Bombes

I want to send a message, it's 1942

It needs to be a secret, just from me to you

I set the wheels, dial all three

I connect the plug-board too

About ten to the twenty settings

Can this Enigma do

I press a key, a light shines bright

A T becomes a C

The same again, a P this time, but never *ever* T

This little flaw, it turns out, can compromise the scheme

For the Poles and the Brits have built their Bombes

A huge electric machine

And in a corrugated village, a future Milton Keynes

Alexander, Welchman, Tutte, Turing

And their crack codebreaking team

About two hundred Bombes, ticked in English huts

About two thousand personnel, made war with paper cuts

Nazi plans were intercepted

Allied strategy, craftily corrected

But by land, air and sea: horror, horror, rage

Because to keep the secret

We couldn't always engage

The High Command had Lorenz, twelve rotors in this beast

Encrypted digits in radio Morse

Ten to the nineteen settings at least

But Colossus helped to crack it

And bequeathed the world a future

Born in this shed of electric valves:

The digital computer

Andy French, following a visit to the National Computing Museum 18/1/22