



Chairman's Summer Newsletter 2025

Dear Member

I have great pleasure in welcoming the members who have joined since my last Newsletter – James Taylor, Martha Clokie, Matt Derry, Robert Francis, Julie Smith, Martin Smith, Martin Hewison, Christopher Briggs, Dene Cropper, Andy Wells, Jim Richings and Martin Hooper. I hope you will enjoy your membership of the Society and I look forward to meeting you at our future lectures, visits and social events. Regretfully, I have to advise the deaths of long standing member, John Gillmon and former member Pauline Manfield, who had been active in the Society for many years.

Congratulations - Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, has been appointed Companion of Honour in the King's Birthday Honours List 2025 for services to astronomy and physics and to diversity. Jocelyn gave the 2018 Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture entitled “Pulsars: Stars, Cars or Watches”. **The Society's Patron** – Sir Ian Dudson retired as His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire on July 15th, after 13 highly successful years as the Monarch's official representative in Staffordshire and a very supportive Patron of the Lichfield Science and Engineering Society. I am pleased to confirm that his successor as Lord Lieutenant, Professor Liz Barnes CBE has accepted the Society's invitation to be our new Patron.

Educational Support

1. **Lichfield Repair Shop** – “Team Repair” Initiative – the LSES financially supported the first session of this project, which was held in mid-June at Christ Church Primary School in Lichfield. The devices were faulty “retro games consoles” and the children were given the task of finding and rectifying the fault(s).
2. **University Bursary** –Failing any response from more local Universities the Society has made a formal approach to Keele and I am pleased to confirm that we will be providing financial support to a computer science PhD student, recommended by the University. More details to follow.

Providing financial help to support local schools in advancing their understanding of science and engineering remains a key ethos of the Society. Should any member have a close relationship with any of our local Junior and High schools, please let me or our Education Officer Jenny Arthur know.

The Annual General Meeting was convened on Wednesday 8 May, prior to the evening's lecture and 80 years to the day, since the end of the Second World War in Europe. My report to the Members had been circulated prior to the meeting, which attracted approximately 50 attendees. I reported that attendances at lectures had nearly recovered to pre Covid levels and there had been occasions, where we had to call on the Garrick to bring in some temporary seating. Thanks to Claire Robinson we have increased our Social Media presence, mainly on Facebook, which has helped to spread knowledge of the Society to a younger age range. I was also able to report that with the market wide increase in interest rates the Society's bond was now attracting far more income,. Our President, Professor Janet Lord ably chaired the meeting for the election of officers for the ensuing year and I am particularly pleased that David Dimeloe will be our Deputy Chairman for the coming year.

Monthly Lectures and Social Events - Since my previous Newsletter, the Society has held two lectures -



Following the sudden departure of our planned RAF speaker to a new posting, on Thursday 8 May, we were delighted to have Dr Andy Wells of MustardGeo Ltd present at very short notice an interesting lecture on satellite imagery, entitled “**Everything, Everywhere, All at Once (Almost!)**”. The lecture drew a good audience of 93 attendees. Dr Wells described the massive global growth in satellite imagery, in particular from 2016 and also the technical advances in increasing the resolution of satellites’ cameras. He detailed a whole range of markets where satellite imagery is now used, including agriculture, forestry, habitat mapping, land subsidence, insurance sector and many more.

On Tuesday 10 June, Professor Martin Hewison of the University of Birmingham gave a fascinating lecture entitled “**Vitamin D Deficiency in the 21st Century**”. The talk drew a very large audience of 132 attendees, including a significant number of visitors. Professor Hewison showed photographs of rickets, which the general public are aware is a result of low Vitamin D intake. Whilst 90% of our vitamin D requirement is generated by exposure to sunlight, Professor Hewison strongly supported the taking of daily vitamin D supplements. Martin went on to explain the strong link between a lack of vitamin D and a number of other medical conditions, including immune health and infectious and auto-immune disease as well as risks during pregnancy and this remains his main research interest.

The Annual Summer Supper – was held on Wednesday 18 June, once again at the attractive Whittington Golf Clubhouse. The evening was supported by a good number of members and guests, ably helped by the presence of a balmy midsummer’s evening. We were delighted to have present a number of guests, including our Patron, Sir Ian Dudson, Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire and his wife Lady Jane, our President, Professor Janet Lord and her husband Derek and former President, Professor Peter Lambert and his wife, Jill. Post the supper, Sir Ian spoke of his interesting time as Lord Lieutenant, after which he was presented with an engraved Society paperweight and gift, as a mark of the Society’s appreciation of his support as our Patron. The evening was very successful and I thank Carol for all her hard work in putting it together.

2025-2026 Lecture and Social Programme – I am pleased to confirm that your Committee has now completed next year’s lecture and social events programme commencing in September. Details will be sent to members in the Summer Mailing.

Visits – reports from our Visits’ Secretary.

Only one to report, the visit by 21 Members to Petsy Farm, Claire’s brother’s family’s robotic dairy farm in Shropshire. The unit produces 150,000 litres a day from 250 cows, all of whom are obviously very content to present themselves at any hour of the day or night for milking by the completely automated computer controlled machinery. The whole site is kept clean and tidy by robot sweepers. Most striking were the family’s commitment to the project, the advanced technology and the vast amount of computer data collected.

Accompanying this Newsletter is the new Programme Card, an invitation to the Annual Dinner and details of future visits from the Visits Secretary Please reply direct to Carol and Mike respectively.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for all their hard work behind the scenes, which ensures the smooth and successful running of your Society.

Alan

Alan Hooper
Chairman