

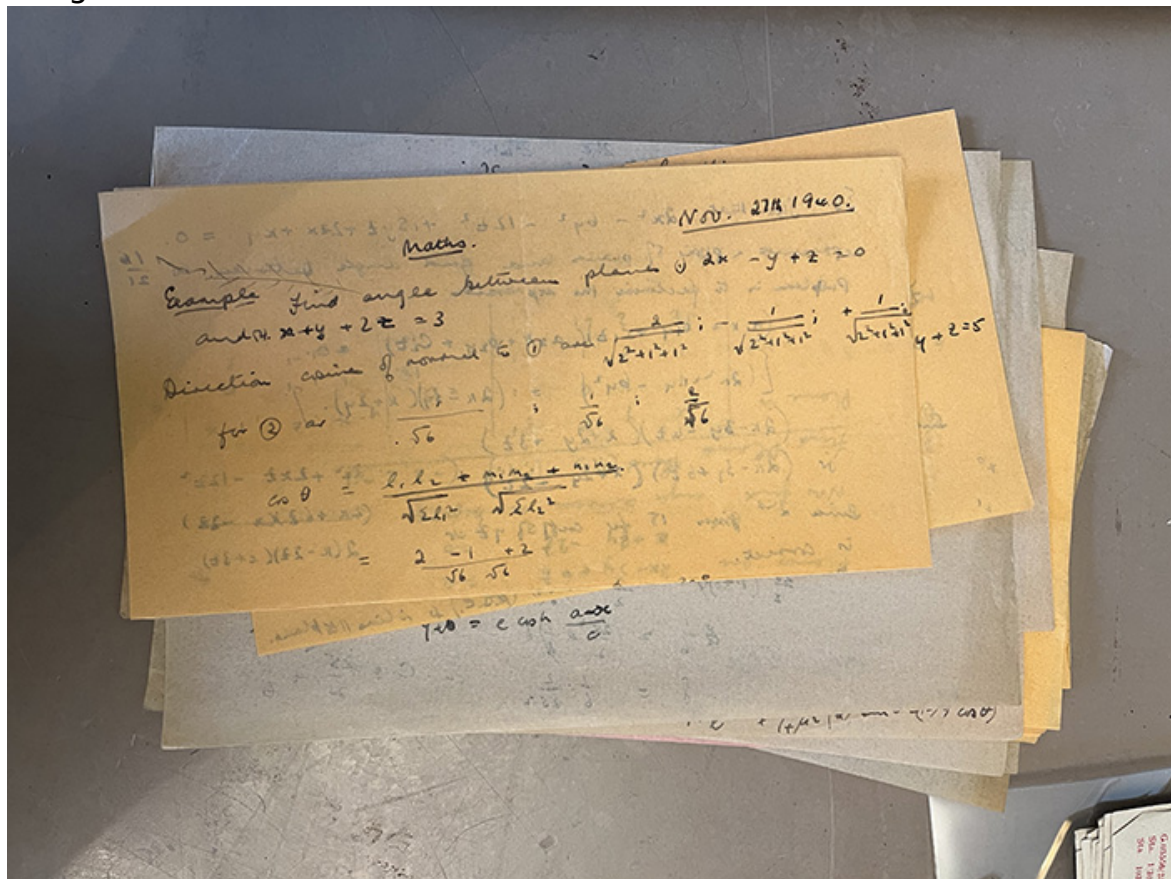
Alan Turing's 'Delilah' papers saved for the UK

09 April 2025

A rare archive of Turing's unpublished Second World War papers has been acquired by King's College, Cambridge, shedding light on his work after Enigma.

Following his ground-breaking work on the Enigma machines at Bletchley Park, in 1943 Alan Turing turned to building a portable voice encoder for short-distance transmission to be used in military operations.

Image



A selection of the Delilah papers.

Insights into Delilah

The project was code-named 'Delilah'. With the help of electrical engineer Donald Bayley, Turing built a single prototype to digitise and encode speech. Messages could then be sent by telephone line and accurate at the other end.

Unpublished evidence of Alan Turing's work has rarely survived. He did not usually keep his research notes, working drafts, or correspondence.

But during the development work for Delilah at Hanslope Park, now the home of His Majesty's Government Communications Centre (HMCCC), Turing and Bayley kept a logbook of their experimental results. Bayley also kept notes of Turing's lectures, along with diagrams, calculations and explanations.

