

# SCIENCE+ MEDIA MUSEUM

Press release: Tuesday 11 January 2022

## National Science and Media Museum to explore a century of codebreaking in major new exhibition



- ***Top Secret: From ciphers to cyber security*** to open in Bradford in February following its successful run in both Manchester and London
- Exhibition has been created with expert advisors GCHQ and is supported by principal funder the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)
- The exhibition features over 100 objects, including historical technology, handwritten documents and declassified files from the collections of GCHQ and the Science Museum Group

The National Science and Media Museum in Bradford is set to launch a new exhibition this February which will uncover the fascinating world of codebreaking, cyber security, and secret communications.

***Top Secret: From ciphers to cyber security*** has been created alongside expert advisors from the UK's intelligence, security and cyber agency, GCHQ, and will open to the public from **Friday 11 February – Sunday 5 June**. This follows its successful run at the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester and Science Museum in London.

Visitors can discover more than a century of codebreaking history through extraordinary objects, interactive puzzles and first-person interviews. From the First World War to the latest in cyber security, fascinating stories will be revealed via hand-written documents, declassified files and artefacts from the historic collections of the Science Museum Group and GCHQ.

Free tickets for ***Top Secret: From ciphers to cyber security*** are available to book now via the [National Science and Media Museum website](#).

Beginning their journey over a century ago by exploring how Britain protected its skies during the First World War, visitors can then delve into a collection of objects that will track the remarkable work of Alan Turing and the team at Bletchley Park, who broke German cipher systems in the 1940s.

The exhibition then drops visitors into the heart of Cold War Britain and uncovers how intelligence agencies and police foiled one of the most successful spy rings in operation during that time, before transporting visitors back to the 21st century to examine the challenges of maintaining digital security and how the new technologies of today have transformed how we communicate, bringing risks as well as opportunities.

The 100+ exhibition objects reveal fascinating historical stories of communications intelligence from the last century, including cipher machines used during the Second World War, secure telephones of the type used by British Prime Ministers, and an encryption key used by Her Majesty The Queen. Other exhibits also chart the more recent history of cyber security and the work of GCHQ's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), which works to defend against cyber-attacks. Visitors will be able to see a computer infected with the WannaCry ransomware which, in 2017, affected thousands of people and organisations, including the NHS.

The exhibition will showcase domestic spy camera equipment available during the Cold War era through objects that have been introduced to the exhibition specifically at the National Science and Media Museum. These unique objects will reveal how espionage scandals like the Portland Spy Ring influenced the development of spy camera technologies with the introduction of miniature and disguised cameras like the Stylophot, a camera disguised as a large pen or the Tessina camera which could be worn on the wrist. The exhibition will also tell the story of the evolution of spyware technologies from personal surveillance to big data with the juxtaposition of objects like a high-precision Nagra SN miniature tape recorder built by Nagra-Kudelsk, that at 100mm is small enough to be concealed under clothing and will be displayed in the foyer of the museum alongside a 2-metre-tall Facebook server from their Arctic Circle data centre.

Sleuths in the making can also take their own tour around the exhibition with a specially designed trail to help uncover remarkable people and stories, revealing the importance of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills in maintaining national security. The

development of STEM skills is central to the work of both the Science Museum Group and GCHQ, and this exhibition highlights the huge diversity of skills practised every day that can be used to pursue a career in STEM.

**Commenting on the exhibition, Curator Toni Booth, said:**

“Our museum tells the stories of the science and culture of sound and vision technologies and their impact on our lives, so we are incredibly excited to be welcoming *Top Secret* to Bradford. The exhibition will showcase how advancements in image and film have impacted domestic spyware throughout the Cold War Era, and ultimately influenced modern technologies that have transformed how we communicate today.”

**Sir Jeremy Fleming, Director GCHQ, said:**

"GCHQ has been at the heart of the nation's security for over 100 years. We are always evolving to respond to changing threats, helping to protect the country, its people and our way of life.

"We're delighted that 'Top Secret' will soon open in Bradford's National Science and Media Museum. The centenary exhibition is an exploration of our past, present and future. Those who visit will get a glimpse into the hidden world of intelligence and learn about the brilliant people who have innovated in secret to keep the country safe. Some might even be inspired enough to join us."

GCHQ's modern-day mission is to tackle the most serious cyber, terrorist, criminal, and state threats and to make the UK the safest place to live and do business online. *Top Secret* originally opened at the Science Museum in London to coincide with GCHQ's centenary in 2019, and moved to the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester in summer 2021. The exhibition's stay in Manchester was timely, as GCHQ opened an office in the North-West in 2019, where they are pioneering a new kind of national security, mentoring start-ups on tech challenges and working with universities on some of the most pressing national security challenges. GCHQ also has sites in London, Bude, Scarborough and Cheltenham.

The government plans to further establish a 'cyber corridor' in the North to promote growth in the digital, defence and technology sectors, and the subsequent need to inspire a new generation of diverse intelligence and cyber security officers, makes the launch of *Top Secret* in Bradford particularly important.

***Top Secret: From ciphers to cyber security*** will open on Friday 11 February and runs until Sunday 5 June 2022. It is free, but booking is essential. Visitors will also need to book a general admission ticket.

The exhibition is supported by principal funder, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), which is working to improve cyber security skills and inspire the next generation of cyber professionals.

**- ENDS -**

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**Editors Notes:**

The **National Science and Media Museum** in Bradford, West Yorkshire, opened in 1983, and has since become one of the most visited UK museums outside London. It draws on more than three million objects from its national collection to explore the science and culture of image and sound technologies, and their impact on our lives.

The Museum creates special exhibitions, interactive galleries and activities for families and adults, and is home to three cinemas, including Europe's first IMAX cinema screen and the world's only public Cinerama screen outside the USA. Entry to the Museum is free.

[www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk](http://www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk)

**GCHQ** is an intelligence, security and cyber agency with a mission to help keep the UK safe. Its people use cutting-edge technology and technical ingenuity to identify, analyse and disrupt threats in an increasingly digital world. We work closely with MI5, the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), law enforcement, the military and international partners to counter real-world and online threats from nation states, criminal groups, terrorists and individuals. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), which is part of GCHQ and was set up in October 2016, leads the cyber security mission to make the UK the safest place to live and do business online.

[www.gchq.gov.uk](http://www.gchq.gov.uk)



The **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)** drives growth, enriches lives and promotes Britain to the world. DCMS is helping to deliver the government's £2.6 billion National Cyber Strategy to protect and promote UK interests in a rapidly evolving online world. This includes strengthening the UK cyber ecosystem by investing in skills and ensuring we have the people to meet our ambitions, now and in the future.



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