Ada Lovelace

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ada, Countess of Lovelace

Ada, Countess of Lovelace, 1840

Born	The Hon. Augusta Ada Byron 10 December 1815 London, England
Died	27 November 1852 (aged 36) Marylebone, London, England
Resting place	Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Hucknall, Nottingham, England
Title	Countess of Lovelace
Spouse(s)	William King-Noel, 1st Earl of Lovelace
Children	• Byron King-Noel, Viscount Ockham and 12th Baron Wentworth • Anne Blunt, 15th Baroness Wentworth • Ralph King-Milbanke, 2nd Earl of Lovelace
Parent(s)	• George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron • Anne Isabella Milbanke, 11th Baroness Wentworth

Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace (*née* **Byron**; 10 December 1815 – 27 November 1852) was an English mathematician and writer, chiefly known for her work on Charles Babbage's early mechanical general-purpose computer, the Analytical Engine. Her notes on the engine include what is recognised as the first algorithm intended to be carried out by a machine. Because of this, she is often regarded as the first computer programmer.[1][2][3]

Lovelace was born 10 December 1815 as the only legitimate child of the poet George, Lord Byron and his wife Anne Isabella Noel.[4] All Byron's other children were born out of wedlock to other women.[5] Byron separated from his wife a month after Ada was born and left England forever four months later, eventually dying of disease in the Greek War of Independence when Ada was eight years old. Ada's mother remained bitter towards Lord Byron and promoted Ada's interest in mathematics and logic in an effort to prevent her from developing what she saw as the insanity seen in her father, but Ada remained interested in him despite this (and was, upon her eventual death, buried next to him at her request).

Ada described her approach as "poetical science"[6] and herself as an "Analyst (& Metaphysician)".[7] As a young adult, her mathematical talents led her to an ongoing working relationship and friendship with fellow British mathematician Charles Babbage, and in particular Babbage's work on the Analytical Engine. Between 1842 and 1843, she translated an article by Italian military engineer Luigi Menabrea on the engine, which she supplemented with an elaborate set of notes of her own, simply called *Notes*. These notes contain what many consider to be the first computer program—that is, an algorithm designed to be carried out by a machine. Lovelace's notes are important in the early history of computers. She also developed a vision of the capability of computers to go beyond mere calculating or number-crunching, while others, including Babbage himself, focused only on those capabilities.[8] Her mind-set of "poetical science" led her to ask questions about the Analytical Engine (as shown in her notes) examining how individuals and society relate to technology as a collaborative tool.[5]