



Nancy Hartshorne Kirk

Geologist

Nancy was born in Mansfield and was brought up mainly by her father as her mother had died when she was very young. She was a pupil at Mansfield Queen Elizabeth's Girls Grammar and won a competition to go to Newnham College Cambridge where she read Natural Sciences but moved to study Geology and graduated with a first in 1939 after which she started research though her studies were interrupted by the war.

She spent time in the Land Army and then moved to the Royal Ordnance factory. After the war she returned to Cambridge and in 1949 gained her PhD before working at Birmingham university and then in the field in Wales. In 1953 she became assistant lecturer in Geology at Aberystwyth and then a full lecturer in 1955 continuing to work in the Dept. after her official retirement in 1983.

She was remembered for the care and effort and the support she gave to those having difficulties. In the late 1960's she presented a paper to the Geological Society of London on the life and evolution of graptolites challenging the traditional understanding. Unfortunately the Society condemned her ideas and attempted to censor her work and this study then began to occupy the rest of her life producing evidenced based work and beautifully illustrated papers with new radical interpretations – she became in demand as a speaker and gained an international reputation. She also created a beautiful garden at her home in Llanafan growing many new varieties azaleas and rhododendrons from seed.

She lived in isolation, liked discreet naturism and was totally single minded in pursuit of her goals. She was also a committed Marxist and found much of modern consumer culture distasteful. The red flag was played as her body was carried to its green burial.