



Alan Turing: Designs first computer

Video transcript: Clip from *Horizon: The Strange Life and Death of Alan Turing*, produced by Christopher Sykes Productions.

DONALD BAYLEY:

I think he thought that when he went to the NPL he was going to make an electronic brain, rather as he had made – or I'd made for him – this secure speech device. And he spent several months working out the basis of the ACE and got it to the stage at which now you start making things. And at that stage he was sort of metaphorically was rolling up his sleeves and saying: "Right, now get out my American beauty and get down to making this brain" and the NPL said "Oh no you don't. You're the sort of chap that tells us how we make one. We have experts and we have contractors who make things for us."

And he rather took offence to this – so he told me – that they employed him to make a 'brain' and they weren't letting him do it.

PAUL VAUGHAN (NARRATOR):

His vision was of a computer and programming which could simulate mental processes. It seemed to him that the NPL were more interested in a mere calculating machine.

He took up running seriously, possibly out of frustration with the snail's pace of the progress on the ACE. The truth was that the eccentric brilliance, boldness and originality which had made Turing a national asset during the war, were not appreciated in peacetime Britain.