



Lichfield Science & Engineering Society

PATRON

Mr. James Hawley

H.M. Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire

CHAIRMAN

Brian Hammond DipEE, DMS, MITE
Chartered Engineer

PRESIDENT 2007-2009

Richard J Tetley

Newsletter: July 2008

As I start my first Newsletter, I have the thought "That's a hard act to follow!" Attendance at meetings last year **averaged 125!** In fact, the average during Jenny's Chairmanship was **over 115!**

Would you be prepared to help us to maintain this success? You don't need to join the committee, though you would be welcome, just help with, say, the publicity for one or a group of events or write a report for the press on, say, a visit. Think about it and let me know.

Jenny Arthur

Having been co-opted onto the committee in February 2002 as Education Officer, Jenny Arthur stepped into the Chair after less than a year of experience on the committee. This was a time of rapid growth for the Society, which was beginning to see larger audiences than St Mary's Centre could accommodate and so Jenny led us through the move to the Lichfield **Garrick** for the 2003-2004 season. Since then, she has contributed enormously to our programme, with a continuous stream of suggestions for speakers, not only for our lecture meetings but for the Darwin and Festival Lectures, Dinners and Suppers. Never tiring, always helpful, cheerful and exuberant, she managed also to keep our local schools fully involved in her role as Education Officer and still found time for her other interests.

Thank goodness we still have her on the Committee and as our Education Officer!

Obituary

His many friends will be saddened to hear that David Durston, a founder member of the Society, Treasurer 1989-92, General Secretary 1996-01, passed away on May 16th in his nursing home room in Shepperton.

Membership

We now have 269 members, the highest ever! I hope you will agree that it represents extremely

good value for money at £18 for our eight lecture meetings plus all the perks of membership and that you will return your membership renewals and cheques by September please.

Meetings – not just Lectures!

Once again, our meetings vary between Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, so please check your Programme Card enclosed carefully as you copy the dates into your diaries.

Our success in bringing you high quality speakers means that, on occasions, the Studio has reached capacity and later arrivals have had to be turned away. This is most regrettable but we have no solution to the problem; even the proposed Darwin Hall is now unlikely to be of any use to us. All we can do is to advise you to arrive early. We suggest you take advantage of the opening of the Green Room Café Bar before and, usually, after our meetings to socialise.

Attendance at the meeting on 13 May 2008 on Nanotechnology was
Members: **94**
Visitors: **26** Students: **1** Total: **121**.

Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture

If you haven't already purchased tickets for this year's lecture, you should do so straight away. The Lichfield **Garrick** publicity machine starts early and Professor Lord Alec Broers is very popular. His lecture, "Harnessing Science: was it easier in Darwin's time?" on **Tuesday, 18th November**, poses the question "Is the public more willing and better prepared today to assess the true value of technological advances than it was in Darwin's day?"

Free to Members?

There has been a misconception that all of our lectures are free to members. Unfortunately, we can only include the eight monthly meeting

Chairman:
Eur Ing Brian Hammond, DipEE,
DMS, CEng, MITE
6 Darnford Lane
LICHFIELD
Staffs. WS14 9RN
Tel: 01543 252 693
brian@lsec.org.uk

General Secretary:
Alan Hooper, BSc, CEng, MICME
85 Tamworth Road
LICHFIELD
Staffs. WS14 9HE
Tel: 01543 317 739
alan@lsec.org.uk

Hon. Treasurer:
Mrs C Hannam, BSc
52 Kensington Oval
Boathouse Field
LICHFIELD
Staffs. WS13 6NR
Tel: 01543 255 903
carol@lsec.org.uk

Membership Secretary:
Paul Bettson
Tuppenhurst Farm
Armitage
RUGELEY
Staffs. WS15 4HJ
Tel: 01543 490 351
paul@lsec.org.uk



lectures in the membership. The wording on Programme Card has been amended to make this clearer.

Erasmus Darwin and Festival Lectures

The Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture is our big public event and the Festival lecture, which is intended to illustrate the frontiers of Art and Science, is one which we organise for the Lichfield Festival and is theirs. You must purchase tickets for both of these direct from the Lichfield **Garrick** Box Office but you do get a concessionary price for the Darwin Lecture if you say you are a member. Both are in the Main Theatre this year so there should be plenty of space but obviously less choice the later you leave it to book.

Informal Supper

George Hook gave a superbly well balanced talk on his business in Mother-of-Pearl manufacturing, with just the right balance of humour, business and technical information. Absolutely right for the informal nature of the Supper enjoyed by the 74 members and guests present. It was a fascinating insight into the production of everything Mother-of-Pearl, from the well known pearl buttons, through jewellery, to knife handles and spoons.

To improve audibility, we plan to have our PA System in operation at Mabel's next year, when we will have a talk by Rita Morton on The Elan Valley Dam: I hear that she is very good.

Lichfield Festival Lecture

Brian Hurwitz gave an excellent performance in this years lecture on "Narrative Thinking in Medical Practice - Literary Imagination in the Practice of Medicine". Plenty of food for thought in that and very appropriate in this 60th year of the NHS.

For next July we have booked Dr Mark Miodownik of Kings College London to give a talk on "Strange Materials". He mentions wallpaper that changes to suit your mood, how strange is that!

Annual Dinner

Once again we are at The Oat Barn, Packington Moor Farm, for our Annual Dinner, to be held on **Wednesday, 22nd October**. It's a fairly informal dinner, as you can judge from a dress code of lounge suits, so do join us at this first class venue by completing the enclosed application. After the meal, a member of the Society, Dr John Lester, will give a short talk entitled 'Sundials and Such'.

Discussion Luncheon

The next Lunch - application form enclosed - will be on **Tuesday, September 23rd**. With the

subject of Violent Crime, it will be led by retired police sergeant, Kieran Brennan to follow on with a similar theme from our first lecture.

Visits

For personal reasons, John Hodges has decided to retire from arranging the visits. He has worked hard on our behalf over the last 6 years, organizing some 40 visits to 35 different companies, an excellent record and one he can be justly proud of. His attention to the detail of the arrangements has always ensured that they ran like clockwork. **A resounding thank you, John, from all of us who have enjoyed them.**

The visit to Birmingham Town Hall on 10th June was enjoyed by some 44 members. We started with a potted history, from the 18th century need for the hall, an immediate extension for the 6000-pipe organ, the addition of a second balcony, disuse in the 1990's, and the recent removal of that second balcony during the refurbishment. Then we had a tour which included some of the places the general public never get to see. Great!

Tim Sims has agreed to front the visits and will be your main contact point whilst Irene Ordidge will be doing the 'back office' work and Paul Bettson, with his previous experience in the job, is helping out in the short term too. **Many thanks to them all for stepping in at short notice!**

Visits have been arranged to the Symphony Hall and to the Gun Barrel Proof House, both in Birmingham - see enclosed forms - and others are in the pipeline, including one to George Hook's Mother-of-Pearl "manufactory".

Education Fund

An object of the Society is "To establish and administer an Education Fund for the furtherance of the educational activities of the Society". We have several hundred pounds to give away each year and Jenny Arthur will be pleased to advise on applications. Please help to ensure that schools know about this if you come across a project in need (but note that we do not fund school 'bus running costs').

Well, I hope you have enjoyed my first Newsletter. Now please also enjoy your holidays - but don't let your anticipation detract you from filling in all those forms and sending off your cheques and offers of help before you go!

Brian Hammond
Chairman