

# University of Southampton National Cipher Challenge Solutions

## Message 5 Plaintext:

*My Dear W,  
The Countess has informed me that the plans have disappeared  
and that you are on their trail. From discreet enquiries with her  
society friends in the Foreign Office it appears that the rogue  
Spion has contacted French agents.*

*His flight to Southampton might mean that he plans to escape  
back to France. If only there were Peelers in Southampton to  
assist you. It occurs to me that an electric telegraphic device  
based on our Turning Machine might be useful in the  
apprehension of such rogues in the future, though doubtless this  
engine mail as I call it will be the cause of much idle gossip too.*

*Be sure that the rogue is lying low and you will have to be assiduous in your enquiries if you are to  
find him. The Countess has kindly placed an advertisement in the national Press. She has high  
hopes that it will yield new avenues of enquiry.*

*Yours as ever,  
Chas*



## Cipher:

- Affine cipher:  $23 \cdot I + 5 \pmod{26}$ , where  $I = 0, 1, 2, \dots$  corresponds to a, b, c, ...

## Notes:

- Was engine mail an early form of “e-mail”?
- Wheatstone and Sir Willaim Fothergill Cooke patented an electric telegraph in 1837. More on the history of the electric telegraph at <http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/bltelegraph.htm>  
<http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/8341/telegraf.htm>
- Did you spot the hidden reference to “affine” in message 4? – look carefully!

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