

LOGARITHMS

Fill in the blanks with the words below



John Napier's father, Archibald Napier, was an important man in late 16th century Scotland. His family had owned the Merchiston estate from the 1430s when one of his _____ acquired the estate.

Archibald Napier married Janet Bothwell, the sister of the Bishop of Orkney, in 1549 when he was only 15 years old. Their son John Napier was born the following year.

Napier was educated at St Andrews University, entering the university in 1563 at the age of 13. Shortly after Napier matriculated his mother died.

After that, Napier left St Andrews to study in Europe before completing a _____.

Napier's study of mathematics was only a _____ and in his mathematical works he writes that he often found it hard to find the time for the necessary calculations. He is best known, however, for his invention of logarithms.

Napier's discussion of _____ appears in *Mirifici logarithmorum canonis descriptio* in 1614. In the preface of the book Napier explains his thinking behind his great discovery :

Seeing there is nothing that is so troublesome to mathematical practice, nor that doth more molest and hinder calculators, than the multiplications, divisions, square and cubical extractions of great numbers ... I began therefore to consider in my mind by what certain and ready art I might remove those hindrances.

Briggs read Napier's 1614 Latin text and made the difficult journey from London to Edinburgh to see Napier in the summer of 1615 (at least 4 days by horse and coach in those times).

Briggs had suggested to Napier in a _____ sent before their meeting that logs should be to base 10 and Briggs had begun to construct tables. Napier replied that he had the same idea but :

... he could not, on account of ill-health and for other weighty reasons undertake the construction of new tables.

Briggs spent a month with Napier on his first visit of 1615, made a second journey from London to Edinburgh to visit Napier again in 1616 and would have made yet a third visit the following year but Napier died in the spring before the planned summer visit.

Words: logarithms; hobby; letter; degree; ancestors