



A history of the Immortal Memory Toast

Around the late 1700s and early 1800s it was a common tradition to offer a toast to the Immortal Memory of the recently deceased.

Only three people are celebrated today with Immortal Memory Toasts: Robert Burns, Admiral Lord Nelson and James Watt.

The first dinner held to commemorate Burns' life and work was held in 1801. At that dinner a toast to Burn's Immortal Memory was given. The toast celebrated all aspects of Burns' work, life and legacy. Within a few years Burns life was being celebrated by many groups on the anniversary of his birthday, 25th January.

In 1806 a dinner was held at Oxford University where a toast was made to the recently deceased Admiral Lord Nelson: this Immortal Memory toast was held in silence. The tradition of toasting the Immortal Memory of Admiral Lord Nelson is still celebrated by navies and maritime groups around the world.

The celebration of James Watt was started by members of our Institution in 1867. Our records show that a toast to the Immortal Memory of James Watt was 'pledged in solemn silence'. The Immortal Memory Toast to James Watt has continued since those early days of the James Watt Dinner.

IES is very privileged to continue this fine tradition of honouring the memory and achievement of James Watt.