

April — June 2019 Magazine

Welcome to the April, May and June 2019 edition of our Magazine. This issue runs from 1st April to 30th June and is an archive of some of our activities.

Reports include:

April SNATTs Meeting

April Day Out Group trip to Chipping Norton

May Garden Appreciation Group

May SNATTs Meeting

May Day Out Group trip to Coventry

June Day Out Group trip to Worcester

Last update: 30th June 2019



Tourist Boats passing on the River Avon, Stratford-upon-Avon, April 2019

Science, Nature & All Things Technical Group Field trip—12th April 2019 Visit to Bletchley Park.

Bletchley Park is a museum dedicated to the World War II Code and Cypher School which was set up in 1920 but was massively expanded just before WW2 started. The mansion and about 43 acres of Bletchley Park were acquired in 1938. Wooden huts were built in the grounds to accommodate the extra staff and these were later increased by building extra blocks from concrete and similar materials later during the war years. The total staff increased to over 9,000 people towards the end of the war. The workforce and equipment were in-

corporated into GCHQ after the war and now resides in a new headquarters building in Cheltenham.

Twenty four U3A members travelled by car to the museum and met in the visitor centre coffee shop. We had a 1 hour guided tour around the site with a very good guide who related many stories about the founding and operation of the operation. The tour started from the Chauffeurs' hut, proceeding towards the Mansion and then through the huts and the blocks finishing by the Teleprinter Hut.



Part of the group walking between buildings with the Mansion behind them.

Science, Nature & All Things Technical Group Field trip—12th April 2019 Visit to Bletchley Park. (continued)



The photographs on the column to the left are:

The Chauffeurs' Hut,

The Mansion,

Some of the Huts surrounded by blast walls,

Some of the later blocks.

Then it was time for lunch in Hut 4, where something approaching period food was available. I never noticed bully beef on the menu though.



After lunch we had time to explore the site in some detail, visiting most of the huts and some of the block buildings where there were displays explaining people, responsibilities, successes and some periods when codes could not be read because the Germans had introduced new procedures, apparatus, etc. During these periods of failure to decipher signals there was intense activity trying to find ways through and this brought in several new inventions in apparatus to help. This included the invention of the first programmable computer—Colossus. The mathematics was provided by the code breakers—Alan Turing, Gordon Welchman, Max Newman, and others. The Colossus programmable computer was designed and engineered by Tommy Flowers of the GPO. About ten machines were built by the end of the war. The Bombes and Colossus are situated in the Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park. Nobody from the party managed to go and see that museum as it required exiting the Museum of the Code-breakers and paying another entrance fee



Science, Nature & All Things Technical Group

Field trip—12th April 2019

Visit to Bletchley Park. (continued)

fo the Museum of Computing and we were running out of time.

