



Lichfield Science & Engineering Society

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PRESIDENT 2009-2011

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Newsletter: September 2009

Welcome back! If you have been away, I trust the weather was kind to you and you have returned fired with enthusiasm for another season of inspiring lectures.

At this juncture, I will repeat our call for new committee members. It is interesting work and does not have to be arduous if there are enough of us. There are several areas where help would be welcomed so just have a chat with Paul Bettson or myself if you feel that you may be interested or could help.

Website

Our website is once again much improved, thanks to Webmaster Paul Bettson, and worth a visit whenever you forget a date or lose a form or simply want some more information on an event, past or future. Forms, Programme Card, Newsletter, History, Links for more information on the subjects of our lectures - it's all there! If you have access to the web, go to **www.LSES.org.uk** for an interesting visit.

Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture

I hope that we will once again be celebrating the achievements of a group of local school students at this year's lecture by publicly presenting them to Alice Roberts. Four Nether Stowe sixth formers provided GKN Driveline, Erdington, with a design to aid their drive-shaft production line.

As I am sure you know by now, this year's Memorial Lecture had completely sold out by mid-July. I am truly sorry that some members were unable to obtain tickets and I felt that I should give you an explanation.

Our problem is caused by our success in finding good speakers prepared to deliver excellent lectures at reasonable cost, thus attracting good numbers of visitors. However, at our meetings, visitors' entrance fees in effect pay the cost of hire of the venue, enabling us to

keep subscriptions low. Visitors are also important as they help to fulfil the objectives of the Constitution (Clauses 2a and 2c).

So we need a venue which is compatible with the standing and excellence of the speakers and I hope you will agree that the Lichfield Garrick is what we need in this respect. However, a commercial venue such as this imposes its own terms and conditions: including our Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture in their Autumn (May to December) brochure means that, when the brochure is released to the public, the public may book seats for any of the events advertised. Hence our Lecture is advertised - and tickets put on sale - rather earlier than heretofore.

I did negotiate a brief period during which LSES Members could book their seats prior to the release of the brochure and I drew members' attention to this in my April Newsletter. I repeated the message at several lectures and all of this I will continue to do each year.

This issue of the excess of demand for seats at our lectures over their availability is a continuing concern and is discussed and agonised over at almost every meeting of your Management Committee. We will always welcome suggestions as to how we may improve the position!

Next year we will have the inventor of DNA Fingerprinting, Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys, FRS, and he is also likely to be very popular. I will try to ensure that tickets are again available to you for a short time before they go on sale to the public and you do need to take advantage of this concession.

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Annual Dinner

21st October 2009: The Oat Barn, Packington Moor Farm will see the retirement of Richard Tetley from the post of President.

Well known by members as the taller of the two Richards who seem to have run the Society for so much of its life, Richard Tetley held that most onerous of posts, Meetings Secretary from 1992 to 1997. He was also active in the background before, during and after that period, introducing the Society's Letterhead and managing our stationery, maintaining the Membership List and, as publisher, producing the first version of our Short History booklet in 2002. With "the other Richard", he also organised no less than ten Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lectures and a lot more besides. Richard has thus been a stalwart of the Society over many years following his retirement and we all, I am sure, are deeply grateful to him.

Elected at alternate AGMs by the members then present, Presidents are inaugurated on the next appropriate occasion - our Annual Dinner - and so we will also be inaugurating John Campbell. Whilst working for Cosworth, John was the originator of the Cosworth Casting Process for the production of aluminium alloy cylinder blocks, a process adopted by Ford in the USA but under the name Coscat. He was, for 15 years, Professor of Casting Technology in the University of Birmingham, retiring in 2004.

The author of many papers and patents, John was elected a Fellow of the UK Royal Academy of Engineering in 1992 and received the OBE in 1993, climaxing in May 2009 with his election as our President!

Visits

The visit by 42 members to Taylors Eayre & Smith, Bellfounders, Bellhangers & Engineers, in Loughborough on 16th July was another triumph for Tim & Irene. Our guide, Mr David Corley, gave us a most interesting tour of this Victorian manufactory, one of only two bell foundries in the UK and world renowned for the quality and tune of its bells. As they make virtually everything to do with bells, we were able to watch some of the ancillary cast ironworks being poured.

Irene and Tim are extremely pleased to have arranged a Virtual Reality visit on November 3rd to HoloVis at Lutterworth. This is an aspect to which we have been trying to secure a visit for several years so we are really pleased and sure it will be a great event. The Company are very keen on our visit, their Chairman from London hoping to be present to welcome us and one of their Partner companies, Autodesk, offering a presentation. Details from Tim herewith: get your applications in early!

Still to come are visits to George Hook & Co - Mother of Pearl Worker on Thursday 24th September & Thursday 1st October and the National Physical Laboratory on Thursday 8th October. I am sure that those attending either of these will have splendid day out!

If you intend to attend a visit, please **always** complete and return the appropriate slip or, if at the last minute, 'phone or e-mail and await an answer before committing. Unless you do this, you cannot be notified if a visit is full, cancelled, postponed or changed and you may arrive to find yourself turned away or simply all alone. It has happened!

Education Fund

In the current economic climate the income available for us to distribute to schools is very low. Your committee have considered ways of overcoming this and decided that we should top-up the total available to the average of the last three years from the Society's general fund.

Lab-In-A-Lorry is an initiative run by the Institute of Physics and the Schlumberger Foundation. They have three lorries which tour secondary schools, giving the children a day's experience of science. The programme is guided by volunteers who want to share their passion for science and their curiosity about the world we live in and can give one or more days of their time during the week to help staff the lorry. They will be given a full briefing on the experiments which the young people will be doing plus guidance on how to help them explore and learn by themselves. The aim is to make the experience as enjoyable and inspiring for the volunteers as it undoubtedly will be for the young visitors.

If you feel you could be involved in this work, I would be pleased to discuss the idea further with you. If we can find a few volunteers, I believe that I can get some help from the professional engineering institutions locally and we could then secure visits to some of our local schools. Why not do your bit to enthuse the youngsters with science!

If you have internet access, why not visit <http://www.labinalorry.org> and read more about this project.

In Conclusion

I look forward to seeing many of you at our forthcoming lectures and the Annual Dinner. I also look forward to hearing your views on the Society, its management and its various activities.

Brian Hammond
Chairman