



Lichfield Science & Engineering Society

PATRON

Ian Dudson CBE

H.M. Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire

PRESIDENT

Professor Carolyn Roberts

FRGS, FIEEnvSc, FCIWEM, CEnv, CWEM

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Dear Member,

Yet another Covid-blighted Newsletter, now from one of the twice-jabbed, as I hope you are too. Fortunately with virtual meetings we have managed to maintain the lecture programme but the social side has been seriously affected and we hope that this will return to normal in the not-too-distant future.

We've now had ten meetings on the Zoom platform, each of which has increased not only our knowledge of the speakers' subjects but also the Committee's knowledge of Zoom; the steepness of the learning curve is reducing steadily but asymptotic is the best we can hope for. Zooming has meant more work for the Committee and for their unfailing support, especially the Co-hosts who make the software work, I am grateful. Grateful too to the Members, some of whom have also been on the learning curve, who have kept lecture attendances high and thus made it all worthwhile.

Mark Hamlet explained to many Members what had been done to their various bones and gave hope to the (so far) more fortunate of us. Professor Kai Bongs gave an introduction to quantum sensors; not only what they can do for us but also what they are already doing in the field of the precise measurements that now seem necessary for our daily life. Electric aeroplanes may yet be some way off but although Professor Ian Grey didn't tell us how to build one he provided a great deal of information about the background to modern air travel and the factors underlying the need for change in the way it's done. If you avoided Dr Erica McAlister's talk on the grounds of a nervous disposition you missed one of the best; her facts about flies were fascinating. Rhys Phillips combined his considerable knowledge of the physics of lightning with an equally deep knowledge of pop music lyrics and to end the season Dr Patricia Fara returned to tell us about Joseph Banks and to explain why he is rather unfairly less known in this country than in the Antipodes. Don't forget that most lectures are recorded and uploaded to the Members' Area of the website to watch again.

Alan's Virtual Visits go from strength to strength although his choice of a gin distillery in Dry January did cause some adverse comment. Love it or hate it the Marmite trip was a real "back to school" experience and we even went abroad, a first for the Society, to Airbus in Toulouse, a reminder of our real visit to the A380 wing factory a few years ago. Then back down to earth with folding bicycles, trailers and carpets.

What the future holds for the lecture programme is still hard to say. We hope of course to get back to the Garrick but when this will be practicable or desirable we don't know. Various options are being considered but in the current situation there can be no final decision; this applies also to the Annual Dinner. Whatever happens we hope that you will find next season's programme as, or even more informative and enjoyable as usual.

Best wishes,

Mike

**Chairman &
Publicity Secretary:**
Mr M J Beeson
9 Eastmoor Close
Foley Road East
SUTTON COLDFIELD
West Midlands B74 3JS
0121-353 4684
MikeB@LSES.org.uk

General Secretary:
Mrs Irene Ordidge
39 Irnham Road
Four Oaks
SUTTON COLDFIELD
West Midlands B74 2TN
0121-308 7370
Irene@LSES.org.uk

Honorary Treasurer:
Mr Peter Stubbs
16 Scotch Orchard
LICHFIELD
Staffordshire WS13 6BZ
01543 254 678
Peter@LSES.org.uk

Website: www.LSES.org.uk