



Alan Turing: Ends brief engagement

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

PAUL VAUGHAN (NARRATOR):

Early in the war, Turing had found himself attracted to a young mathematician and Bletchley cryptanalyst called Joan Clarke.

JOAN MURRAY:

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 – though we didn’t have very much physical contact.

Now 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 which was almost certainly permanent. But, we carried on.

DR SHAUN WYLIE:

And it was quite delightful. They were really sweet together. I was very upset when it broke up and I didn’t fully understand it although Alan Turing had an attempt to explain it to me, which I think was perhaps not entirely the full explanation.

PROF I. J. GOOD:

We didn’t know until after World War II that Turing was homosexual. At least I did not know. There may have been some people who knew, perhaps Joan Clarke knew. It could have been one reason that he gave to her for breaking off the engagement, for all know. But, it was probably a good thing that the security people didn’t know because he might then have been fired and we might have lost the war.