

Jeanne Templeton

The secret history of Bletchley Park code-breaking centre remained untold for many years. Equally unknown was that two women from our small village, Jeanne Templeton and Nonwy Maw (see also on this page), were members of that elite unit.

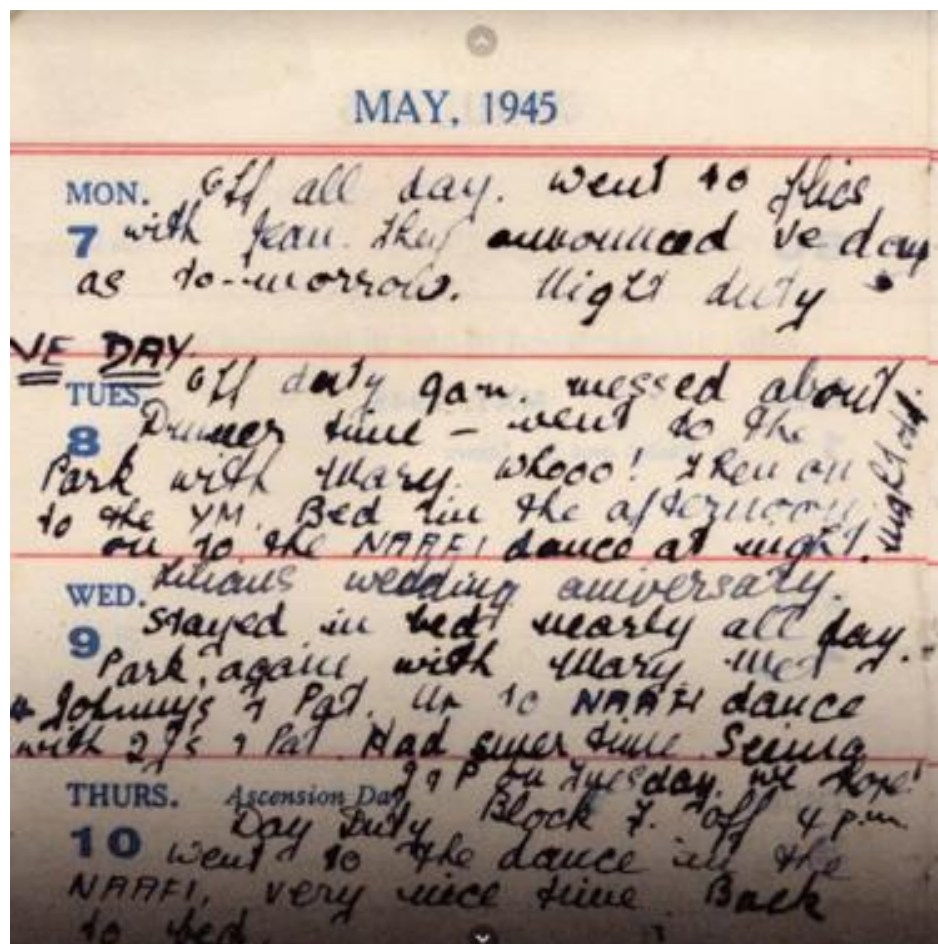
Jeanne Sylvester Templeton, who lived with her mother and sister Peggy at Sunny Cottage, was attached to the Japanese section at Bletchley Park. Sadly, she was never interviewed about her time as a code-breaker, keeping her secrets to the end.

Jeanne was born in October 1925 and would have been an 18-year-old teenager seconded from the Navy when she joined the code-breakers. This suggests that she had a special talent and intellect to be selected so young. Her Summary of Service says she was at Bletchley Park from March 1944 to August 1945, probably working in Block D as a Typex operator, using the Typex cipher machine to encrypt and decrypt messages. From May 1945 she worked in Hut 7, Naval Section, Japanese. She was billeted at Wavenden House.

She became famous after the war, when she embroidered the signatures of her colleagues, which they signed on a white scarf.



The scarf embroidered with the signatures of Women's Royal Naval Service (WRENS) Typex Operators, donated by Jeanne Templeton. The scarf is an emblem of the camaraderie of the Wrens who worked together as a team. The scarf names Wavenden House, one of several country houses near Bletchley which provided residential accommodation for the Wrens.



Diary written on 7, 8, 9, 10 May 1945

The writer went to the flics (cinema) with "Jean" the night before VE Day. The girls would have known about VE day before it was announced to the public. That knowledge was all part of the secret life of a code-breaker.

The entry for 8 May, VE Day, reads:

"VE DAY. Off duty 9a.m. messed about. Dinner time – went to the Park with Mary. Whooo! Then on to the YM. Bed in the afternoon. On to the NAAFI dance at night."

Jeanne, like her father, was a competent artist. As an amateur actress, she was a keen member of the Wheathampstead Dramatic Society.

She died on 17 March 2006.

Written by Terry Pankhurst,

Source: Bletchley Park Archive