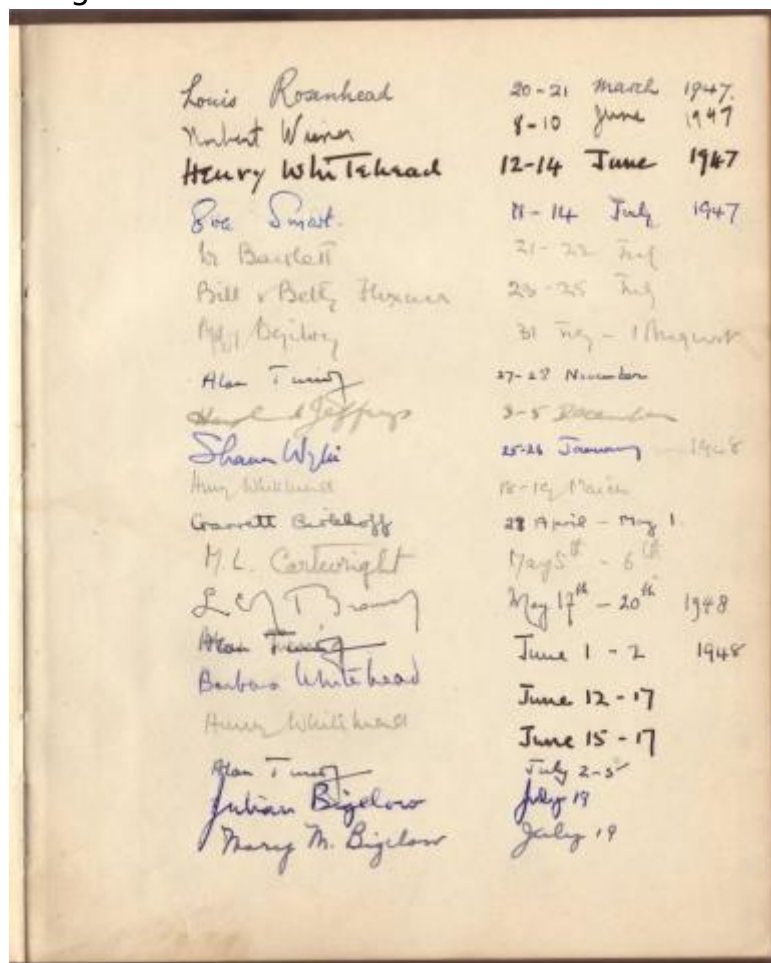


Eleventh hour rescue of Turing collection

25 February 2011

Public support and National Heritage Memorial Fund secure precious collection for new home in Bletchley Park.

Image



Visitors book with Alan Turing signature

Almost nothing tangible remains of genius Bletchley Park codebreaker, Alan Turing; so when an extremely rare collection of offprints* relating to his life and work was set to go to auction last year, an ambitious campaign was launched to raise funds to purchase them for the Bletchley Park Trust and its Museum. The Trust is today delighted to announce that the collection has been saved for the nation as the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) has stepped in quickly to provide £213,437, the final piece of funding required.

The campaign was launched by passionate supporter Gareth Halfacree, and attracted colossal public and media backing, with £28,500 donated by hundreds of members of the public within just eleven days. Google has generously pledged \$100,000 and a significant sum has been received from a private donor. Despite this tremendous support, further funds were needed to reach the asking price and prevent the collection from potentially being bought by an overseas collector, threatening this unique piece of national codebreaking and computing heritage.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the NHMF, said: "This is such welcome news. Alan Turing was a true war hero and played an absolutely crucial role during the Second World War. The National Heritage Memorial Fund was set up in memory of those who have given their lives for the UK and this grant will now ensure that this extremely rare collection of his work stands as a permanent memorial to the man and to all those who paid the ultimate price in service to this nation."

Peter Barron, Director of External Relations for Google, said, "Turing is a hero to many of us at Google for his pioneering work on algorithms and the development of computer science. We're delighted that this important Collection will now be accessible to everyone visiting Bletchley Park"

The collection of articles belonged to Professor Max Newman, Turing's friend and fellow Bletchley Park codebreaking genius. It includes offprints of sixteen of Turing's eighteen published works including his momentous paper *On Computable Numbers*. A limited number of the offprints would have been produced at the time and Turing's gifting them to Newman bears testimony to their unique relationship. The set includes articles which have been annotated by Newman, along with Max Newman's name inscribed in pencil in Turing's hand. Accompanying the set of offprints is the Newman household visitors' book with several signatures of Turing, that of Turing's mother and, of special significance to Bletchley Park, signatures of other wartime codebreaking giants.

The Turing-Newman Collaboration Collection is particularly rare, important and valuable as very few physical traces of Turing's work or personal belongings still exist. Most of the wartime records at Bletchley Park were destroyed after the war, while Turing himself kept little of his work and very few personal belongings.

