really pleased to support this important heritage project to identify the local Bletchley residents' contributions to the war effort and the social impact it had on families. Capturing that social history and heritage helps Bletchley Park engaging with its localities and to tell those fascinating stories that otherwise would be lost forever.'

The workforce at Bletchley Park peaked in 1945 when almost 10,000 people worked in shifts around the clock, many billeted in accommodation around Buckinghamshire and its surrounding counties. BP personnel were also working in top secret listening posts based around the UK and overseas.

Many Bletchley Park Veterans have shared their stories of living with local families, like Ann Mitchell, née Williamson, a civilian who worked in the Hut 6 machine room, who recalled: "There was a club in Wolverton, which I used a lot, where you could buy coffee, tea, cakes and snacks, and I met a lot of my Oxford friends there and other Bletchley Park people living in the area. Old fashioned single decker buses picked us up for work at fixed places near our digs. I once got lost in the pitch black, no street lights, but luckily a local person walked me to my bus stop."

Bletchley Park would love to hear from anyone with a story to tell about the wartime local community and interview them, wherever they may be living now. Please contact Jonathan Byrne on 01908 272685 or at jbyrne@bletchleypark.org.uk for more information.

-ENDS-

About Bletchley Park

Bletchley Park is a place of exceptional historical importance, open to visitors throughout the year. 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. By presenting and explaining these achievements in the very place where they occurred, Bletchley Park brings together the dramatic history of the twentieth century with the challenges we face in the twenty first.

Social Media

Join the discussion about Bletchley Park at:
Facebook /bletchleypark1

Instagram @bletchleyparkuk
Twitter @bletchleypark
#BletchleyPark

For visitor information, contact 01908 640404, info@bletchleypark.org.uk, or go to www.bletchleypark.org.uk

For further information, hi-res imagery or to arrange an interview, contact Rosie Burke, Media and Publications Manager, Bletchley Park.
Email: rburke@bletchleypark.org.uk, Tel: +44 (0)1908 272661, Mob: +44 (0)7487730193