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Our finances are in the ha

The only problem was the title: **Britain's Greatest Codebreaker**. It sounds like another Do You Know How Close We Were to Losing the Second World War? documentary – and it was, to a degree. Alan Turing. Stop. Enigma machine. Stop. Bletchley. Stop. There have now been 15 million million Enigma-machine documentaries, one more than there are permutations of an Enigma machine. It would take longer to watch them all back-to-back than it did to crack the thing in the first place.

If you could get past the title, this drama-documentary was more imaginative than that. It had all the code-breaking stuff, but it focused on the last two years of Turing's life. Here was a man who had played one of the most critical parts in the defeating of the Nazis, but he was a homosexual, which negated all of that. The post-war British authorities treated him as a common criminal rather than a hero; and after being prosecuted in 1952, he was given a choice of prison or a course of female hormones. It was *The King's Speech* with chemical castration instead of a stammer. Ed Stoppard played a handsome Turing with verve and a little too much nail-biting. Henry Goodman was the therapist, far less smug and pushy than Geoffrey Rush.

George VI got over his speech impediment; Turing didn't get over the castration and killed himself – a great shame, not just

Television

MATT RUDD



- **Britain's Greatest Codebreaker (C4, Mon)**
- **When Bankers Were Good (BBC2, Tue)**
- **Your Money and How They Spend It (BBC2, Wed)**
- **The Manor Reborn (BBC1, Thu)**
- **The Café (Sky 1 HD, Wed)**

for him but for all humanity. He wasn't only Britain's greatest codebreaker: he also conceived of and paved the way for the computer age. Without him, we might all still be flummoxing around with abacuses and pencils. He then envisaged artificial intelligence and designed a test for it. Without him, *Blade Runner* would have been rubbish. And he was just getting onto morphogenesis (the biological process that causes an organism to develop its shape, dummy). If he hadn't committed suicide by Snow White-style poison apple at 41, one last

defiantly camp flick of the finger to an intolerant age, he could have taken us far beyond computers, rather than leaving us stuck on them. The Microsoft Office Assistant might never have happened.

When Bankers Were Good also had a misleading title, mainly because they weren't. Or the very few who sort-of-were behaved in ways quite similar to the very few who sort-of-are today. Or they were Quakers, which is no fun at all.

It's tricky for Ian Hislop. He used to be establishment antiestablishment, but now he's firmly establishment establishment, a grinning toby jug of a national treasure. Ask him to talk about Victorian bankers and he becomes a pleasant version of David Starkey, when what we want, what we really need, is some contextual cynicism about bonuses and pinstripes. In the absence of proper Hislopian pique, there was a lot of rose-tinted, square-peg/round-hole history and a very, very roundabout suggestion that perhaps today's bad bankers might all neck a bottle of prussic acid and leave us in peace. If they'd be so kind.

The most eloquent critique of the modern financial system came, not from Hislop, but from Giles Fraser, the then canon chancellor of St Paul's. He talked about how money was corrosive of the soul, how wealth can distance you from the world, how the disciples of Mammon needed to develop a greater sense of responsibility for

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