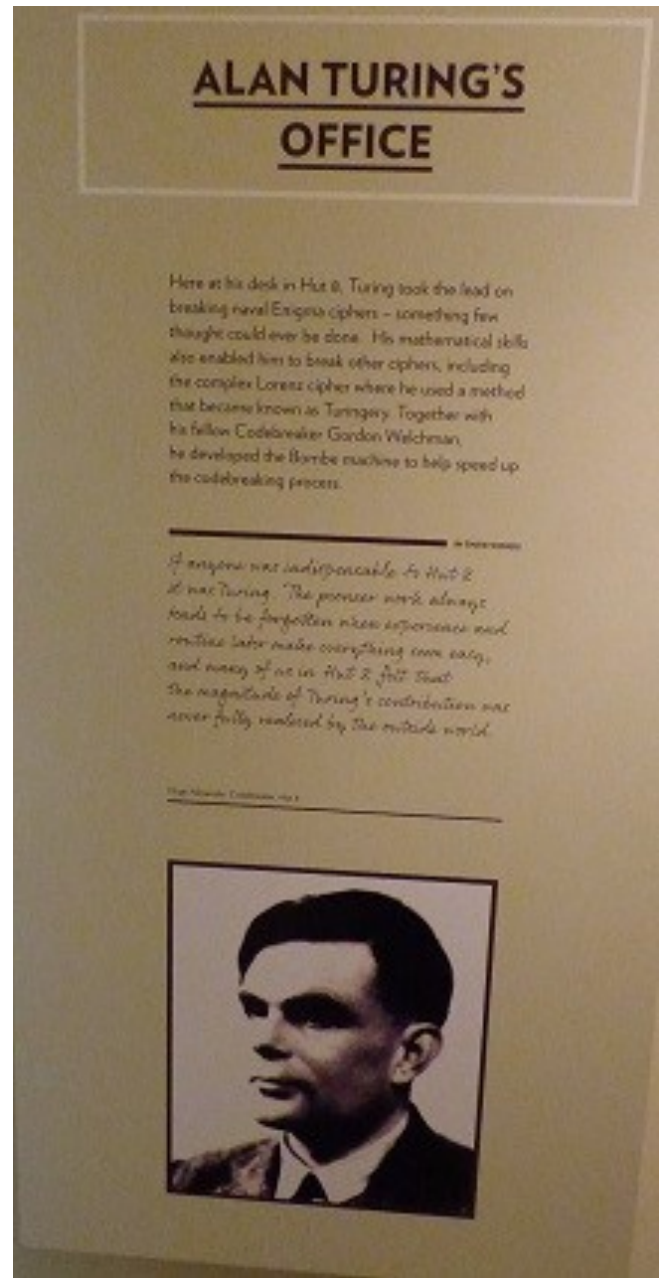
We will have to go again to see the rest of the site.



Teleprinter in one of the huts.

Alan Turing's office and desk.

An Enigma machine coupled to a teleprinter—used by the Germans later in the war.



Science, Nature & All Things Technical Group
Field trip—12th April 2019
Visit to Bletchley Park. (continued)



An Enigma machine with rotors.



Representation of a Bombe machine

Day Out Group Day Trip to Chipping Norton Thursday 18th April 2019

This day started out cool and misty although the forecast was for sunshine and above average temperatures. The day took a little while to get going but by lunchtime it was indeed sunny and quite warm—the temperature eventually reached 21°C.

We were a small, select group of three who boarded the 09.10 bus to Chipping Norton, which we eventually reached at about 10.00am. On the route down Ann had told us about an outdoor heated swimming pool in the town that she wanted to find and have a look at. On the bus journey through the town we did spot a direction sign to the pool.



View of town centre from below Town Hall

Over a cup of coffee in a café near the bus stop we discussed the day ahead. Then we started by having a walk around the town, stopping to look in the occasional shop. The town is an old Cotswold wool town with a correspondingly large church away from the centre of the town. We had a look in that during our walk. We also found some stone built almshouses near the church which were very picturesque.



Further back towards town centre we came across the local theatre, which had started off as a Salvation Army Citadel.



Day Out Group Day Trip to Chipping Norton Thursday 18th April 2019 (continued)

Back in the centre of town we found the public house called "Bitter and Twisted" where we were to have lunch. This had been recommended to us as a possible location for lunch by a local gent in the café when we were having coffee. We were not disappointed. Comfortable surroundings, with tasty and well served food.



After lunch Ruth and I went to look at the museum—small but interesting with some nice exhibits. Ann went off to find the open air heated swimming pool that she had heard about. She did find it and is making plans to visit again in the future.

There are plenty of shops in Chipping Norton, including independent shops. Not so many chains and a small local department store.



The front of the upper Town Hall

The lower Town Hall

The return bus journey was uneventful and we arrived back in Stratford at about 4.00pm having had a very pleasant day out.

Garden Appreciation Group Visit to Morton Hall RSC Gardens Sunday 5th May 2019

A small group of members visited Morton Hall gardens for their tulip festival this month. Fortunately, there were plenty of tulips still in bloom, although it was a lovely garden anyway. Several of the group ordered some named variety tulips, even to celebrate weddings for next year.



