

Institute of Physics – London & South East Branch – Retired Members Section

Visit to The National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park on Thursday 30th May 2019

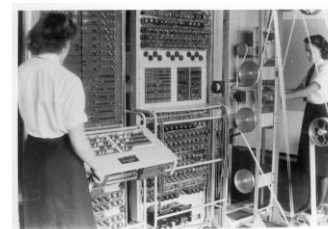
This visit has been organised by John Belling.

Description

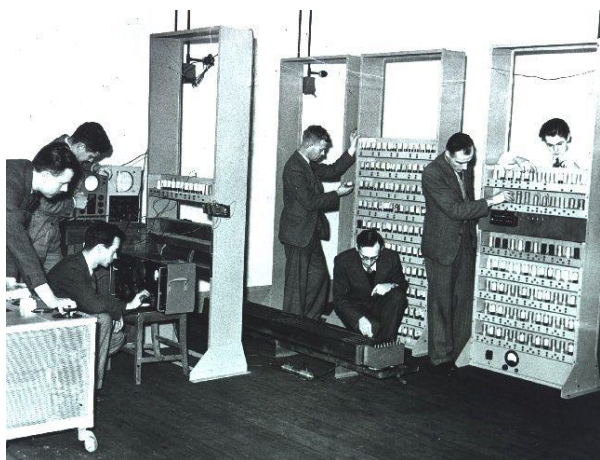


The National Museum of Computing (TNMoC), located on Bletchley Park, is an independent charity housing the world's largest collection of functional historic computers, including the rebuilt Colossus, the world's first electronic computer, and the Harwell Dekatron (otherwise known as WITCH), the world's oldest working digital computer. The museum enables visitors to follow the development of computing from the ultra-secret pioneering efforts of the 1940s through the large systems and mainframes of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and the rise of personal computing in the 1980s and beyond.

For the morning session, Phil Hayes will give us a talk on Colossus (picture right), the world's first electronic computer, and will explain how it helped to decipher the Lorenz-encrypted (Tunny) messages between Hitler and his generals during World War II.



Following the Colossus talk, we will have a private guided tour of the various sections of the Museum, to include the recent Turing-Welchman Bombe rebuild, the WITCH (1951), the Elliott 803B (1962), and the Museum's largest computer, the ICL 2966 (1985). We shall also visit the The Air Traffic Control Gallery, a highly dynamic, interactive display which highlights the past, present and future of air traffic control. The gallery is sponsored by National Air Traffic Services (NATS), the UK's leading air traffic management company, which has such a long history with Bletchley as it was home to the company's engineering training college.



Maurice Wilkes (kneeling) and the original EDSAC team

After lunch, we shall focus on a TNMoC project to rebuild EDSAC (Electronic Delay Storage Automatic Calculator). EDSAC was originally built in the Cambridge University Mathematical Laboratory by a team led by the late Professor Sir Maurice Wilkes immediately following the Second World War. It is generally accepted (in the UK!) that the EDSAC was the first practical general purpose stored program electronic computer: the first computer program was run May 1949, so our visit will coincide with the 70th anniversary of that event. We will be treated to an in depth talk on EDSAC, and the problems arising during its rebuild.

Where and when to meet: 10:00 (refreshments) for an 10:30 start, at the reception foyer: The National Museum of Computing, Block H, Bletchley Park, MILTON KEYNES, MK3 6EB.

Getting there: see area map, below.

Much helpful information is to be found at <http://www.tnmoc.org/visit/getting-here> .

By car: for satnavs, use **MK3 6DS** (the postcode for the railway station) and then follow the signs to Bletchley Park.

There should be adequate car parking on site, in front of Block H. You can park anywhere in this car park, ignore the red lines.

By train from London Euston:

Depart Euston	Arrive Bletchley	Depart Bletchley	Arrive Euston
08:51	9:38	15:27	16:17
09:13	9:49	15:47	16:25
09:20 (change at Milton Keynes)	09:59	15:57	16:53
09:24	10:14	16:27	17:18

On leaving Bletchley station, cross over the zebra crossing, then turn immediate right, following the signs to the Museum. After a couple of hundred yards or so, cross over the lights controlled crossing, and you will see the Museum entrance in front of you. On walking through the entrance gates, do not go into the visitors centre on the left there -this is for Bletchley Park site dedicated to the WW2 codebreaking –m this is NOT TNMoC! Carry on walking then turn left following the bend, and carry on walking straight (over a roundabout) for 5 minutes or so, until you reach block H which houses TNMoC.

Lunch: this will be a cold buffet plus tea/coffee/juices included in the cost. Wine/beer will be available, £8.99 per bottle of wine.

If you have any dietary requirements, please email me at: john.a.belling.secrems@gmail.com .

Timetable:

Time	Details
10:00	Meet at Museum for refreshments
10:30 – 11:00	Colossus talk in the meeting room
11:00 – 13:00	Private guided tour
13:00	Lunch: cold buffet
14:00 – 15:00	EDSAC talk
15:00 ...	Free time to explore the galleries
17:00	Museum closes

Size of party: Maximum 40, minimum 15.

Cost: £35.00 including refreshments and lunch.

Contacts:

Tony Colclough on 020 8398 0766, tonycolclough@outlook.com , or
John Belling on 07986 379935, john.a.belling.secrems@gmail.com .

Late arrivals: Go to Museum and ask to be directed to our party – phone John Belling as above.