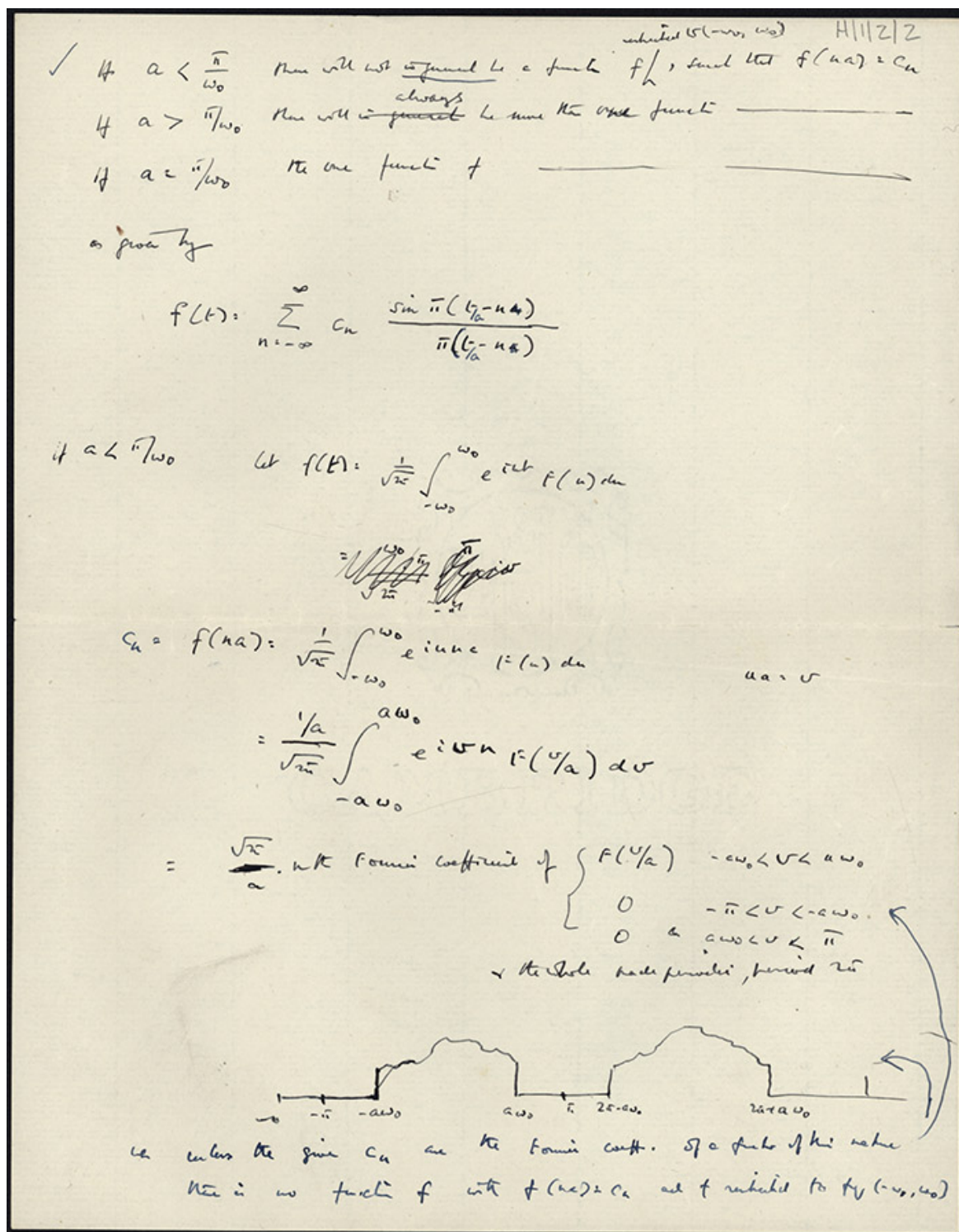
This rare collection of papers dating from 1943 to 1946 sheds light on some of Turing's most inventive, secret, and overlooked work.

Campaign to save archive

The 'Delilah' papers were at risk of leaving the UK, however a temporary export stop was put in place in August 2024. Friends of the Nations' Libraries launched a campaign to save the archive.

More than £397,000 was raised to acquire the papers, including £97,876 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund. Funding also came from XTX Markets, Friends of the Nations' Libraries, private donations, and King's College.

Image



Alan Turing's handwritten notes.

Simon Thurley, Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "The Turing papers give us a fascinating insight into the development of the 'Delilah' machine and into the mind and work of Alan Turing, who played a key role in the foundations of computer science and AI which continue to shape our world."

The 'Delilah' project notes will join the largest collection of Turing-related documents at King's College, Cambridge. Once digitised they will become part of the Turing Papers online archive, freely available to researchers and students

around the world.

Explore more heritage treasures

Find out what else the National Heritage Memorial Fund has helped preserve in our [project archive](#).

Related News

Eleventh hour rescue of Turing collection

Almost nothing tangible remains of genius Bletchley Park codebreaker, Alan Turing; so when an extremely rare collection of offprints* relating to his life and work was set to go to auction last year, an ambitious campaign was launched to raise funds to purchase them for the Bletchley Park Trust and its Museum.

Their place in history: remembering three pioneering women of science

On International Women's Day, we're sharing the work of three lesser-known yet ground-breaking women scientists whose heritage has been protected thanks to NHMF funding.

Nationally significant works by Darwin's mentor secured

Close to £1million has been raised to purchase a collection of writings by the Scottish geologist, Sir Charles Lyell