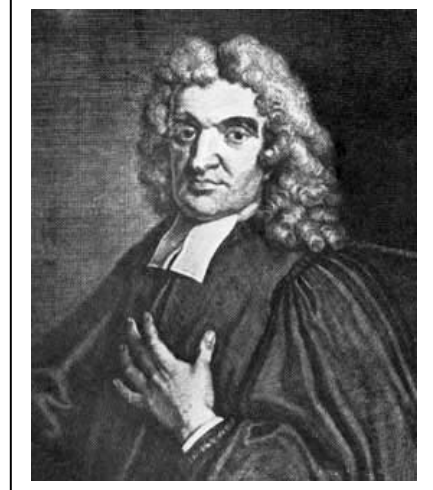


John Flamsteed (1646 – 1719)

He was the father of modern astronomy; the first Astronomer Royal, who corrected all the astronomical tables in use in 17th century.

John Flamsteed born on August 19, 1646 at Denby, Greenwich. His father Stephen Flamsteed, was a maltster. After three years, his mother had died.

The cold brought other ailments in its wake. Primarily a rheumatic affliction of the joints.



Young John became very ill, rheumatism crippled him; he grew unable to walk to school and left in May 1662. From his fourteenth year to his death, Flamsteed struggled against illness and physical agony, but the illness gave him opportunity. He could not go to school, so he began to teach himself. He read the books between the agonizing bouts of his illness.

It was not long before his talents attracted notice. Friends lent him books, and he repaid them writing papers. In order to buy astronomical instruments, he took private pupils, during his service in Royal Observatory at Greenwich. From 1676 to 1709 no fewer than 140 pupils sat under him. His first observation was made in September 1676; unable to afford assistance, he worked single-handed for thirteen years ; by 1689 he had made 20,000 observations.

For John Flamsteed, the chuckling, rheumatic, crippled, suffering, irritable old man, who first studied the heavens from a bed of pain, had made one of the richest contribution to practical astronomy that the world has seen.

He was still working and observing when he was taken ill on December 27, 1719; on the last day of the year he was dead.