Above: Heather in front of a large bush.

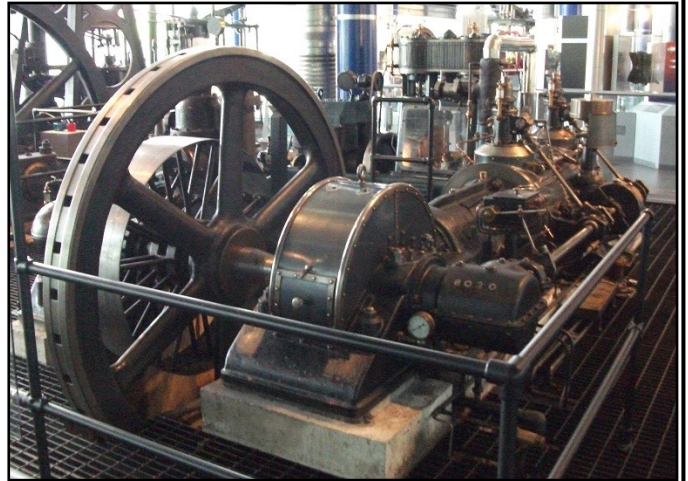
Top right: a white flower

Bottom right: a group photograph.

Science, Nature & All Things Technical Group Field trip—10th May 2019 Visit to Thinktank, Birmingham.

Eight members of the group arrived at Thinktank in Birmingham in time for morning coffee in the small café. Thinktank is the Science Museum for Birmingham. It is on 4 floors in the Millennium Point building, opposite where the new station for the HS2 railway project is planned, indeed site development has started with fences, notices, etc proclaiming the building work to start soon.

On the ground floor the emphasis is on heavy items—various steam and other engines for transport, agriculture, facilities and industry. The largest item is a complete railway locomotive, one of the largest and most powerful on the nations railways during the 1940s. The City of Birmingham was built in 1939 by the London Midland and Scottish Railway.



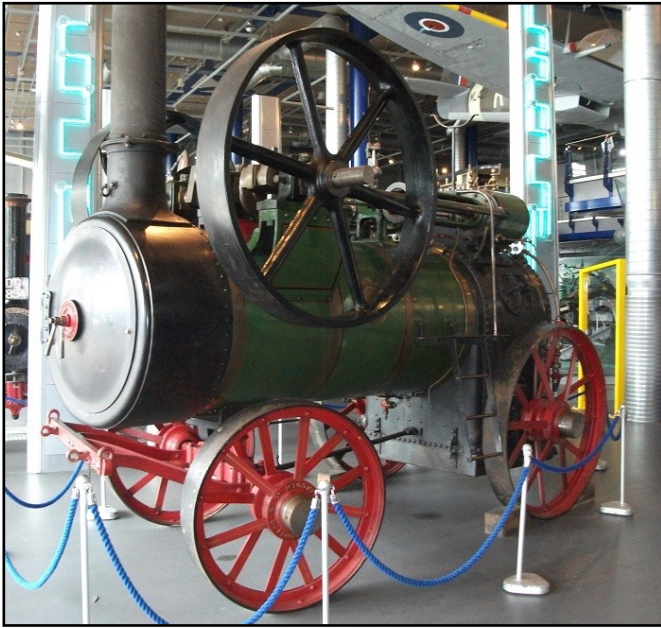
Above is large steam engine used at the Hovis mill at Macclesfield between 1924 and the 1950s to provide power to the machines making paper bags and other products to pack Hovis products.

