

glassware and an 18th-century opaque twist-stem wineglass—because science and glass were David's two great loves, outside of his family.

David was born in Enfield, a suburb of London, on August 5, 1931. His father, a ship's engineer, was rarely home, and he died when David was 15 years old. David was brought up by his mother, a dressmaker. His family was poor and working class, and David was fortunate that the English educational system at the time enabled him, like other bright children who were not from wealthy backgrounds, to receive a free education in a selective grammar school. This permitted him to pass the entrance examination to attend Kings College at the University of London.

At King's, David studied botany, and while he was on a biology field trip, he met his future wife, Rosemary, a fellow King's student, who was reading biology. Following his graduation, David transferred to University College London (UCL) to work on an M.Sc. in chemistry. He then performed two years of national service, which was still a postwar requirement at that time. After demobilization, he returned to UCL to earn a Ph.D. in biochemistry, and then he accepted a position at that college as a lecturer in biochemistry.

In 1966, he became a reader in biochemistry at Guy's Hospital in London, joining Rosemary, who already worked there. David remained at Guy's, where he received a D.Sc. for his work on Duchenne muscular dystrophy, until his retirement in 1995. He published many papers on biochemistry, some of which were coauthored by his wife. She eventually left the hospital to work in the English Co-operative movement.

David was active in the Biochemical Society, and he was, for a time, honorary managing editor of its publication, *Transactions*.

Around 1970, David purchased his first piece of old glass, an 18th-century opaque twist-stem wineglass, from Montague Rumsey Antiques in the west of England shortly before the business closed and was turned into a restaurant. This is one of the two glasses mentioned in the first paragraph of this obituary.

In 1973, David joined The Glass Circle, which presents an annual series of lectures, and two years later he was elected to the committee of the Circle.

The Circle had always published papers presented to its members. These were initially mimeographed and distributed, and by 1977 the papers

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David Charles Watts
(1931–2015)

It was appropriate that the cover of the order of service for the funeral of David Watts, following his death on December 22, 2015, was illustrated with two items of glass—a piece of scientific

numbered about 120. In that year, Robert Charleston, then chairman of the organization, suggested that David produce a newsletter, called *Glass Circle News*, four times a year. It is this series of newsletters for which David will be most remembered. He enthusiastically took up the project, with the help of Peter Lole, Henry Fox, and others. In addition to editing the newsletter, he wrote much of it. He also printed the publication, first at Guy's Hospital and, following his retirement, at home, using newly purchased equipment. He then mailed the publication to all of the Circle's members—a prodigious amount of work. Moreover, he was not hesitant in commenting on the contributions of other authors.

David's newsletters were printed, double-sided, on A4 paper, and the pages were stapled together at the top left corner. Color images remained a problem, however. Eventually, the committee decided that the Circle should have a full-color newsletter, which would require professional printing, so after having served as editor from 1977 to March 2010, David relinquished that position while remaining an active contributor.

David was a very active member of The Glass Circle committee for many years, and in 1993/1994 he was largely instrumental in updating its constitution. He was named an honorary vice president of the Circle, in recognition of his service, in 2001. He resigned from the committee three years later, but he continued to edit the newsletter.

The last lecture he presented to The Glass Circle, on May 6, 2015, was titled "Getting to Know American Glass." It was illustrated, in part, with pieces from his own collection. Although he was already ill at that time, he insisted on revising and publishing this lecture, in two parts, in *Glass Circle News*.

Over the years, David was involved with many other glass-related organizations:

- He was a founding member of The Glass Association in 1983. This association was established at the Broadfield House Glass Museum in central England, which was at that time more interested in 19th-century glass than in glass of the preceding century. The distance from London made it difficult for David to become fully involved, and he never published in that group's journal.



David Watts holds vase by Peter Layton, which was presented to him by The Glass Circle in 2008 in recognition of his role as editor of Glass Circle News for 30 years.

