

The Rose Code

Kate Quinn

This book provides a fascinating insight into life at Bletchley Park during the 2nd world war. Although the main characters are fictional the author had done a great deal of research so that the story seems to accurately portray life amongst the thousands of staff employed at Bletchley Park during the war. Whilst not explaining how the actual code breaking was done it gives a very engrossing account of the demands on the employees. Although many of the code breakers themselves were very clever Oxbridge male graduates this was not exclusively so; some women from quite unexpected underprivileged backgrounds also had the necessary skills to act as codebreakers. So people were employed for their skill set regardless of their class and the social mix was huge but firm friendships were formed regardless of class. The secrecy required put huge stresses on these friendships, and family, since employees were not allowed to disclose either what they did nor ANY of the information they decoded even if they knew that without some of their knowledge friends might be exposed to considerable danger. The inevitable stress resulted in mental breakdowns amongst some. Romances inevitably formed with so many people working together under extremely demanding conditions. The requirement for absolute secrecy was paramount however the rewards of spying were also very tempting.

This is a long but absolutely gripping reading. I thoroughly recommend it.

Stephanie