



Codebreakers and Groundbreakers: Women's Work in the Second World War

18th September 2025 | Newnham College, Cambridge

About

This one-day conference builds on the exhibition *Newnham and Bletchley Park: Women's Work in World War II*, which opened at Newnham College, Cambridge, in March 2024 and received national press coverage. The research uncovered 77 alumnae of Newnham College who were employed at Bletchley Park during the Second World War in a variety of analytic, decryption and translation roles. The classified nature of work at Bletchley prevented women from speaking about their employment in later years, requiring researchers to undertake a five-year project to piece together their vital contributions to the war effort.

The conference will provide an opportunity to take stock of the research on Newnham, establish lines of enquiry for research into other institutions from which women were recruited into Bletchley, and set a broader context for the wider mobilisation and employment of women during the Second World War.

Draft Programme

[Please note that paper titles will be confirmed at a later date]

09.30 – Registration and Welcome

10.00 – Morning Session [Chair: Dr Gillian Sutherland]

Speakers: Dr Sally Waugh (Newnham College, Cambridge)
Dr Jackie Ui Chionna (University of Galway)
Ms Veronia Lowe (St Hugh's College, Oxford)
Dr Claire Hubbard-Hall (Independent Researcher)

- 12.45 – Lunch
13.45 – Afternoon Session [Chair: Prof. Wendy Ugolini, University of Edinburgh]
Speakers: Graduate Research Forum
Dr Cherish Watton-Colbrook (Churchill College, Cambridge)
- 17.00 – End

Registration

Registration is now open. The registration fee is £30, and we are additionally able to offer fifteen subsidised places for current postgraduate students at a price of £15.

The registration fee includes a buffet lunch, as well as morning and afternoon refreshments.

Please reserve a space by emailing herwarwork@newn.cam.ac.uk, after which you will be requested to make payment to Newnham College.

The deadline for registration is **1st July**.

Venue

The conference will be held in the Lucia Windsor Room, Newnham College, Cambridge, CB3 9DF.

Further Information and Enquiries

For further information about the exhibition which led to this conference, please visit: <https://newn.cam.ac.uk/home/bletchley-park-exhibition>

A Bletchley Park podcast about the research can be found here:

<https://bletchleypark.org.uk/our-story/e163-the-women-of-newnham-college/>

General enquiries can be sent to the conference organisers, Dr Gillian Sutherland and Chris Campbell, at herwarwork@newn.cam.ac.uk.

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Training for the Women's Land Army at the Northampton Institute of Agriculture, 1942 [IWM Public Domain License]