- He was also a founding member, in 1997, of the Contemporary Glass Society (CGS), following the disbanding, five years earlier, of British Artists in Glass. Today, the CGS represents the interests of largely professional glass artists.
- While traveling in the United States on several occasions, he visited many American museums with glass collections. He was also a member of the National American Glass Club, which made him an honorary member, and he attended some of its conventions.
- From 2005 until his resignation in 2012, he was a Fellow of The Corning Museum of Glass, and he was subsequently named an honorary Fellow.
- In 1997, he organized a seminar at The British Museum titled "Glass Collectors and Their Collections of English Glass to circa 1850 in Museums in Great Britain," and he edited the proceedings of that gathering, which were published by The Glass Circle two years later.

David's list of publications is impressive. More than 100 articles in *Glass Circle News* are included among the holdings of the Rakow Research Library of The Corning Museum of Glass, along with articles in the journals of The Glass Circle and the Society of Glass Technology. David also contributed articles to the publications of the Glass Society of Ireland, the Guild of Glass Engravers, and the National American Glass Club.

David co-authored the article "Assessing the Authenticity of the Putative Sebastien Zoude Catalog of 1762" with Hugh Tait in the 2007 volume of the *Journal of Glass Studies*. At that time, Hugh was a keeper at The British Museum. He had a gift for recognizing fakes, and his suggestion that the late Leo Kaplan should subject an English cream-ware candlestick to a thermoluminescence test caused a prolific forger of such items to be exposed.

It is not surprising that David, who was a Londoner and worked in a laboratory that overlooked the site of a former London glasshouse, took a particular interest in London glassmaking and glasshouses. During the excavation of several glasshouses there in the last quarter of the 20th century, David was always ready with comments on the work. This led to his book *A History of Glassmaking in London and Its Development on the Thames South Bank*, which was first published in 2009 and revised (to 324 pages) in 2014. This will be part of his lasting legacy, together with his Web site, www.glassmaking-in-london.co.uk. In 2011, David translated and supplied notes to *Glass Recipes of the Renaissance: Transcription of an Anonymous Venetian Manuscript*, edited by Cesare Moretti and Tullio Toninato.

David was no stranger to controversy. In particular, his assertion that English lead glass was discovered in George Ravenscroft's glasshouse by the Italian Da Costa while he was attempting to make *calcedonio* glass is not widely accepted. Nevertheless, David continued to argue his case until his death.

David's interests were wide-ranging, and with his scientific training and knowledge of chemistry, he was a force to be reckoned with. At all of the meetings of The Glass Circle, David would sit near the front, the better to question the speakers following their talks. His scientific training made him an admirable lecturer, as did his skill and interest in photography.

David was predeceased by his wife, Rosemary, but he is survived by his younger sister, Christine, and his only son, Ben, who in David's later years was also his carer.

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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS ON GLASS BY DAVID C. WATTS

Books

Glass Collectors and Their Collections of English Glass to circa 1850 in Museums in Great Britain, ed. D. C. Watts, London: Glass Circle, 1999.

A History of Glassmaking in London and Its Development on the Thames South Bank, [Barnet, U.K.]: Watts Pub., 2009 (revised in 2014). The cover describes this book as "an historical travelogue tracing what is known about London's numerous glasshouses, who ran them, what they made, where they were located and what has happened to the sites today."

Glass Recipes of the Renaissance: Transcription of an Anonymous Venetian Manuscript, ed. Cesare Moretti and Tullio Toninato, English translation with additional notes by David C. Watts and Cesare Moretti, [Barnet, U.K.]: Watts Pub., 2011. Translation of the transcription of a Venetian batch book dating to about 1560.

Articles

[*Editor's Note:* Dr. Watts's articles in *Glass Circle News* and other publications documented the history of English and foreign glass and glassmaking, and provided accounts of glass-related activities: exhibitions, museum events, lectures, reviews of newly published books, activities of The Glass Circle, auctions, and obituaries.]

Abbreviations:

G CJ *The Glass Circle Journal*
GCN *Glass Circle News*

“Why George Ravenscroft Introduced Lead Oxide into Crystal Glass,” *Glass Technology*, v. 31, no. 5, October 1990, pp. 208–212.

“Who Was John Hill?,” *The Glass Society of Ireland Newsletter*, no. 13, December 1996, pp. 3–6. Eighteenth-century glassmaker associated with Stourbridge and Waterford glasshouses.

“Shades of Red: The Problems of Ruby Glass,” *GCN*, no. 75, June 1998, pp. 8–9. Based on lecture to The Glass Circle and the Society of Glass Technology.

