The history behind computing has always been a vital part of the field, allowing us to measure our progress over the last 100 years as we've moved from devices the size of an entire room to handheld gadgets.

On the 21st of July, Sheffield Hallam University ran a trip to visit Bletchley Park and the National Museum of Computing. Through the collaboration with BCS, this opportunity was extended to some student placements and apprentices to join so that they could immerse themselves in Computing History. The trip ended up becoming a valuable learning experience, allowing the group to learn more about traditional encryption methods and Moore's law, where they could visually see how some of these machines worked and how the scale and size has changed significantly over the years.

The interaction provided by both venues allowed all involved to get to grips and learn via various methods, where they engaged in multiple activities throughout the day, starting from Bletchley Park in the morning, with a combination of free-roaming and a guided tour taking them all over the site and immersing the group in the life of those who worked there during the war.

In the afternoon, activities shifted to a planned session involving discovering and breaking various encryption techniques, including deciphering the famous Vernam cypher. A particular highlight of the session was the hands-on encounter with a traditional Enigma machine, where the group could encode and decode their own messages. Given that most genuine Enigma machines are in the possession of private collectors, this opportunity was particularly exceptional.

Following the planned session finished at Bletchley, the group moved to the Computing Museum for the final activity, which was a private guided tour around the museum. The tour covered various topics extending upon the knowledge from the earlier sessions at Bletchley, where they learnt the comprehensive background of what exactly the Bombe did and the procedures that went by during the war when cracking the Enigma code.

At the end of the tour, the focus transitioned from the past to the present and the future of computing as they discussed the evolution of computing from wartime to the modern day, demonstrating the concept of Moore's Law in various examples, such as showing how a disk half the size of a person in the 1960s could only hold a thousandth of the memory and storage easily available today.

It is important to extend special thanks to Sheffield Hallam University for orchestrating this enlightening trip, as well as to Bletchley Park and the National Museum of Computing for hosting the participants and offering this invaluable experience.