



Lichfield Science & Engineering Society

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THE AGM

The AGM in May was attended by 133 members. After I gave the chairman's report Mrs. Carol Hannam presented the Financial Report on behalf of Dr. Robert Giles who could not attend. I reported that our Patron, Sir James Hawley, had resigned at the AGM and I had written to him to express our thanks for his support over the years and to wish him a happy retirement. The whole committee was re elected en block and we are actively looking for a new Patron.

Following the AGM, Sandy White and Richie Mason, both managers with Abnormal Load Engineering, gave us a presentation about the company and their roles. ALE has grown from small beginnings at Hixon into one of the worlds largest heavy transportation companies, still privately owned and often seen on TV with their distinctive red vehicles, transportation axle units, cranes and barges. They have built and operate the worlds largest land based crane.

SUMMER SUPPER

65 members and guests attended a very successful Summer Supper event at Curborough Hall Farm on June 6th. After supper Jim Dixon, Chief Executive of the Peak District National Park, gave us a very interesting talk on what is Britain's busiest National Park, covering 555 square miles. It was the first National Park to be formed in 1951 and Jim explained how it is managed for future generations as well as allowing for businesses to thrive today. It is a balance involving many local organisations and the Peak District Board itself.

VISITS

June 28 saw 12 more members on a third successful visit to BAE Systems at Warton in Lancashire, previously reported on in the Christmas newsletter.

11th July saw 43 members visit Tesco Distribution Centre at Fradley Park witnessing some of the complex organized activities that have to take place for the successful supply of goods to the 350 'local' Tesco outlets that this Distribution Centre services. Situated on a 45 acre site, we were completely dwarfed by the enormous main warehouse which temporarily stores 20 to 30 thousand different merchandise lines on enormous pallet racks. The warehouse employs numerous workers who operate fork lift trucks, constantly replenishing the racks, some of up to 14 metres high. Scores of other battery powered trucks traversed the aisles, driven by operatives with computers strapped to their wrists, who fill the large cages, for dispatch to the local outlets. Some require 7 deliveries daily! Our host and Training Manager, Byron Gethfield, regaled us with much fascinating information and statistics before and during the conducted tour. We learnt that Tesco own 6000 stores in 13 countries, with 2750 in the UK. Fradley deals with mainly dry goods while Hinckley is a fresh food depot yet local stores will have deliveries of a mixed load from both.

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FESTIVAL LECTURE

The annual Festival Lecture, The Hippocrates Prize for Poetry and Medicine, delivered by Professor Donald Singer of Warwick University, took place on 12th July in the Main Theatre of the LichfieldGarrick and was attended by members and visitors. The programme comprised of an introduction to the Hippocrates initiative followed by explanation of Haiku poetry and an opportunity for audience participation in the form of spontaneous submission of Haiku poems. Poetry readings by Michael Henry, Tricia Torrington and Wendy French followed along with a discussion and questions and an introduction to the 2013 competition.

LOOKING FORWARD

We look forward to the 23rd Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture to take place in the main theatre of the LichfieldGarrick on Tuesday November 13th 2012 when our speaker will be Sir Paul Nurse, Nobel Laureate, President of the Royal Society, Director and CEO of the Francis Crick Institute. The lecture is entitled "The Great Ideas of Biology". Tickets are selling very well.

A reminder to you all of our Annual Dinner to be held on October 24th at Aston Wood Golf Club with an after dinner talk by Simon Gulliver, Plant Collections manager at The Birmingham Botanical Gardens. This is always a very enjoyable evening at a first class venue and I encourage members and guests to secure their tickets by completing the enclosed application.

Details of the next discussion lunch on September 20th are enclosed, as is the application form for the visits, a prompt reply is always helpful in planning these events.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A gentle reminder that subscriptions fall due in September and it is of great assistance if they are paid on time.

IN CLOSING

Often those behind the scenes are forgotten, so a big thanks you to all of the committee who have worked tirelessly to organise the events for the society.

I wish you all a pleasant and dry summer and look forward to meeting many of you at the beginning of the next season of lectures starting in September.

Paul Bettson
Chairman