



Lichfield Science & Engineering Society

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PRESIDENT 2009-2011

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Newsletter: July 2009

Introduction

Included with this mailing are your new Programme Card, Visits Notice & Application Form, Discussion Lunch Notice & Application Form, Dinner Application Form, and most importantly, your Membership Renewal Form!

You might like to note also that my Newsletter is now available on our website.

Work Experience

We have been approached by members and others for assistance in finding Work Experience placements for children in year 10. If any member can help in this respect, please let me know. This is a part of our promotion of Science and Engineering to these children.

Membership

As announced at the AGM and repeated to the full May meeting, we will try a new approach to admission control to our meetings such that, as from September, only members and their guests will be allowed in until 7:50 pm, after which it will be first come, first served. In this context, Members will be taken to include members of those societies with which we have reciprocal arrangements.

To keep you better informed of the Management Committee's decisions, as from now we will be having four mailings per year: April (AGM Calling Notice), July (including your Programme Card), September and December. If you think you have missed one, please let a member of the committee know. For those registered for e-mail notices, please ensure that you tell us of any change in your address, perhaps due to a change of ISP but also note that, however good our systems, occasionally a message does get lost in the web.

In mid-June, the Garrick informed us of the hire charges for the next two years: for 2010 they go up almost 32% and for 2011 by a

further 20%. We assume this to be in response to the removal of local authority subsidies.

Meetings

April 21st, Neil Kermode's tremendous delivery of his lecture 'Ocean Power' was full of superb touches such as 'we've stopped making oil' and the comparison of the state of development of extraction of the energy of the seas with Wilbur Wright's early efforts to fly brought home the relatively imminent energy crisis to the 130 Members and 27 Visitors present. Another powerful performance, then, to end an excellent 2008-2009 season of lecture meetings.

Dissection and Display in the 18th Century provided an interesting counterpoint to recent more technical lectures for the 89 Members, 29 Visitors and 2 Students attending on 14th May. A rather gruesome interest in the hanging and subsequent public dissection of criminals led the 18thC public to accept the display of suitably preserved and presented body parts, objects which today are reserved for museums. To top it all, the presentation on May 14th by Simon Chaplin was possibly the best we have seen.

The AGM saw Richard Tetley retire as President and Professor John Campbell elected into that role. The Management Committee also reluctantly parted with Cliff Ricketts, who has been a tower of strength and fount of good advice for so many years that we've lost count. Marion Sadler also retired from the committee under the rules of the Constitution and the remainder were re-elected en bloc. We were pleased also to have Dr Robert Giles elected to the committee. Bob, now retired, lives in Sutton Coldfield and was a chemist for an electro-plating company.

AOB brought a lively discussion on the problems of our growing membership and limited venues.

The Constitution decrees a Committee of 12 and we now have just 10: also we lose another

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committee member next year. So, if any member feels that they could spare a few hours a month to help to run our unique society, we would love to hear from you. New blood is good for the continuing success of any organisation and we are no exception. In particular, we could do with a Publicity Assistant and a Webmaster so, if you have some IT skills, you would be especially welcome.

Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture

Rather than a reminder to purchase tickets for our annual prestige lecture, this year by Bristol University anatomist and TV presenter Dr Alice Roberts, I have to report that the event is already sold out.

Informal Supper

10th June 2009 at Mabel's, Curborough, where Kay's famous Bakewell Tart was as popular as ever, with many of the 86 members and guests present choosing it over the strawberries! Michaela Greenhalgh (Severn Trent Water) combined an interesting account of the size and complexity of the systems for the supply of *eau potable* and the concomitant disposal of our more-or-less-fluid waste with an appeal to ensure that we don't ask the latter to cope with anything too solid.

Next year is the 25th since the formation of the Society and we are organising a Sunday Hog Roast Lunch to be held at Paul Bettson's farm in Armitage. There will be a demonstration of some electronic phenomena and some other ideas are being explored. This is aimed at being an important social event: more news as we refine our ideas and add yours - **PLEASE**.

Lichfield Festival Lecture

On 15th July Dr Mark Miodownik's gave his inspired lecture "Strange Materials" to a packed audience in the Lichfield Garrick Main Theatre. Starting from the art in pre-historic cave paintings, he showed how science, initially in the form of the chemistry of pigments, has increasingly affected our lives. Turning the subject full circle, Mark finally described how sensors embedded in clothing could not only warn doctors of health problems but, as has been demonstrated by artists, could also be used to change the colour of our wallpaper.

Annual Dinner

Once again be at the splendid **Oat Barn**, Packington Moor Farm, when we will be saying *au revoir* and many, many thanks to Richard Tetley as President. We will also be inaugurating Professor John Campbell as his replacement for 2009-2011. Wednesday, **21st October** is the date for your diaries.

Discussion Luncheons

The next Discussion Luncheon will be held at Erasmus Darwin House on Tuesday, 29th September when Cliff Ricketts will lead on "Energy Supplies for the Future".

Visits

Following last year's excellent talk at our supper by George Hook, Tim has arranged a visit to His Mother of Pearl factory. This should be a very interesting visit to see how it all actually done.

Tim has also organised a very special day out at the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington. An all-day outing to see inside several of the best equipped and staffed laboratories in the world plus a talk and lunch in the historic Bushy House. Where else could you get all that for the price which Tim has arranged for you!

The visit on **18th June** to Apedale Heritage Centre and the Moseley Railway Trust was enjoyed by 23 members. We were given a tour of the more accessible parts of the drift mine itself, entering via a slightly daunting 1 in 4 slope. Miners would then have proceeded to a lower level on a 1 in 2 slope but the public is not allowed that far down. In addition to a large display of mining equipment and a mock-up miner's cottage, the Museum records the presence of a large Roman settlement in the area. With facilities for 18", 24" and 30" gauge rolling stock, the associated Railway Trust has some 60 narrow gauge locomotives, mainly electric or ic-engined, the largest such collection in the country and we were able to drive some of these on the site.

The 9th July visit to Birmingham Post Print House and Editorial Offices was postponed at the last minute due to the redundancies resulting from the reorganisation of the company.

Education Fund

As you will all be painfully aware, interest rates are at an historic low. This will severely reduce the amount we can give to schools - unless we get a better-than-usual response to the appeal for donations which is included on your Membership Renewal forms. **Please give generously!**

Closure

Once you've sent in your membership renewals, and your visits, dinner and discussion lunch cheques and applications, enjoy your holidays! I look forward to seeing you again in September.

Brian Hammond
Chairman