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Beryl A. Joyce

DR BERNARD M. WATNEY
1922–1998

It is with sadness that we learned of the death, on 28th September 1998, of Dr Bernard Watney, at the age of 76. Dr Watney had a long and distinguished career in medicine and he was extremely active in his private life. He was an avid collector in many fields — corkscrews, beer bottles, wine labels, to name but a few — and an expert in most.

To the ceramics and archaeological communities, however, Dr Watney is best known for his special interest in English 18th-century porcelains. He was one of the great collectors in this field, and he became a leading authority and a prolific writer on the subject. Bernard Watney brought the best kind of connoisseurship to bear in his approach to the study of porcelains. His great passion for the material was tempered by a genuine wish to get at the facts behind their manufacture and to reveal to the world the history and development of the factories and their wares. In this he was assisted by a remarkable capacity for recognising similarities between wares, and a memory for the most minute details of vessels' forms and decoration. This, coupled with thorough research into the subject, enabled him to bring products together into factory groups. These groups are well-known and remain valid today, long after archaeological discoveries — such as at Vauxhall and Liverpool — provided definitive evidence for the products of the early factories. Watney's vast knowledge has brought the subject forward to a new era, one in which archaeologists and collectors can work together to produce major results.

Perhaps Watney's best known work has been the study of Longton Hall, which involved the identification of the factory and small-scale excavations in 1955. This work produced numerous porcelain sherds and related kiln material. His book *Longton Hall Porcelain* followed very shortly afterwards in 1957 and was unusual at this time for its inclusion of the results of the excavation. The book remains a standard work of reference and has not been superseded, despite more recent excavations on the site in 1970–71 and a wealth of new finds. It was fitting that Watney should be invited to write up the porcelain sherds from this later work and his excellent report was published in *Post-Medieval Archaeology* in 1993.

Watney's next major book was *English Blue and White Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century* (1963, revised 1973), but more recently he was immersed in bringing to light Joseph Wilson's porcelain factory at Limehouse, London. Considerable research went into the identification of this site, and when development threatened to destroy the site, Watney was a powerful advocate for an archaeological intervention in advance of this work. Excavations were carried out by the Museum of London's Department of Greater London Archaeology in 1990 and important material remains confirmed porcelain production on the site during the 1740s. Several hundred porcelain sherds were uncovered which conformed exactly to Watney's William Reid (Liverpool) group of porcelains. The group held together in the light of the Limehouse discoveries and the re-assigning of the group to Wilson was a simple matter. Once again Watney's uncanny abilities in this area were highlighted. The great interest in this project led to the speedy publication of the book *Limehouse Ware Revealed*, to which Watney was a major contributor, discussing the history of the factory, the wares and parallels for them. The latest situation regarding the attribution of the Liverpool groups of porcelain was clarified in Watney's last book *Liverpool Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century*, published in 1997.

Bernard Watney has many papers to his credit. He was a frequent contributor to magazines and journals until his death, and was always exploring new avenues. One of his major contributions has been his presidency of the English Ceramic Circle, from 1974 until his death. As President he was able to ensure that the group maintained high academic standards and continued to be regarded as the world's foremost ceramic study group. He was always encouraging to new collectors and archaeologists alike and was ever-generous with information, happy to share the knowledge accumulated over a lifetime. He was an inspiration to many and is sorely missed.

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