The Women of Bletchley Park: Decrypting Gender Equality
Transcript of Interview with Jean Macintyre & Stephanie Aldridge

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Question Count: 8

Q: How would you describe your current role in the cybersecurity community?

SA: As a connector of people and ideas.

JM: My role is mainly administration and organizing cyber events.

Q: What qualities do you think made the women at Bletchley Park so successful for their time?

JM: They were diligent workers, focused on the job in hand, had a strong eye for detail and pride in working for their country.

Q: What qualities do you think make women today successful in cybersecurity? Are they the same qualities that BP women used successfully?

JM: Because of the women in BP, today's women understand more of what their job role involves. I would say that there are similar qualities, knowing that they are not just protecting their country but indeed the world. Bletchley Park Women's working environment was tough which gives women in the cyber world of today a realization that we are building on what they started.

Q: What is the current state of women in the cybersecurity community? How can it be improved?

JM: There are not enough women in cyber sectors today - we need more young people to join this exciting business. Training on a regular basis to ensure an understanding is the key. We need to encourage more young people into the cyber world. I believe that if we sparked an interest in young people from as young as 11 years of age there would be more interest, showing girls and boys of all ages that Cyber is about Science, Technology , Engineering, Maths. We use these areas everyday with out thinking. We need to make the subjects more interesting and not

look so scary and that this is attainable by anyone who chooses to do so. Besides, Cyber is quite a well paid job!

Q: Describe the lessons that you think can be drawn from the women of Bletchley park.

JM: We have learned from the Bletchley Park Women that we can and do make a difference. Women are more nimble, listen generally more patiently as the women in BP had to. Only now are the secrets being drawn out openly, all due to the strict secrecy held at that time.

Q: What do you personally think is the deepest engrained contribution that the Bletchley Park women have made?

SA: Unfortunately, as they were sworn to secrecy – the contribution is only known by those who look into the history as you are doing. Women inherently tend to get on with the job at hand without shouting from rooftops, how, why or what they are doing. We need more role-models. This is changing.

JM: I fully support Stephs views

Q: Do you think that the women at Bletchley Park faced more opposition than current women in cybersecurity?

JM: Yes I do believe that the BP women faced more opposition than today's women in cyber security, but in a different way. It was kept so secret that the women, having signed the official secrets act, were not allowed to speak to their closet family or friend. This must have been rather difficult at times considering they worked in huts with blacked out windows and with the monotony of the shift patterns they were expected to complete.

Q: If so, how have you personally drawn inspiration from the women of Bletchley Park?

JM: Oh yes! I certainly have. I have had the privilege of meeting one of the veterans, Ruth Bourne, a few times now. She is a wonderful lady and truly inspirational. It amazes me how all the girls held it together ! The women of BP were highly articulate. Originally only particular types of women with certain skill levels were asked to work in BP . Not necessarily highly educated but women that had the aptitude for diligent thinking /working .

Today we encourage young and old, women and men, to train for cyber security. Cyber is exciting , knowing that you are doing your bit to protect your country...... just like the Bletchley Park girls (and boys) it was an amazing project and we will always be eternally grateful for their efforts.

This is a very proud part of British history, even more so when other countries played their part , By the end of WWII there were over 10,000.00 people working with Bletchley Park, not just in the park but all over the world in various countries.

Quite amazing considering that this all started with a handful of people back in the 1930's!

-Email interview with Stephanie Aldridge & Jean Macintyre

Aldridge, Stephanie, and Jean Macintyre. Personal Interview. 11 Jan 2016

> Stephanie Aldridge and Jean Macintyre work at the CyberSecurityChallengeUK and the Raytheon Foundation, respectively; we contacted them after seeing a video about the event that their foundations had co-planned at Bletchley Park were codebreaking veterans and current women in cyber security attended. Their interview helped us understand the long-term legacy of the women at Bletchley Park, and how they serve as an inspiration to women in cyber security today; we featured a clip from their video on our *A Legacy of Inspiration* page, and quotations from the interview can be found on the same page, as

well (the transcript is on the interviews page.) This is a secondary source as neither

Aldridge nor Macintyre worked at Bletchley Park, yet both based their understanding

through primary sources.