

2018 SUMMER OUTING

BLETCHLEY PARK



BLETCHLEY MANOR

On Wednesday 25th July, one of the hottest days of the year, forty-seven Civic Society members and friends left Hythe on their way to Bletchley Park...home of the WW11 code breakers.

In 1938 the Government bought part the Bletchley Estate to house their secret code breaking and intelligence Cypher School and the work centred on just a small group of experts. As the importance of their work increased, more and more staff were recruited until in 1945 the workforce numbered around ten thousand and women outnumbered men by about three to one.



A BREAK BETWEEN TALK AND TOUR

All staff were sworn to secrecy about Bletchley and even when the story began to emerge in the 1970's many still remained silent about the part that they had played there. Some never even discussed it with their husbands or wives.



OPERATING THE BOMBES

We had all known something about the Enigma machine but to have the complexity of the challenges faced by the code breakers explained to us was mind-blowing. The Enigma used the settings of rotors to scramble messages into unintelligible text with millions of combinations...and the settings were changed at midnight! Having cracked the code for the day the messages were invariably in a foreign language, so an army of linguists was an essential part of the staff.



AN ENIGMA MACHINE

Bletchley houses the world's largest collection of Enigma machines and it's impossible to think of Bletchley without remembering the brilliance of Alan Turing and his tragic story. It was his invention of the Bombe machine that made it possible to crack the codes on a daily basis and there's a beautiful sculpture of him in the Enigma Museum entirely made of horizontal layers of slate.



THE SCULPTURE AND THREE MEMBERS

We had all known what Bletchley Park had been but to actually be there and soak up the history and atmosphere was something really special...but our tickets are valid for a year and we are sure that some of our party are planning to make a return visit.
