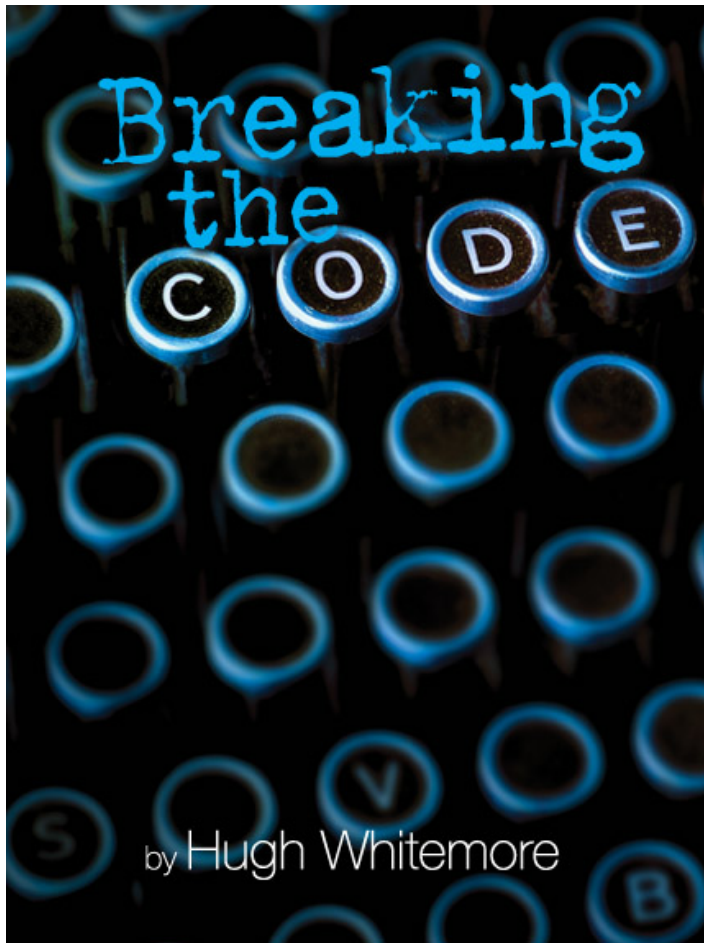


Jewel Theatre Audience Guide

Addendum: Pat Green Biography



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by Susan Myer Siltan, Dramaturg
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PAT GREEN

Pat Green is a character based on Joan Clarke, a codebreaker and colleague of Alan Turing's at Bletchley Park, who was affianced to Alan at one time. Despite spending time with Sara Turing in Guildford and being such an important person in Alan's life, she is not mentioned in Sara's book, *Alan M. Turing* (1956). Her snub by John Turing, Alan's brother, was worse. In his forward to the Centenary Edition of Sara's book, Martin Davis writes:

John Turing dismissed Joan as "safe" (apparently meaning unattractive). In an earlier version of the document, he had referred to her "unwashed hair" and "problems of personal hygiene." This was in contrast with the "attractive and lively young women" that John had brought home for weekends who "cheered up" his father. Even allowing for the prejudices of the time, this denigration of a capable intelligent woman was truly appalling.

Joan came into Alan's life in June 1940 as a new mathematical recruit to Hut 8 in Bletchley Park. In his 2015 book, *Prof: Alan Turing Decoded*, Dermot Turing, Alan's nephew, writes:

Hut 8 had done the unthinkable: it had appointed a woman mathematician to join its officer-class codebreakers. The woman was Joan Clarke. Gordon Welchman [a Cambridge grad and one of the four early recruits to Bletchley Park, with Alan, Hugh Alexander and Stuart Milner-Barry] had supervised Joan when she was studying mathematics at Cambridge, and he recruited her in the spring of 1940. She was allocated to Alan Turing's team in Hut 8.

