

BLETCHLEY PARK

NEWS RELEASE

Bletchley Park marks 80th anniversary of the WAAF

80 years after the formation of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF), a new summer display at Bletchley Park commemorates the wartime contribution of these women's service at the top-secret codebreaking site, in Milton Keynes.

Open from 28 June 2019 – 5 January 2020, the new pop-up display charts the growth of the WAAF at Bletchley Park and explains the importance of the communications role they played here. 75% of the workforce at Bletchley Park were women, occupying a variety of roles from civilians and government clerks to members of the women's armed services.

The WAFs posted to Bletchley Park mostly worked in communications at Teleprinter Operators, Wireless Operators and Morse Slip Readers. Further afield, WAFs worked at 'Y Stations' (secret listening posts throughout the UK), intercepting wireless signals which were sent to 'Station X' (the codename for Bletchley Park).

Erica Munro, Exhibitions Manager, at Bletchley Park Trust:

"We are proud to be celebrating the contribution of the WAAF on site in this new display continuing our programme of celebrating women in the services at Bletchley Park.

We began the series in 2017 with a pop-up display in Block C for the 100th anniversary of the WRNs, the women's Royal Naval Service. In 2018, we marked the 80th anniversary of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), the women's branch of the British Army, with a display in the Mansion. Next year, we will focus on women of the Foreign Office."

The display will run outside the newly restored Teleprinter Building, the communications hub of Bletchley Park, where WAFs worked in shifts around the clock receiving tens of thousands of intercepted messages and transmitting intelligence to Allied Commanders.

Today the Teleprinter Building houses a new immersive experience, *D-Day: Interception, Intelligence, Invasion*, which tells the story of how Bletchley Park contributed to D-Day, 75 years after the famous Normandy landings.

Also new for summer 2019:

- Bletchley Park's annual 1940's Weekend – 6 and 7 July 2019
- Summer Jazz Concert series – performances running throughout July and August
- Family codebreaking activities – join in with free workshops and family tours running throughout the summer holidays

ENDS

For further information, images or interview requests, please contact the Bletchley Park communications team on: communications@bletchleypark.org.uk | 01908 272665

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

About Bletchley Park

Bletchley Park is a place of exceptional historical importance, open to visitors throughout the year. It remains highly relevant to our lives today and for the future. 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.

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Over the past twenty years Bletchley Park has become an internationally renowned heritage attraction, visited by people from around the world, which acknowledges the successes from the War and the people responsible for them. It celebrates their values: broad-minded patriotism; commitment; discipline; technological excellence. By presenting and explaining these achievements and these values, 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 in our rapidly changing and technologically complex society.

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