



CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

PHILIPPA GARRETT FAWCETT

1868-1948, England - At the age of fifteen Philippa attended mathematics lectures both at Bedford College (later affiliated to the University of London), the first British university to grant degrees to women, and at University College London, where she studied pure and applied mathematics from 1885 to 1887. Philippa Fawcett's outstanding results in algebra and geometry led to her being awarded a Gilchrist scholarship to study mathematics at Newnham College, Cambridge, a women's college that her mother had helped to found.



Fawcett's performance in the Trinity Intercollege Examination, which she sat after two years at Cambridge, was outstanding and it was clear that she would excel in the Tripos Examinations of 1890. At that time only men were ranked in the Tripos Examination; women who took the examination were made aware of their place by being told they were placed between the n th and $(n+1)$ st man or equal to the n th man.

After taking Part II of the Mathematical Tripos, when she was placed in the first division of the first class, Fawcett was awarded the Marion Kennedy Scholarship which allowed her to undertake research at Cambridge for one year. She published one research article as a result of her work in that year. It was on the motion of a helical body in a liquid and appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of Applied Mathematics*.

In 1905 Philippa was appointed to the position of principal assistant to the Director of Education of London County Council, which she held until her retirement in 1934.

Biography courtesy of The MacTutor History of Mathematics archive