Simon Greenish, CEO of the Bletchley Park Trust, welcomed today's announcement, saying, "The acquisition of this hugely important collection has been made possible only by the astonishing support demonstrated by the public, the media, Google, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and Christies the auctioneers whose help in brokering the purchase is gratefully acknowledged. We

are delighted to have the collection here at Bletchley Park, which is surely its most fitting home, and it will be an incredible addition to the visitor experience.”

Tourism and Heritage Minister John Penrose said, “Safeguarding our heritage isn’t just about bricks and mortar or fine art, it’s also about preserving the evidence of significant scientific discoveries and inventions. The National Heritage Memorial Fund’s grant to the Bletchley Park Trust to help secure this collection for the Trust is fantastic news and reflects the great advances Turing made in terms of code breaking and computer science, which as we now recognise, helped to turn the tide for this country during the war.”

Of his many roles – as mathematician, logician, cryptanalyst and computer scientist, Turing is best known for being the father of modern computer science and his work at Bletchley Park conceiving the Turing-Welchman Bombe to mechanise the process of breaking the German Enigma cipher. He is considered to be one of the most influential thinkers of our time and his work was fundamental to the Allied victory in World War Two and freedom in the West.

Turing's close relationship with Newman was crucial to the historic contribution Turing made, starting with Newman's encouragement to investigate 'mechanical processes' and his help in securing Turing a fellowship at Princeton to continue his research. In 1952 at a time when homosexuality was illegal in the UK, Turing was convicted of having a sexual relationship with another man. Turing was sentenced to a hormone treatment that amounted to chemical castration. The conviction robbed him of his security clearance for GCHQ, for which he still worked, and made him the target for surveillance at the start of the cold war. Having made one of the most outstanding contributions of the twentieth century, he died after eating an apple laced with cyanide.

William Newman, son of Max Newman, explaining the special relationship between Turing and Newman, said, “Max Newman supported Alan Turing and collaborated with him for nearly twenty years, starting in 1935 when Turing was inspired by one of Newman’s lectures to write his *On Computable Numbers* paper. It was a huge blow to Turing, and also to Newman and his wife Lyn, when Turing was arrested and prosecuted for gross indecency. Newman gave evidence at Turing’s trial, and may thus have helped the court decide towards sentencing Turing to probation rather than imprisonment. Two years later came what Lyn described in a letter to a friend as ‘the most shattering thing that has ever happened to me’ – news of Alan’s death.”

In September 2009, following a public campaign, the PM Gordon Brown issued an unequivocal and powerful apology for the way in which Turing had been inhumanely treated, saying “on behalf of the British government, and all those who live freely thanks to Alan's work I am very proud to say: we're sorry, you deserved so much better”.

Historians agree that Bletchley Park, top secret codebreaking hub of World War Two, shortened the war by at least two years saving countless lives. Since 1994, it has been open to the public as a museum. Interest in the site continues to grow with visitors increasing threefold over the last few years reaching 120,000 for 2010. Bletchley Park Trust is currently working up a major regeneration project to help transform Bletchley Park into a world class heritage and educational centre. The Trust aims to commence the project in early 2012 and it will include the restoration of iconic codebreaking huts and derelict WW2 buildings as well as a redeveloped museum, which will greatly enhance the visitor experience and improve educational accessibility.

Now secure, The Turing-Newman Collaboration Collection will be on display in the Bletchley Park Museum later this year once conservation work on the collection is complete.

Notes to editors

The Turing-Newman Collaboration Collection will arrive at Bletchley Park on the morning of Friday 25 February.

In addition, the following spokespeople are available for interview:

- Sir Francis Richards KCMG CVO, Chairman, Bletchley Park Trust
- Simon Greenish, CEO, Bletchley Park Trust
- Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund
- Peter Barron, Director, External Relations, Europe, Middle East and Africa, Google
- Gareth Halfacree, founder of the campaign for the Turing-Newman Collaboration Collection
- William Newman, son of Professor Max Newman

To request a viewing or an interview, please contact Kelsey Griffin, Director – Museum Operations, Bletchley Park Trust, 01908 272 662, kgriffin@bletchleypark.org.uk

2012 will be a year of events and activities to commemorate the Alan Turing Centenary Year. More information here:

<http://www.mathcomp.leeds.ac.uk/turing2012/>

**An offprint is a separate re-printing of an article that previously appeared as part of a larger publication.*

Further information

Kelsey Griffin, Director – Museum Operations, Bletchley Park Trust,
Phone: 01908 272 655 email: kgriffin@bletchleypark.org.uk

Natasha Ley / Alison Scott, Media and Government Relations Manager, National Heritage Memorial Fund,
Phone: 020 7591 6143 email: natashal@hlf.org.uk

Caroline Murdoch, Redworks PR,
Phone: 01869 810 443 email: caroline@redworks.co.uk

Supplementary information, also attached – *A Personal Account of the Turing-Newman Collaboration* by William Newman, son of Professor Max Newman

Photographs of items from the Turing-Newman Collaboration Collection and of Max Newman are available as jpegs on request