

sequences use abstract imagery in the style of David Lynch to retell the events of Turing's last days, and are positively swollen with religious symbolism (human, not robotic).

This leaves both the meaning of the dream sequences — and the film itself — open to a variety of interpretations. My own is perhaps a bit more pessimistic than that of others: I see the character of Alan Turing — as portrayed in the film — as a sentient re-creation by the thinking

machines themselves from Turing's dream journals; one who is forced to act out a never-ending cycle as a 'dying god', tragically forced to relive his death over and over. Fortunately, this is just one possible interpretation, and AL and AL carefully avoid imposing one on the audience.

Ultimately, the film demands multiple viewings, and is almost oversuffed with ideas and intriguing questions. For answers, we either have to use our own imagination — or wait

patiently for the inevitable Hollywood remake. Until then, *The Creator* is highly recommended. □

REVIEWED BY NEILL LAMBERT

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■ A trailer for *The Creator*, and more information, is available at <http://www.alandal.co.uk>.

A life decoded

EXHIBITION

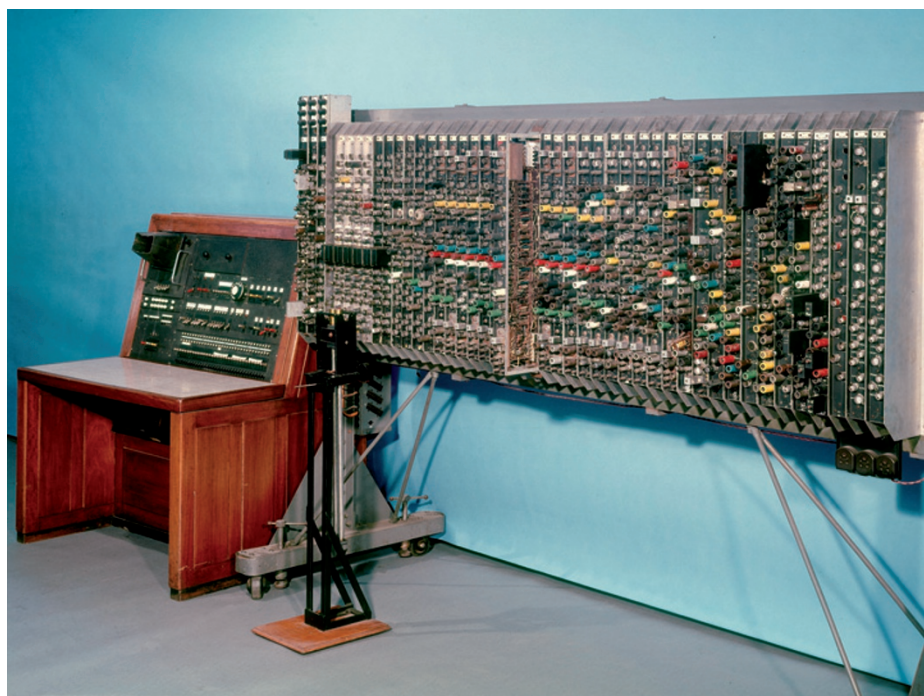
The Science Museum in London is celebrating the achievements and lasting influence of British mathematician, philosopher and computing pioneer Alan Turing, one hundred years after his birth.

The pride of the collection is the 1950 'pilot' version of the automatic computing engine (ACE). Turing wrote the specification on which the Pilot ACE was based while working at the British government's National Physical Laboratory. As one of the first electronic 'universal' computers — machines versatile enough to tackle more than one type of problem — its importance in the history of science and technology is beyond doubt, but it is also a thing of engaging complexity.

Another technologically and culturally relevant highlight is the set of three Enigma cipher machines. Used during the Second World War to encrypt radio signals, Turing was instrumental in breaking their code and devised a machine to crack intercepted messages on an industrial scale.

A question posed by the exhibition is whether such a complicated man, whose main contributions were predominantly theoretical in nature, can be understood through a collection of technological objects to which he was only tangentially related. Indeed, even the Pilot ACE itself was only completed two years after Turing had left the National Physical Laboratory for the University of Manchester, having become frustrated with the project. And it is some of the less headline elements of the exhibition that manage to provide this important insight.

Most poignant perhaps is a 1976 audio recording of Turing's assistant



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Jim Wilkinson, who later went on to head the Pilot ACE project: "I found an extremely likeable man, but not a very easy person. His mind worked quickly; he had days when he was rather depressed and there were times when it was just as well to get out of his way."

Further telling pieces include an essay from 1932 that shows how Turing thought much about the nature of the human mind and believed in life after death; ideas that seemed to have become entangled with his work as he pondered the possibility of machines with minds of their own. Finally, a bottle of the oestrogen Turing was ordered to take after his prosecution under anti-homosexuality laws sits next to a copy of the 1954 postmortem report that determined he had committed suicide.

The small exhibition is set on a balcony above the Science Museum's Energy Hall — a permanent collection of iron originals and working models dedicated to the birth and development of steam power. The parallels are striking. And just as James Watt's 'Big Bess' of 1777 marked the beginning of an energy revolution that would change the world, so the Pilot ACE, as shaped by the mind of Alan Turing, represents the information revolution — that has still only just begun. □

REVIEWED BY DAVID GEVAUX

■ *Codebreaker — Alan Turing's Life and Legacy* runs until 31 July 2013 at the Science Museum, Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2DD, UK.