Percy John Heawood Biography

Percy John Heawood

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Biography

Percy John Heawood is most well known for his work on the four color map **theorem** on which he published extensively during his life. His other mathematical interests were chiefly in **geometry**, approximation theory, continuous **fractions**, and quadratic **equations**.

P. J. Heawood was born in Ipswich in Southern England in 1861. After initial schooling at Ipswich he was awarded a scholarship to study at Oxford University in 1880. Whilst at Oxford Heawood received several prizes including both Junior and Senior Mathematical Scholarships (1882 and 1886 respectively) and the Lady Herschell prize in 1886. The following year Heawood took up his life long post as lecturer in mathematics at Durham University, being given a chair in 1911. 1890 saw Haewood publish the first of many papers on four color map theorem. Heawood was regarded as an eccentric in the circles in which he mixed. His only passion outside of mathematics was Durham Castle (a Norman castle in the center of Durham City in the North east of England) which in 1928 was found to be in a dangerous state of repair. Haewood raised the vast majority of the money required to correct the problems with the foundations and for his efforts he was awarded an OBE in 1939 (Order of the British Empire). 1939 also saw the retirement of Heawood although he remained active in research and continued to publish many papers, his last being in 1949, some six years before his death at the age of 93.