Thomas Lombe Encyclopedia Article

Thomas Lombe

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Thomas Lombe

1685-1739

English weaver and inventor who, with his brother John, helped found England's silk industry. The Lombe brothers built England's first silk weaving engines, taking out patents on the process of turning silk filaments into thread. In fact, Thomas financed his brother's trip to Italy where, employed as a mechanic in a silk factory, John learned the secrets of the Italian machines. Upon his return, the two brothers constructed their first mill, launching what was to become an important English industry.