



21 OCT BIOCITY HOSTS DIGITAL EVENT TO CELEBRATE THE LEGACY OF THE FIRST FEMALE COMPUTER PROGRAMMER, ADA LOVELACE.

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Nottingham UK – 13 October 2020. BioCity, the pioneering life science incubator and business collective, supported by [education charity Ignite!](#) brought together ninety students from five Nottingham secondary schools, to celebrate the legacy of the celebrated Nottingham mathematician, Ada Lovelace, to inspire young women into STEM careers.

[In previous years](#), young women have been invited to spend the day undertaking activities within BioCity; however, this, the third Ada Lovelace Day hosted by BioCity, was held virtually, in a fitting tribute to the first female programmer. Students from Nottingham Girls Academy, Park Vale Academy, Toot Hill School, Colonel Frank Seely Academy and Farnborough Academy were connected with female ‘scientists in residence’ to gain first-hand insights and practical experience in STEM careers. Scientists, mathematicians and

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In an introductory message to the students, [Dr Rebecca Todd, member of the BioCity Board](#), talked about the potential for real-world impact that is possible through careers in STEM.

“A background in STEM-related subjects gives students a fantastic grounding for whatever they choose to pursue,” said Dr Todd. “You are taught to question, to approach challenges logically and come up with creative solutions – if you are trained as a scientist or engineer, you will always think like one. The variety of career options available in STEM is huge. I never imagined that my academic background would eventually lead to a career as a venture capitalist, but this is the way that I am able to play a part in enabling technology and human endeavour to do good in the world.”

Working within their own classrooms but connected virtually through the event, students spent the morning creating their own solutions to challenges set by the ‘scientists in residence’, before presenting their findings to the group. Solar panelled litter picking robots, grapevine fishing nets and heart rate monitoring smart glasses were just a few of the novel solutions that the pupils came up with.

As students worked through their challenges, they were able to speak directly to the women about their experiences in industry and ask questions which included “How has your gender affected your career?” and “Which females have influenced you?”. The impact of these conversations was clear as Ada Lovelace Day 2020 drew to a close.

At the beginning and end of the event, students were asked to ‘draw a scientist and list the type of jobs they do’. The differences before and after were stark, as, traditional gender stereotypes were replaced with possibility, prospects and opportunity.

Megan Shore, Ignite! Communications Executive said “We were so pleased to have been able to deliver our Ada Lovelace Day event again, and in spite of all the restrictions and changes, we adapted by using new technologies to beam into the classroom. It’s so important for us to be able to provide female pupils with the opportunity to ask scientists insightful questions and undertake activities which encourage them to think like scientists.”

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hope inspired the young women that took part. The aim was to encourage young women to see the potential career paths in STEM available at WBA. As a business resource group we continue to support the event and opportunities it presents to the young women involved.”

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