Soon she was working night shifts with Alan, and her intellect caught his attention. Outside of his family, she was the first woman with whom he was able to make a connection. Moreover, she was the only woman he had ever known that he could talk to on the same level. In *Alan Turing: An Enigma* (1983), Andrew Hodges writes that Alan "specifically" told Joan that he was "glad he could talk to her 'as to a man'". Alan was often lost when dealing with the Hut 8 'girls', not least because he was unable to cope with the 'talking down' which was expected. But Joan's position as cryptanalyst gave her the status of an honorary male".



Joan Clarke in the 1940s

In 1992, Joan described their relationship in an interview for the television program, "The Strange Life and Death of Dr. Turing", Episode 9 of Season 28 of the BBC *Horizon* series:

I suppose the fact that I was a woman made me different. We did do some things together, perhaps went to the cinema and so on, but certainly it was a surprise to me when he said – I think his words probably were 'Would you consider marrying me?' But although it was a surprise, I really didn't hesitate in saying yes. And then he knelt by my chair and kissed me. We didn't have very much physical contact. Now the next day, I suppose we went for a bit of a walk together; after lunch, he told me that he had this homosexual tendency, and naturally that worried me a bit, because I did know that that was something that was almost certainly permanent. But we carried on.

In *Alan Turing: An Enigma* (1983), Andrew Hodges writes that when Alan told Joan about his homosexual tendencies, he expected her to break it off. He was surprised when she didn't. Hodges sheds light on this:

Many people, in 1941, would not have thought it important that marriage did not correspond with his sexual desires; the idea that marriage should include a mutual sexual satisfaction was still a modern one, which had not yet replaced the older idea of marriage as a social duty.

... The engagement continued. He gave her a ring, and they made a visit to Guildford for a formal introduction to the Turing family, which went well enough. On the way they also had lunch with the Clarkes – Joan's father was a London clergyman.

Because he was her supervisor at work, Alan was able to arrange the shifts to ensure they'd always work together. Because of security reasons, Joan was careful not to wear her ring in the Hut; Alan told only Shaun Wylie, a trusted friend and colleague about their engagement. Still, the others could see the spark between them. Alan had somehow managed to procure a few precious bottles of sherry, which was scarce in wartime, and squirreled them away for an office party to announce their engagement when the time was right.

They'd discuss their future away from work. Alan wanted children, but both of them conceded that it would be wrong for her to abandon the critical work they were doing at the time. In the summer of 1941, the outcome of the war was still very uncertain—the Axis forces were moving unabated through Russia and the south-east.

It seemed the two young people were finding refuge and romance in one another, as described by Hodges:

... when Alan said that he could talk to her as to a man, it certainly did not mean that he had to be solemn. It was the other way round: he was free to be himself, and not conventionally polite. If he came up with some scheme or entertainment then they would both join in with gusto. He had learnt how to knit, and had progressed as far as making a pair of gloves, except for sewing up the ends. Joan was able to explain how to finish them off.

The joy, or the difficulty, was that they enjoyed so easy a friendship. They were both keen on chess, and were quite well matched, even though Joan was a novice, whose interest had been drawn by attending Hugh Alexander's course for beginners. Alan used to call their efforts 'sleepy

chess', taking place as they did after the nine-hour night shift. Joan had only a cardboard pocket set, and proper chess pieces were unobtainable in wartime conditions, so they improvised their own solution. Alan got some clay from one of the local pits, and they modelled the figures together. Alan then fired them on the hob of the coal fire in his room at the Crown Inn. The resulting set was quite usable, if somewhat liable to breaking. He also tried to make a one-valve wireless set, telling her about the one he had made at school, but this was not such a success.

They had been to see a matinée of a Bernard Shaw play while making their London visit, and besides Shaw, Alan was currently keen on Thomas Hardy, lending *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* to Joan. These were, after all, with Samuel Butler, the writers who had attacked the Victorian codes. But they spent more time taking long country bicycle rides. And because she had studied botany at school, Joan was able to join in one of Alan's enthusiasms which went back to *Natural Wonders* [a book about biology and science that he treasured since childhood. See p. 7 of the Alan Turing Character document]. He was particularly interested in the growth and form of plants.

