Sir Christopher Cockerell Encyclopedia Article

Sir Christopher Cockerell

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Sir Christopher Cockerell

1910-

English engineer who invented the hovercraft. Cockerell was born in Cambridge and studied at Cambridge University, where he initially focused his engineering skills in the fields of radio and radar before turning to hydrodynamics. In the early 1950s he discovered that air could be used to speed a boat's journey across water. His hovercraft, which "hovered" a few inches above the water as it moved, was first built in 1958. Cockerell was knighted for his work in 1969.