



Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School

A Member of The Williamson Trust

Acting CEO / Headteacher: Mr E Hodges



Dear Staff, Parents, Pupils, Governors, Trustees and Old Williamsonian's

As some of you may have expected, or even anticipated, from the 2019-20 academic year the School will introduce a 7th House. The purpose of this letter is to address why we are introducing a 7th House, a brief summary on the history of our House System, and the three names that have been shortlisted which are to be voted upon.

Currently Years 7 and 8 are taught in seven teaching groups J, O, S, E, P, H and W, as well as being assigned to either Bridge, Castle, Gordon etc. This has been a long standing tradition of the Math, and as the school continues to expand in numbers, we must also expand our House system. By introducing a 7th House, each pupil will be able to reintegrate fully into the House system, and teaching groups J, O, S, E, P, H and W will no longer be necessary.

The original House System under Mr. Cape (Headteacher 1910-1916) had split students into six houses, with the name of each House being that of the Housemaster. In 1918 however, Mr Lucy (Headteacher 1916-1926) wanted a system of grouping boys into Houses according to the district in which they lived. This was so that they could meet for games practice without having to come to the school field. Also the boys had a better chance of getting to know other members since they lived near one another, and in many cases travelled to school together. This period in time marks the birth of Bridge (to which all boys who crossed Rochester Bridge would belong), Castle (whose members were Rochester boys), Gordon (to which the boys from Old Brompton and Gillingham would belong), Pitt (for boys from Chatham and Luton) and Tower (for boys from Gillingham High Street and Chatham Hill). This modernization was significant for the school. Since then there have been four significant moments in the House System that are worth mentioning. In 1939 the House System was disbanded due to the War, and revived again in 1945; but no longer with Tower House. 1945 also saw the School stop assigning boys to Houses based on location. 1994 saw the School increase to five houses with River, and in 1996 Thetford was introduced.

Now in late 2018, we embark on the introduction of the 7th House. The three names shortlisted are: **Garrick**, **Tower** and **Watts**.

Garrick - David Garrick was an English actor, playwright, theatre manager and producer. Garrick attended the school in 1737, and it is reported he was under the Headteacher's private tutelage. His name is also on a plaque that can be found in Rochester High Street above Hairstyle Avenue. This plaque marks the site where the old school used to be located in the car park just adjacent to it. The plaque reads 'On this site between the years of 1709-1970 stood Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School where the great actor David Garrick was a pupil in 1737'.



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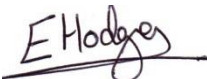
Tower – Jezreel’s Tower was built in Gillingham in the 1880’s by James Jershom Jezreel. The Tower was located at the top of Chatham hill and was the highest point in the area. The connection to the school is arguably the strongest of the three proposed names. Tower was one of the original five Houses when the House system was modernized in 1918 under Mr. Lucy. The House system was disbanded due to the Second World War but re-formed afterwards, without Tower House. It was not revived with the other four as most of the boys who came to school from Towers’ area no longer attended the school.

Watts – Richard Watts was a businessman and MP for Rochester. During his lifetime he helped supply the Royal Navy, helped to build Upnor Castle and was a close associate of Queen Elizabeth 1st. He died in 1579 and is buried in Rochester Cathedral. After his death the Richards Watts Charities were set up. In 1886 there was an additional scheme extending the work of the charity. Two exhibitions were made annually. One to our school, and the other to RGS. The Watts Exhibition is a prize awarded to students who go to either Oxford or Cambridge University.

We would be grateful if you could take the time to vote for your preferred name using the slip below. We plan on announcing the name at the Christmas Carol Service.

Having decided on a name, the next stage in the process will be to allocate students to the new House, and we will be writing again in Term 2 to explain how this will work.

Your sincerely



Mr E Hodges
Headteacher

Please return to the school office or to office@sjwms.co.uk by 12th November 2018

Name:.....
Please Print

Form *:
(* if a pupil)

Garrick

Tower

Watts