

INVENTOR & MAKER OF THE WEEK

Joan Clarke

WORLD WAR II CODE BREAKER

Joan Clarke was born in London in 1917. She attended Dulwich High School for Girls in South London. After school she won a scholarship to attend Newnham College, Cambridge.

She got the best possible grade in mathematics at university. However she wasn't given her degree because in those days Cambridge only gave degrees to men.

During World War II one of her tutors at university asked her to join the Enigma Project at Bletchley Park. The Enigma Project had top mathematicians, chess masters and language experts all working to decrypt the seemingly unbreakable Nazi codes generated by their Enigma machines.

At first Joan was put with the other women as a secretary, but was moved to help Alan Turing with his work which would eventually break the code and help win the Second World War.

She was awarded an MBE by the Queen in 1946.