While lying on the Benchley Park lawn, likely after a game of tennis, they discussed the Fibonacci pattern, which their characters discuss in Act I, Scene 5 of the play.

The relationship would not, however, progress towards marriage, which Hodges writes of in his book:

The engagement had continued during the summer, but there had been signs of inner conflict on Alan's part. Once they had a weekend together in Oxford, visiting Joan's brother there; Alan went off by himself for a while, apparently thinking it over again, though deciding to carry on. Then in the last week of August they were able to have a whole week together. (They were allowed a week of leave each quarter.) They took their holiday in North Wales, going up by train from Bletchley with bicycles and rucksacks, and arriving at Portmadoc when it was already dark. Alan had arranged for them to stay at a hotel, but the management had made a mess of it and overbooked; only by making a fuss could they be accommodated for the night, and they lost half a precious day finding another place in the morning. Food was a problem too, Alan not having a

temporary ration card. But they had brought some margarine, and managed on bread and a surprise discovery of unrationed meat paste. They walked the lesser mountains, the same as he had tramped as a boy: Moelwyn Bach, Cnicht, and others, suffering only the usual troubles with punctures and rain.

It was soon after they returned that Alan made up his mind and burnt his bridges. It was neither a happy nor an easy decision. He quoted to her Oscar Wilde's words, the closing lines from *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, which bore both an immediate and a prophetic interpretation:

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

There had been several times when he had come out with 'I do love you'. Lack of love was not Alan's problem. The break created a difficult situation in the Hut. Alan told Shaun Wylie that the engagement had been broken off, but not the true reason. In fact he used a dream to make up an explanation, saying that he had dreamt that they had gone to Guildford together and that Joan had not been accepted by his family. Alan dropped out of shift work so that he and Joan did not have to meet more often than necessary at first. It was very upsetting for both of them, but he had behaved in such a way that she knew she had not been rejected as a person. The break was a barrier, but the understanding of it continued as a link.

The link between them that Hodges describes is echoed in *The Debs of Bletchley Park and Other Stories* by Michael Smith (2015): "Joan's knowledge of his reasons—the only person in the hut, probably the only person at Bletchley, who knew of his homosexuality—formed a bond between them. That bond would last Alan's entire lifetime".

In 1943, after Alan returned from his stint in the US at Bell Laboratories, he visited Joan. He told her how his elderly cousin, Jack Crawford, had died just a few days before he arrived in the States, and that seeing his widow, Mary

Crawford, had affected him with a sense of how much they had meant to each other. He hinted to Joan that they ought to give their relationship another go, but she did not take him up on it. She knew what they had was over.

Joan married Lieutenant-Colonel J (Jock) K R Murray in 1952. He was a retired army officer and work colleague whom she met post-Bletchley Park, while she was still working as a codebreaker. Not long after their wedding, the couple moved to Scotland. They were both Scottish history buffs, and Joan soon came to share her husband's interest in numismatic history, which is the study of coins, paper currency, and medals. It became a lifelong pursuit for her, netting her the field's highest recognition in 1987, the year *Breaking the Code* came out. Joan helped Andrew Hodges when he was researching and writing *Alan Turing: The Enigma*, which came out in 1983, but declined to see *Breaking the Code*, saying that it would have been too painful.

Joan's husband died in 1986, and Joan passed away 10 years later. The couple did not have children, though the character Pat Green tells Alan that she and her husband have two boys.



Joan Clarke posing with other colleagues at Bletchley Park

To learn more about Joan's life, a wonderfully comprehensive biography can be found here, in the MacTutor Archive, which is part of the School of Mathematics and Statistics, University of St Andrews, Scotland:

http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/Biographies/Clarke_Joan.html

It discusses her work as a mathematician and codebreaker, as well as her personal life.

Joan's interview from "The Strange Life and Death of Dr. Turing", mentioned earlier: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MB2e9R7bXCk>

RESOURCES

Please see separate resources document provided as an addendum to this Guide.