

Douglas Hartree



Born March 27, 1897, Cambridge, UK- died February 12, 1958; designer, with A. Porter, of the Manchester Meccano differential analyzer- very influential early British computer user at both Manchester and Cambridge, and originator of the method of self-consistent field.

Education: BA, University of Cambridge; MA, University of Cambridge; PhD, University of Cambridge; MSc, University of Manchester.

Professional Experience: Antiaircraft Experimental Group, Inventions Department, Ministry of Munitions, 1916-1919; research fellow, St. John's College, Cambridge, 1924-1927; research fellow, Christ's College, Cambridge, 1928-1929; University of Manchester: professor of applied mathematics, 1929-1937, professor of theoretical physics, 1937-1945; professor of mathematical physics, University of Cambridge, 1946-1958; on leave, acting chief, Institute of Numerical Analysis (INA), National Bureau of Standards (at UCIA)

In 1933 Hartree visited MIT to use the Vannevar Bush Differential Analyzer. As a result of this work he received a copy of the design, which he then used to create his own model using Meccano parts, and costing about £20, a tiny fraction of the expenditures at MIT. This machine was so successful that several copies were made and used throughout the country. Hartree used his influence to promote the mechanical solution of differential equations as related to a wide range of applications from ballistics to atomic energy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Biographical

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Significant Publications

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Hartree, D. R., "Automatic Calculating Machines," *Mathematical Gazette*, Vol. 34, Dec. 1950, pp. 241-252.

UPDATES

Portrait added (MRW, 2013)