Steam engines could also be made portable or movable and so could be taken to where



Science, Nature & All Things Technical Group
Field trip—10th May 2019
Visit to Thinktank, Birmingham. (continued)

power was needed:

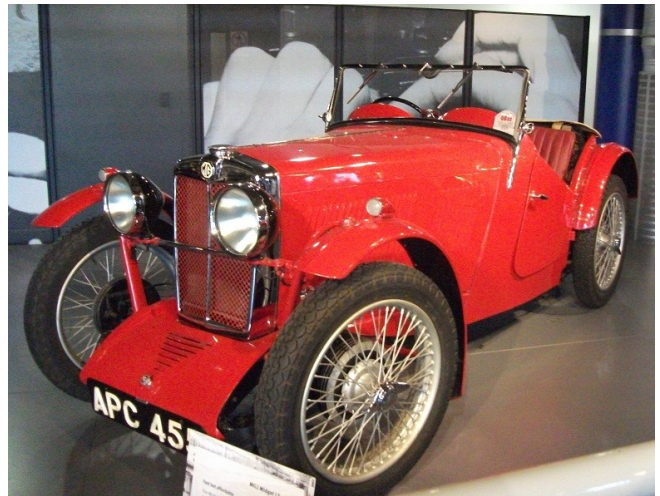


A portable steam engine made about 1894.

Steam was also useful for powering lorries for a time, but was eventually replaced by petrol and later diesel.



Petrol engines powered the early motor cars, many of which were manufactured in the Birmingham area. The picture in the next column is an Austin 7 of 1923.



Above is a MG sports car of 1933.

Motor bikes were also manufactured around Birmingham and below is a BSA Bantam of 1951



Science, Nature & All Things Technical Group Field trip—10th May 2019 Visit to Thinktank, Birmingham. (continued)

During WW2 large factories were created around the country in which to build armaments and munitions. Aircraft, such as the Supermarine Spitfire and the Hawker Hurricane fighter planes, were built in large numbers in and around Birmingham. Examples are displayed in the air above level 0.



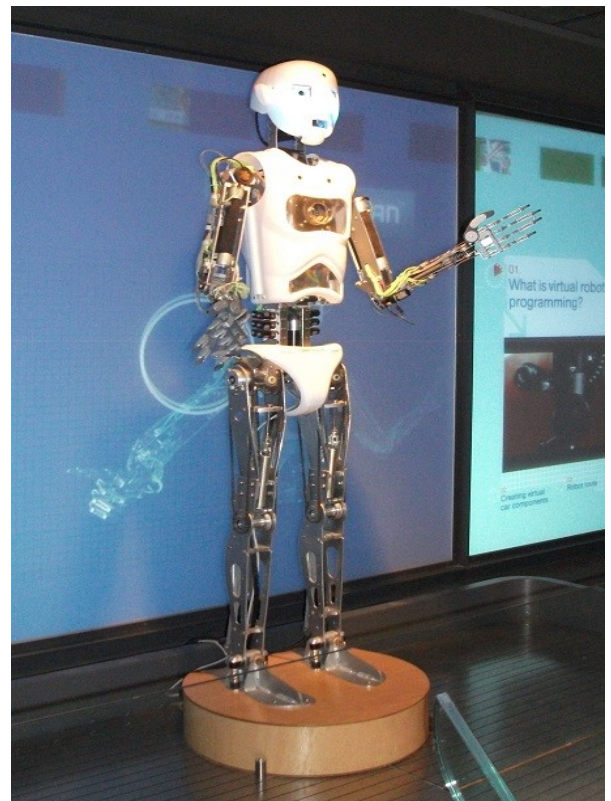
Shown top right is the Spitfire, and below it is the Hurricane.



Other display cases illustrate the wild life that has existed in Britain over the ages and some of the bird-life still existing around Birmingham



Science, Nature & All Things Technical Group
Field trip—10th May 2019
Visit to Thinktank, Birmingham. (continued)



Life is likely to change in the future and robots and other mechanical/electronic devices will probably figure prominently. Examples are shown opposite, but who knows what people in the future are likely to be confronted with.

Climate change is currently a big problem and will need a considerable amount of research and development and investment to allow humans to live a comfortable and useful life whilst looking after the wildlife and natural world around us.

The museum is a very interesting place and well worth taking children to learn. There are plenty of levers to pull and knobs to

turn or push!

