

Press Release:

Watt a 'great man!' Why [James Watt \(1736-1819\)](#) is Essential in Celebrating His Pivotal Work

Caroline Archer-Parré and Malcolm Dick offer new perspectives of Watts' work in terms of context and his influences

(22nd July 2019, Liverpool University Press): The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain, which became the world's leading commercial nation by the mid-eighteenth century. So which historical figures played a part in this major turning point in history? One of them was James Watt, a scientist, inventor and engineer, whose pumping and rotative steam engines represent a summit of technological achievement in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

After Watts' death, his surviving son, James Watt junior projected his father's image by commissioning sculptures, medals, paintings and biographies which celebrated his reputation as a 'great man' of the Industrial Revolution. [James Watt \(1736-1819\)](#) is the first book which re-evaluates James Watt, his influence and in coincidence with the 200th anniversary of his death in 2019. For instance, the book pays particular attention to previously neglected themes, such as Watt's religious background, the participation of his family in the slave trade, the influence of his wives on his work and well-being and the nature of his political ideas.

This book does not focus entirely on the past. In fact, it provides a foundation upon which future scholarship can be built to explore the process of technological innovation, the connections between science and its social and intellectual context and how reputations are made and cemented.

'High quality chapters, convincingly argued and clearly written, offering new insights into Watt's life and work...' (**Professor Christine MacLeod, University of Bristol**)

*Caroline Archer-Parré is Professor of Typography at Birmingham City University, Director of the Centre for Printing History & Culture and Chairman of the Baskerville Society. She is the author of *The Kynoch Press, 1876-1982: the anatomy of a printing house*, (British Library, 2000); *Paris Underground* (MBP, 2004); and *Tart cards: London's illicit advertising art* (MBP, 2003). Caroline is currently Co-investigator on the AHRC-funded project, 'Letterpress Printing: past, present, future'.*

*Malcolm Dick is Director of the Centre for West Midlands History at the University of Birmingham. He directed two history projects in Birmingham between 2000 and 2004: the *Millennium Project*, which created a multi-media archive of post-1945 Birmingham history and *Revolutionary Players* which produced an online resource of the history of the West Midlands region. Malcolm has published books on Joseph Priestley, Matthew Boulton and the history of Birmingham and co-directs the Centre for Printing History & Culture.*

[James Watt \(1736-1819\)](#) is available for pre-order and is due to be published on 30th September via the [Liverpool University Press website](#)