

Bletchley Park Innovation Group

Background

There are three main elements to Bletchley Park.

The first element is Bletchley Park as a place of historic importance, as the location of the code-breakers in WWII.

Credited with reducing the length of the war in Europe by at least a year, the code-breakers deserve recognition of their work, by society as a whole.

The second element, as the origin of the modern electronic computer, the Colossus, designed and built to break the cryptographic Lorenz machine.

The replica Colossus re-built largely due to the efforts of Tony Sole, is a living part of our computer heritage.

The National Museum of Computing, sited at Bletchley Park, reminds us of how much computers and computing has changed and influenced modern life.

The third element of Bletchley Park is as a place of great invention and innovation.

Not only where Alan Turing, Bill Tutte and Tommy Flowers plied their expertise, influenced by Amos Joel, the American cryptanalyst, engineer and inventor, but also where a large number of people with a wide range of skills and backgrounds worked in a challenging environment.

Current situation

Currently the site is in need of substantial funds to preserve the fabric of the buildings.

Monies have already been forthcoming from a number of sources, including IBM and English Heritage, but much more is required.

However, due to the charitable trust nature of both Bletchley Park and the National Museum of Computing, these organisations are limited in the fund-raising options available to them.

The level of funding required is between £1.5m and £2.5m, to put Bletchley Park into a state which future generations can appreciate.

Dr Sue Black, head of the computer science department, University of Westminster, has already motivated the academic community.

So it's time for the IT community to get more involved.

The Future

Due to the charitable nature of the existing Bletchley Park supporters groups, this leaves the way for a not-for-profit, social enterprise organisation to be formed to financially assist Bletchley Park, through a range of commercially-orientated projects.

Under the Bletchley Park banner, an innovation group (BPIG) would be set up with primary aims of :

- i) Raising funds for the preservation of Bletchley Park
- ii) Sharing information to solve current issues
- iii) Educating students and interested parties about Bletchley Park, IT and innovation.

Ideas

An online forum could be set up for use by members to share information, develop contacts, and form business partnerships.

Members of BPIG would be in two main groups, students and associates, who would be able to read the information on the BPIG forum, and full members, who would be able to contribute to the forums.

In addition, all members would be able to use the Bletchley Park IG brand in their own promotional and marketing material.

Membership of BPIG would be open to both businesses and individuals, and the subscriptions, after administration expenses, would be donated to Bletchley Park.

Bletchley Park itself would be promoted as a venue for conferences, meetings and training courses.

Members of BPIG would be encouraged to produce lectures on topics of interest on CD and CDROM. These would form the basis of an Information Lending Library, with fees going to Bletchley Park. (Suitable members would act as outlets for the library.)

Also, as part of the stabilisation of the site, innovative solutions to the upkeep of the buildings would be encouraged. e.g. Ground source heat pumps to reduce the heating bills.

It may be appropriate to extend the Science and Innovation Centre located at Bletchley Park.

First steps

Before setting up BPIG in a formal way, a steering group needs to be formed to gauge the level on potential interest, secure initial funding, and agree on a constitution.

The group would consist of invited people with suitable skills.

Links

[Listen](#) about BPIG

[Bletchley Park](#) - National Codes Centre

[The National Museum of Computing](#)

[Tony Sale](#), Colossus Rebuild Project

[Dr Sue Black](#), Head of Information and Software Systems, University of Westminster

[Saving Bletchley Park](#), blog maintained by Dr Sue Black

[Bletchley Park Science and Innovation Centre](#)

[Jack Copeland](#), professor of philosophy at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, director of the [Turing Archive](#)

Bletchley Park Innovation Group, an idea put forward by [Julian Procter](#), November 2008.