

# VOICES

MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

## Alan Turing

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What does a suicide have to do with ENIGMA's code-cracker? In both cases the name Alan Turing appears. So let's go to London in 1912, where everything began.

Born 23rd of June 1912, he was born in Maida Vale. Due to the profession of his father in India, Alan grew up together with his brother John without his parents, but under supervision of his uncle. Already in his childhood Alan showed a great talent and interest in natural sciences. For him, science served not only as a place of knowledge, but also as a refuge.

At the age of 13, Alan began to attend Sherbourne School and his first school day fell with the general strike of the miners against the privatization of the internationally hardly competitive mines. But due to his strong wish to extend his knowledge he overcame the distance of 97 km from home to school. To get an approximate idea, the distance between Skopje and Zdunje is 72 km.

But he had not an easy school time, due to bullying by his classmates. Studying natural science gave him stability. Unfortunately the focus of the school was more on arts, where he had not the same ability than in science.

On the other hand this time was very important for his further time because he encountered Christopher Morcom.



Being described as his first love in his records, both shared the same fascination in science and the feeling of an outsider. Christopher triggered his interest in further subjects like astronomy. But like always in life, his best friend died due to Mycobacterium Boois in February 1930.

In a letter to Christopher's mother, Alan wrote the following: "I know I must put as much energy if not as much interest into my work as if he were alive, because that is what he would like me to do."

After school he went to King's College at the University of Cambridge.

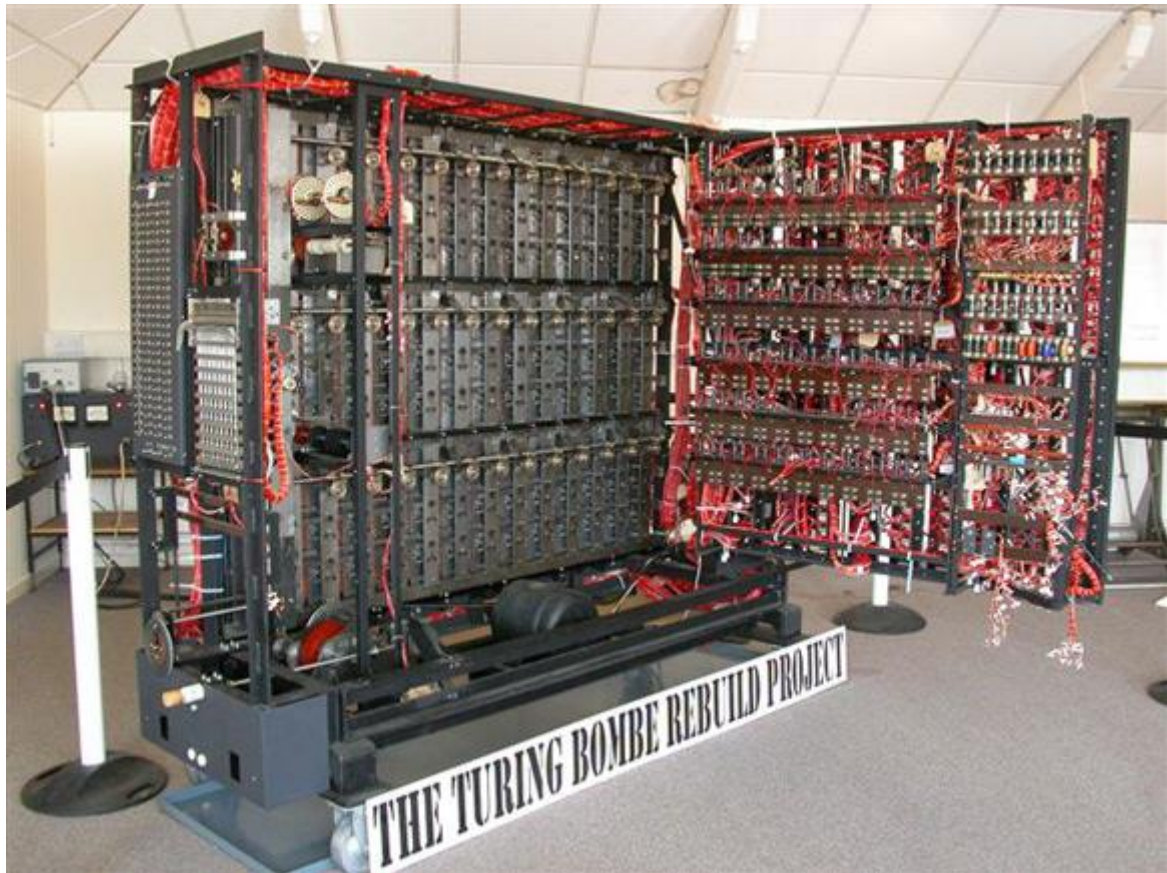




There he stayed isolated and secluded himself, although he was not bullied anymore. His affinity to sport remained and he began to be a passionate runner. He even just missed the possibility to participate in the Olympic Games.

