

# The life of Kurt Heegner

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## **Abstract**

Kurt Heegner (1893 - 1965) was private scholar who worked both on electronic engineering and mathematics. In 1952 he published a paper "Diophantische Analysis und Modulformen" in which he solved Gauss' class number 1 problem. His proof was not accepted at the time and it was only after the solutions of this problem in 1966 had been given by H. Stark and A. Baker that various mathematicians reexamined Heegner's work and found that it was sound. B.J.Birch developed Heegner's ideas further and introduced the notion of Heegner points which have proved to be of considerable significance in contemporary number theory.

Heegner never held a university appointment and very little was known about his life. In the absence of facts some very imaginative stories circulated about him. Recently, in collaboration with Hans Opolka and Norbert Schappacher it has been possible to reconstruct the life of Kurt Heegner who emerges as a remarkable person.