Day Out Group Day Trip to Coventry Thursday 23rd May 2019

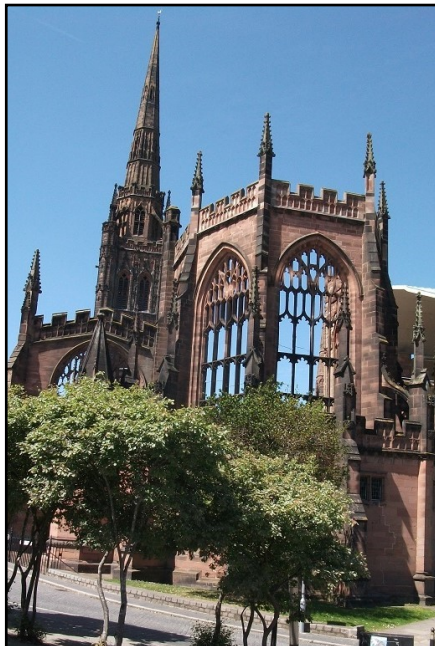
We had a very small group with which to storm Coventry, due to the calls on our numbers by other U3A groups (choir rehearsal prior to a concert, All Swing & Jazz Group) let alone family commitments by some members. But Jackie and Edwin set out undaunted by the task ahead and boarded the X18 bus to see what this ancient medieval city could offer. We did have a pleasant, sunny day ahead and plenty of sights to see.

Arriving at the bus stop by the Coventry Transport Museum, we made our way up to the cathedrals and had a look around to refresh our memories. Some things had changed slightly, others had not.



Above—the new cathedral.

Right—the old cathedral.



Above is a bronze sculpture of St Michael's Victory over the Devil on the outside wall of the cathedral.

We next walked across to the Herbert Walker Gallery and found the café where we could indulge our coffee habit. A quick look around the gallery after our coffee confirmed that it would be worth further inspection at a later date. A couple of photographs records our visit on the next page.

**Day Out Group
 Day Trip to Coventry
 Thursday 23rd May 2019 (Continued)**



Above: Men, a fibreglass sculpture by Ved Gupta, 2008



Right: Figure (Walnut). A bronze by Barbara Hepworth, 1964

Lunch was next, which we found in the cathedral's Rising café. Service and food was quite good and we were able to continue our day refreshed. Shopping was next—partly to look around the shopping centre and also to do some actual shopping. A quick tour of the Transport Museum finished off the day before we caught the bus back to Stratford. A very pleasant day out with still much more of Coventry to explore for another day.

Day Out Group Day Trip to Worcester Thursday 27th June 2019

We were a small party that caught the X18 bus for the first part of our trip. The bus was fairly empty and we were able to converse easily as we sped along. The X18 took us as far as Evesham where we caught a connecting S50 service to Worcester. This got us to the bus station in Worcester just before 11.00am—just in time for a welcome cappuccino in a café at the entrance to the bus station.

We then walked along Foregate and High Street to the Guildhall, the city office building. The Guildhall is a very ornate building outside and inside. We had a walk around the corridors and rooms that were accessible to the public.. There were lots of display cabinets containing examples of Worcester china and some of the annual trophies awarded by the City Council for various events. Lots of information panels as well.



We continued along High Street as far as the cathedral where we stopped to have a quick look around; there was to be an organ recital which we did not want to get involved with. The architecture is a mixture of style from Norman through to Victorian so there

was plenty to look at and plenty of history to become acquainted with.

The East window is magnificent, as is the wall between the High Altar and the East Window.



After a very nice snack lunch in the Cathedral Buttery or café we looked in at the Chapter House, see next page.

Day Out Group—Day Trip to Worcester Thursday 27th June 2019



After leaving the cathedral we walked towards the city centre again, passing a house lived in by Sir Edward Elgar when he lived in Worcester. (right)

We visited the National Trust property in Friar Street—Greyfriars' House. This was built in the late 15th Century and had a fairly chequered history. It is well worth a visit.



Greyfriars' House