

lodged at Mrs Aston's house from 1665 until his death in 1691. Francis' elder brother, William, acted as agent to Mr Harrington's estate, collecting all the rents and attending to the business associated with the property. It would appear from the correspondence that Mr Harrington was an invalid. He required very little money for his own needs; and he allowed the Aston family to retain and use the remainder of the income. Francis says in a letter that 'my mother and brother William had the full use of Mr Harrington's money for more than twelve years before he died.' Mr Harrington left the whole of his estate and possessions to William Aston, and when the latter died they passed to Francis Aston.

The air pump which is exhibited in the library of the Society was made by Francis Hauksbee (junior) in 1715. Francis Aston had ordered it for himself just before he died, and when it was completed the Council decided to purchase it out of the funds left by him to the Society.

RICHARD WALLER

(about 1650 to 1715)

Richard Waller was born about the middle of the seventeenth century, but the year is not known, nor is there any information about his early years. His education must have been good as he possessed a wide knowledge of the sciences besides being a capable linguist and a fair artist; he was also a keen man of business. It is likely that he was a business man in the city of London, as he had an address in Broad Street. His country estate was at Northaw in Hertfordshire and he also owned a farm at 'Mynty, Co. Gloucester.'

Waller was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1681 and soon became actively interested in its administration. He was elected a member of the Council for the year 1684-85, and again for 1686-87. At the Anniversary Meeting of 1687 he was elected junior Secretary in the place of Sir John Hoskins who had accepted the post on the resignation of Francis Aston, and Dr Tancred Robinson in December 1685, under the circumstances which have already been described. His colleague was Dr T. Gale, an antiquary.

PLATE 7



RICHARD WALLER
(about 1650-1715)

His appointment was of great benefit to the Society coming as it did after a series of sixteen secretaries only two of whom had served for more than ten years and most of them for two or three years only. The number of Fellows at this time was less than 120. Many were in arrear with their subscription and the attendances at meetings were poor. A firmer hand in administration was badly needed, and Waller took his work seriously. He acted as first Secretary for seven years, and attended eighteen Council Meetings out of the twenty-seven which were held, his colleague T. Gale having only been at one. After 1695 Dr Hans Sloane replaced Gale and took over the duties of first Secretary; from this time up to the end of 1703, when Isaac Newton was elected President, Sloane attended thirty-seven Council meetings out of forty-three, at only three of which the President was present, the Secretaries having to take charge of the Society's business.

With Newton as President the administration showed greater activity and Sloane as first Secretary was responsible for most of the work.

Waller's tenure of the post of secretary which he held for twenty-eight years with Dr Hans Sloane as his colleague for nineteen of them must have done much to produce an orderly administration which under the Presidency of Sir Isaac Newton from 1703 provided the impulse that launched the Society on its successful career.

The most important matter which came before the Council while he and Dr Hans Sloane were Secretaries was the selection of a house in which the Society could meet, and where its collections could be kept. There were difficulties in remaining at Gresham College, either as guests or tenants, and in 1705 the College formally notified the Society that their occupation of its rooms must be terminated. Steps had already been taken to seek other accommodation for in April 1703 a committee of six, including the Treasurer (Mr Pitfeild) and Dr H. Sloane, one of the Secretaries, had been appointed to deal with the situation. In the course of six years the committee inspected many properties but could find none that was suitable. The matter by this time had become urgent and on 8 September 1710 another committee was appointed, of which Waller and his fellow-secretary were members, to consider the acquisition of two houses in Crane Court,

Fleet Street. They reported in favour of the proposal and this was approved and accepted by the Council before the end of the month.

Waller died at Northaw in the first half of January 1715, but as the registers at Northaw have since been destroyed by fire the exact date is not known. Other registers fail to give any particulars of him or his family, but his mother was alive in 1707 and was then residing in Crosby Square, London. She had married again and her name was, at that time, Mrs Mary Moore. The Council Minutes record that Waller was present at the meeting on 23 December 1714; but his death was reported at the following meeting on 13 January 1715.

As Secretary of the Society, Waller corresponded regularly with scientists abroad and many of the letters are in the archives of the Society and in the British Museum. He wrote equally well in Latin, French and Italian, and his knowledge of the sciences helped him with the many translations he undertook. He published many papers in the *Philosophical Transactions* on botanical, zoological and anatomical subjects, and was responsible for translations from the Italian of 'Essays of Natural Experiments' and from the French of 'The Natural History of Animals.' He also published *The Posthumous Works of Robert Hooke*, to which he added a life of Hooke. He is known to have painted portraits of some of his contemporaries. The Society possesses a volume of water-colour drawings of plants by him which are remarkable for the amount of detail and the technique which they display. His knowledge of botany was by no means superficial, and he took a keen interest in all biological subjects.

In 1710 Waller undertook to build a Repository for the Society's collections in Crane Court for the sum of £200, but in 1712 he reported the cost had been £400. There were apparently some differences of opinion regarding the matter as Waller eventually accepted £300 as payment in full on condition that he should be registered as a benefactor. In this connexion it is interesting to record that Waller had made a will, dated 21 February 1711, leaving £1000 to the Society, but this was revoked by a codicil on 19 June 1714 'for several good and weighty reasons.'

His portrait by T. Murray after Sir Godfrey Kneller was presented by him to the Society in 1711 (Plate 7).