

THE WHITWORTH SOCIETY

C/O THE INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
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<http://www.whitworthsociety.org>

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Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street,
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Dear Mrs May,

Reference: 150 years of Whitworth Scholarships

On 18 March 1868, Victorian visionary, Joseph Whitworth, wrote to your predecessor, Benjamin Disraeli, offering to fund a new engineering scholarship. His belief was that Great Britain was falling behind the rest of the world in its industrial advancement. Whitworth wrote of his desire to “bring science and industry into closer relation with each other” and explained that his scholarship would help ex-apprentices obtain a theoretical education at selected universities. Queen Victoria, a personal friend, supported the Whitworth Scholarship and named its benefactors “Whitworth Scholars”.

In 1923, the Whitworth Society was founded by Dr Henry Selby Hele-Shaw, a Whitworth Scholar and past president of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE). The Whitworth Scholarship, which covers all engineer subjects, has benefited over 2400 engineers, men and women from all walks of life. Whitworth Scholars have been at the forefront of science, engineering, mathematics and business. The Whitworth Society takes pride in the fact that 14 Scholars have served as presidents of the IMechE, while 17 have become Fellows of the Royal Society.

Over 400 Scholars - from recent graduates to senior managers and professors - are currently active across the engineering spectrum. The scholarships continue to be supported by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for which we are grateful. At present, between 10 and 15 scholarships are awarded each year to full and part-time students. Applications are received from March to June each year. Interviews are held during August and new Whitworth Scholars are elected in October, receiving their very own Whitworth medal.

Echoing Joseph Whitworth’s concerns in 1868, we see that today, the United Kingdom has fallen behind America, France, Italy and Germany in our productivity. We appreciate that academic standards in schools are being driven up with the new curriculum, raising our next generation of engineers closer to other leading technology countries. This can only be beneficial for the wider United Kingdom.

The unique Whitworth Scholarship is not discipline-dependent and covers all areas of engineering, and with this we ask that you support the scholarship further and actively promote it through your Apprenticeship Reform Programme. We would like to meet with your relevant leaders and put together a five year plan for advertising the scholarship.

I look forward to your consideration and your response in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Howard Stone WhSch, FIMechE, MBA