

Area 17 Visits Bletchley Park



Our group with Nick Miers in front of the pigeon loft

What A Great Visit!

We went to Bletchley Park expecting a tour of perhaps a couple of hours, but instead there was so much to learn, so much to do and such a variety of high quality exhibits to see, that we stayed all day and still did not do justice to everything on show.

The success of our visit was due in great measure to our guide, Nick Miers, whose detailed knowledge, larger-than-life style and enthusiasm for his subject absolutely made the day.



There are two aspects to a visit to Bletchley Park. The first is to learn of the Park's activities during the second world war when it was able to listen in on German communications, crack their codes and so provide vital information to our convoys and military forces. I have tried to tell that story very briefly in the previous pages.

The second aspect was to view the re-creations and displays of related activities.

We started in the mansion, learnt of its history, and admired the beautiful décor - carved wooden linenfold panelling and wonderful ceilings. Then there was the Bletchley Park post office, originally there to serve the huge number of employees, just as it was and still an authorised postal point selling first day covers. Such was the secrecy surrounding the place that letters to staff had to be sent to a London box number, for warded in bulk and distributed. Similarly, letters to friends and family could not show from whence they came.

Then there was the garage, with period vehicles and memorabilia, and who will forget the shop and the toy and clothing collection with thousands of articles to remind you of the way our parents and grandparents lived and of the articles which were in everyday use.



During the war, the life expectancy of an agent parachuted into France was just six weeks, partly because their radio transmissions revealed their location, so homing pigeons were in widespread use, and we saw



We went for a couple of hours - and stayed all day

the pigeon loft where returning birds brought important news. This was near to the cottage where Alan Turing lived.

There was a full size submarine section from the 'Enigma' film and model railway layouts. A wartime cinema using huge projectors and showing Pathe newsreels of the time. One large 'hut' is full of Churchill memorabilia, one man's lifetime collection—and the owner himself was there to tell us all about his passion and his exhibits.



Tony Sale describes Colossus

We lunched in the café and visited the shop which sold not just the lighter mementos but also some more serious books and videos related to war time activity for those that wanted to extend their understanding.

But most of all, of course, a visit to Bletchley is about its wartime code-breaking activity, and it was the Enigma and Lorenz machines which fire the imagination. These survivors were there with illustrations of their use, and since everything at Bletchley had to be destroyed after the war, supporters and enthusiasts have since re-built a replica bombe, and we were indeed privileged to hear an account of the re-make of a working Colossus from the man who has spent more than a decade masterminding the project, Tony Sale. Even today, the most powerful laptop is no faster at the job of breaking down the Lorenz cipher than his machine with 2,500 valves saved from the old post office exchanges.

If you have not been to Bletchley, you really should go. You will be amazed - and if you have been once, go again, I will bet there is so much you missed the first time.



A block from across the lake



Forthcoming Events

Change of Venue

Starting with our next meeting
On Monday 12 June

The Landlord's Choice Trophy Competition

Our meetings will revert to the second
Monday of each month and will be held at
The Jolly Coopers

Address on last page

Christmas Lunch

Sunday 17 December
At

The Jolly Coopers

Please put the date in your diary now to
make sure you are there

Shuttleworth Evening Flying

Saturday 17 June

To follow Ken Cox' presentation, we
suggest an informal arrangement, arriving
independently to view all the static dis-
plays in the afternoon and then watching
the flying display due to start at 5pm
Be warned, do arrive in good time, it is
likely to be busy

July Meeting Monday 10 July

After the universal approval of our meal in
April, we plan to repeat the experience
with a another meal at
The Jolly Coopers

Classics On The Common

Wednesday 26 July

Contact Peter Madden To Book
(peter.madden@btinternet.com)

Kimbolton Castle Country Fair

Sunday 16 July

By kind invitation of Area 44, tickets now
available, please collect from Roger Gage

The Woburn Classic

Sunday 13 August

Please book with Trevor at June Meeting

Vauxhall Heritage

More Pictures Next
Month



Programme 2006

All regular meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at The Jolly Coopers
Ward Hedges, Flitton, MK45 5ED
Phone 01525 860626

For more information and to add your suggestions, please contact our Secretary

Mick Duffy

**01525 873232
Or mobile
07770933997**

Tuesday 9 th May	7:30pm	Vauxhall Car Museum - Luton
Sunday 21 st May	All Day	JDC 50 th Anniversary Evesham Hall - Oxon
Monday 12 th June	8:00pm	Landlord's Trophy
Saturday 17 th June	4:30pm	Old Warden Flying Display
Sunday 18 th June	All Day	Pavenham Gardens Open Day
Monday 10 th July	8:00pm	Meal at Jolly Coopers
Sunday 16 th July	All Day	Kimbolton Country Fair Joint Day Area 44
Wednesday 26 th July	4:00pm - 10:00pm	Classics on the Common - Harpenden
Sunday 30 th July	All Day	XK Day Burghley House - Stanford, Lincs
Sunday 13 th August	All Day	Woburn Abbey Classic
Monday 14 th August	8:00pm	Members' Choice
Sunday 20 August	All Day	The Old Watemill - Barton Hospice Charity
Monday 11 th September	8:00pm	Dealer Visit
Monday 9 th October	8:00pm	Speaker
Monday 13 th November	8:00pm	Annual General Meeting
Sunday 17 th December	12:30pm	Christmas Lunch at Jolly Coopers

Other Events

Classics On The Common

Bletchley Park

Skid Pan

XK Launch

Stoke Bruerne

Royal Mews

WW2 Operations Room



Web Address www.jaguar17.co.uk