

Alan

Turing

1912-1954

What did he discover?

Alan Turing was a British computer scientist, mathematician and theoretical biologist, born in 1912. Turing joined the British Government's Code and Cypher School and went on to work at Bletchley Park during World War II. The German military used a cipher machine to encrypt radio communications, so that their communications could not be understood by the enemy. Using his mathematical logic, Turing designed and built a machine called the Bombe. This machine, along with the work of Alan and his team, allowed the British Government to understand the messages sent by the German military.

With this knowledge, it's said that Turing helped

to shorten World War II by about four years. He was awarded an OBE for his efforts at Bletchley Park and was a pioneer for the technology we heavily rely on today.

Alan Turing was a homosexual and this was illegal in 1950s Britain. He was convicted due to his sexuality and his criminal record meant that he could no longer work for the British government. Sadly, he was poorly treated in the last years of his life due to the ignorant and prejudiced laws in place at the time.

Years after his death, Turing received a Royal Pardon from Queen Elizabeth II, acknowledging that his sexuality was not a crime. Alan Turing was one of the greatest minds ever known, and he deserves to be celebrated not just as a scientist, but also as an incredible member of the LGBT community.

Something to think about...

Why is mathematics such an important part of science?