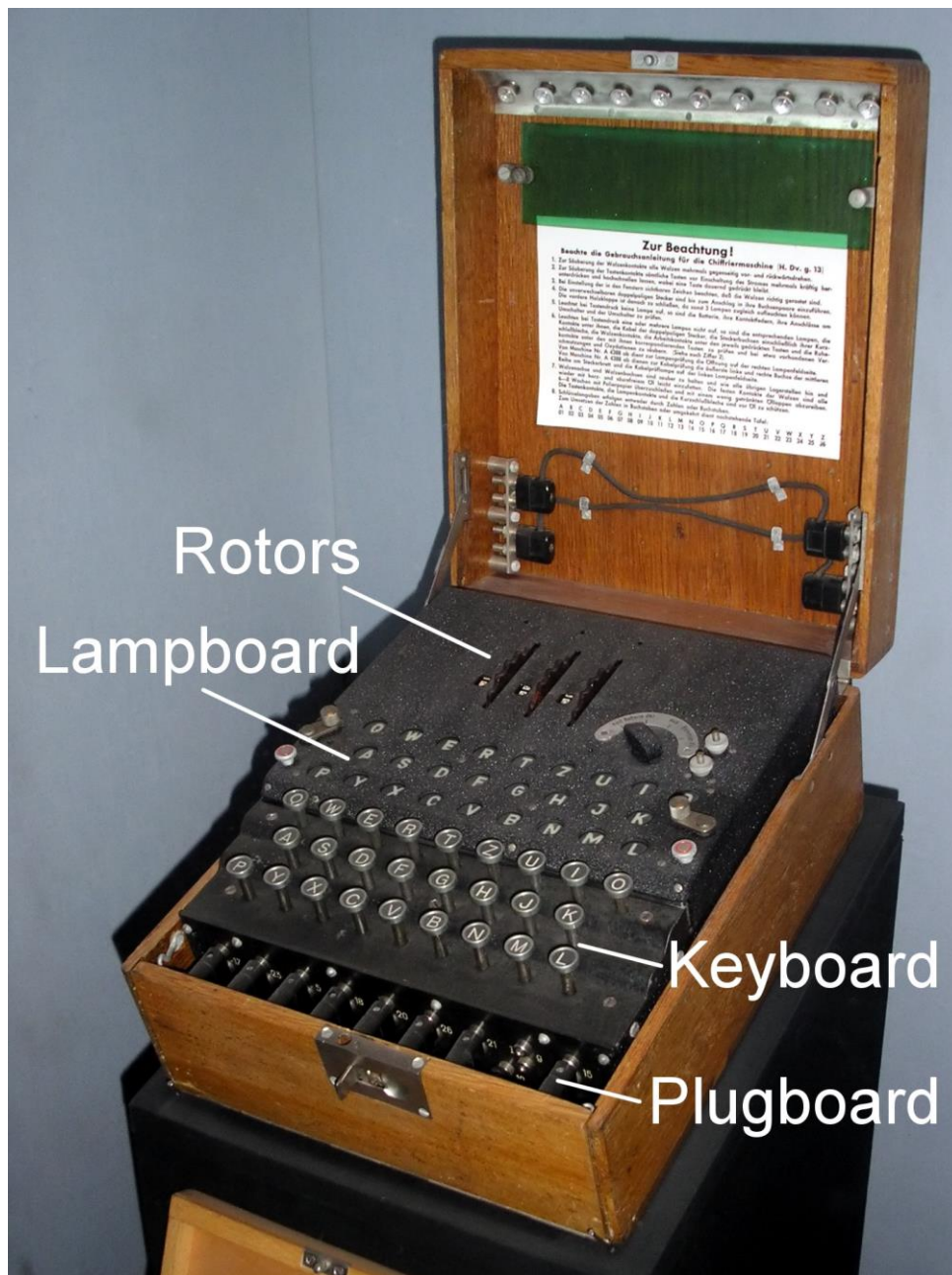


When Hitler came to power in Germany, the fear of a war increased and UK started to monitor German news and intercept news. The messages were encrypted by Engima, till that time it was hardly impossible to decipher. The Government Code & Cypher School tried to find ways to solve this problem and therefore hired mathematician like Alan Turing. But like before Alan tried to solve it by his own and created the Turing bomb on basis of a polish analog.



It used the roller set of the Enigma and tried to emulate the adjustment of the German machine.





He could solve a way of deciphering Enigma due to an information of repetitive message. They were sent with the weather forecast and with the new codes.



But like before Alan struggled with society. During this time homosexuality was a morality crime and Alan was suspected. They gave him the choice between prison and hormonal therapy. He choose the therapy due to the possibility to proceed in running and working in science. But the hormones worsened his physical and mental conditions. They were so strong, that he suffer under depression and on June 8 in 1954 he was found dead in his home. Due to an intoxication of cyanide, the doctors declared suicide.

Alan's life is indeed very tragic. His life is similar to the life of the Indian mathematician Srinavasa Ramanujan. Srinavasa grew up under poor conditions. He had a talent for sciences, like Alan, but this was not so much appreciated in India. And he was therefore excluded. When he made a discovery, he wrote a letter to the mathematician Godfrey Hardy at the Trinity College in Cambridge. He received the possibility to study there. However, Srinavasa, because of its origin, was not taken seriously because of the occupation of India by Great Britain. Godfrey Hardy, however, supported him and they worked together.

It is striking how many elements they, Alan Turing and Srinavasa have in common: outsiders, high-minded, their time ahead, loners ...

If you want to see more similarities, watch the movies "The man who know infinity" and "Imitation Game".



by Dominik Daniel