John Wilkins Encyclopedia Article

John Wilkins

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John Wilkins

1614-1672

English mathematician and inventor who studied at Oxford and became an Anglican clergyman. During the English Civil War he sided with parliament, which helped him obtain a Wardenship at Oxford. He married Robina, sister of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). He promoted group discussion among scientists, and was a founder and first secretary of the Royal Society. Wilkins published works on astronomy, mechanical devices, linguistics, and codes and ciphers. He developed a new plough, a transparent beehive, an improved carriage, and many other machines.