“Some London Glasshouses in the 17th to 19th Centuries and Their Particular Association with the Thames South Bank,” *The Guild of Glass Engravers Newsletter*, Spring 1999, pp. 4–9.

“Shades of Red. Part 1: The Copper Red and Ruby Glasses,” *G CJ*, v. 9, 2001, pp. 41–58. Based on a lecture to The Glass Circle, February 10, 1998.

“Shades of Red. Part 2: Gold Ruby Glass,” *GCN*, no. 91, June 2002, p. 9. Based on a lecture to The Artworkers Guild, February 2002.

“Who Made the Newcastle Glasses?,” *GCN*, no. 92, September 2002, pp. 1–7. Historical overview of the glasses and where they were made.

“Cut Glass and Its Development in the 18th Century,” *GCN*, no. 100, September 2004, pp. 8–10. “Understanding the development of English cut drinking glasses and particularly the origin of faceting.”

“The Action Taken by Sir Robert Mansell to Preserve His Patent Monopoly of Making Glass with Coal,” *G CJ*, v. 10, 2006, pp. 6–12. Early to late 17th century.

“The Great Aldrevandinus Beaker Mystery . . .,” *GCN*, no. 107, June 2006, pp. 1–9. Detailed discussion on the origins of the beaker.

“The Forgotten Great Fire of London,” *GCN*, no. 108, September 2006, pp. 1–7. Includes history of glassmaking in London’s Ratcliffe district, about 1580 to 1796.

“The Ide Family Glassworks at Glass House Fields,” *GCN*, no. 109, December 2006, pp. 5–8. History of the sheet glass and mirror manufacturer, founded in 1860 by Thomas Ide.

“Assessing the Authenticity of the Putative Sebastien Zoude Catalog of 1762” (with Hugh Tait), *Journal of Glass Studies*, v. 49, 2007, pp. 153–178. The authors challenge both the attribution and the dating of this catalog, now in the collection of the Rakow Research Library, The Corning Museum of Glass.

“T & W Ide. Part 2: The 20th Century,” *GCN*, no. 110, March 2007, pp. 10–11. History of the factory, founded by Thomas Ide.

“Apsley Pellatt on England’s Black and Murky Land,” *GCN*, no. 111, June 2007, pp. 15–16. The use of coal, coke, and gas in English glass factories, 17th to 19th centuries.

“Found Wanting: The Putative Sebastien Zoude Glass Catalogue of 1762,” *GCN*, no. 113, December 2007, pp. 3–5. Mainly about the provenance and authenticity of the catalog.

“The Emergence and Adoption of Style in English Lead Crystal Glass in the Late 17th Century,” *GCN*, no. 115, June 2008, pp. 2–6.

“Here’s to a Tot of Gin!,” *GCN*, no. 117, December 2008, cover and pp. 3–7. English gin glasses, late 17th to early 19th centuries.

“How George Ravenscroft Discovered English Lead Crystal Glass,” *The Glass Club Bulletin*, no. 213, Spring 2009, pp. 6–12. Mainly the second half of the 17th century.

“The Causes and Battle against the Duty on Glass, 1695–1699. Part 1,” *GCN*, no. 119, June 2009, pp. 12–15. Glassmaking in England.

“The Causes and Battle against the Duty on Glass, 1695–1699. Part 2: The Events of 1697,” *GCN*, no. 120, September 2009, pp. 10–12. British glasshouses.

“The Causes and Battle against the Duty on Glass, 1695–1699. Part 3: The Events of 1698,” *GCN*, no. 121, December 2009, pp. 10–12.

“The Causes and Battle against the Duty on Glass, 1695–1699. Part 4: The Events of the 1698/9 Parliament,” *GCN*, v. 33, no. 1, March 2010, pp. 12–14.

“Getting to Know American Glass,” *GCN*, v. 38, no. 2 (= issue 138), July 2015, pp. 16–19. Historical overview of the development of the American glass industry, 18th and 19th centuries.

“American Glass: Getting to Know American Glass,” *GCN*, v. 38, no. 3 (= issue 139), November 2015, pp. 16–18. Brief overview of the development of the American glassware industry, about the mid-19th to late 20th centuries.