

Ref: FOI2025-009

18 March 2025

Dear [REDACTED],

Further to our previous correspondence regarding your request for the following information:

*I would like AWE's advice in finding out more bio-data for two women who worked at AWRE Aldermaston during the relevant time period: **Mary Thomas and Florence A Rigg**. I believe they started by using a Ferranti Mark I* computer but then went on to use various IBM computers and the Ferranti Atlas 2 at AWRE. I came across their names when I was writing the book *Early computing in Britain: Ferranti Ltd. and government funding, 1948 – 1958*, published in 2019 by Springer.*

I am not so interested in the nature of the AWRE problems addressed by these two pioneers. Rather, I'd like to know a bit more personal information – for instance, dates/places of birth, higher educational achievements, dates when they joined AWRE and dates when they left, dates when they died (if known). I realise that personnel records are generally confidential but you will appreciate that my underlying objective is to bring such pioneers to life, as it were, and set them in the technical and socio-economic context of the age.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

A search has been conducted and we can confirm that AWE holds part of the information in scope of your request.

In relation to dates and places of birth, higher educational achievements, and dates of death, AWE does not hold any relevant information.

Regarding the dates individuals joined and left the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE), we are withholding the information under section 40 of the FOI Act.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40(2) means that personal data can only be released if to do so would not contravene any of the principles set out in Article 5(1) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Section 40(2) requires the Department to conduct a balancing exercise which involves balancing the rights and interests of individuals against the legitimate interests in disclosure. This is not the same as carrying out the public interest test associated with certain exemptions under the Act. The balancing exercise is carried out in order to decide whether the absolute exemption in section 40(2) is engaged. In particular, there is no assumption of disclosure in the legitimate interest's test, as there is with qualified exemptions. The outcome

of the balancing exercise lay in withholding the third-party personal data identified as being within scope of your request.

This section provides that information can be withheld where disclosure would contravene the principles of data protection. Specifically, disclosing such information could potentially lead to the identification of individuals and the revelation of their personal data without consent, thereby infringing on their privacy rights. Therefore, we are unable to provide these details.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled you have a right to request an internal review within 40 days of receiving this letter, by writing to information.requests@awe.co.uk or our postal address: Information Requests Team, AWE Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4PR. If you are still unhappy after an internal review has been completed, under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you have the right to take your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Please note the Commissioner will generally not consider a complaint until you have exhausted AWE's internal complaints process.

Yours sincerely,

AWE Information Requests Team