Connie Mae Ford 1912-1998

Vet and Poet

Connie was born in south east London, the youngest of 3 sisters, she was educated at the Haberdasher's School for Girls. She was encouraged to study to be a vet, by her science teacher. She was in the second cohort of women admitted to the Royal Veterinary college in London and was one of the first 30 women to graduate in 1933 but she found it difficult to find a post and so she set up her own practice in London.

During WW2 she joined the Scottish Land Army and then in 1943 she moved to Nottingham and was employed at Sutton Bonington as part of the government's veterinary investigation service specialising in cattle fertility for which ground-breaking work she received an MBE in 1970.

In 1966, she was elected President of the East Midlands Branch of the British Veterinary Association. In retirement she researched the life and work of Aleen Cust, Britain's first recognised female vet and a biography about her was posthumously published. She also wrote poetry throughout her life and was published under various names eg Olive Pugh, Connie Rivers; in various magazines and publications. She was an active member of the Nottingham Poetry Society from 1951 and its chair in the 1980s. Her poem 'The Great Eastern', based on her grandfather's journal, won the John Masefield Prize in 1968. She published 4 books of her own poetry which can be found in Nottingham University's Manuscripts and Special collections along with much other material. She also wrote her autobiography through her own poetry 'Walking My Tightrope.' which was published after her death by Cathy Grindrod. She was a lifelong supporter of women's rights and communism and loved sailing on the Trent.

Elizabeth Ingham an English student at Nottingham University undertook a study of Ford in 2017 for her BA dissertation sorting and listing materials in the CM Ford collection at MSC and her article The Papers of Connie M Ford 1912 – 1998 poet 1932 – 98 can be found in the online catalogue and accessed in the reading room.