



# Lichfield Science & Engineering Society

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## Chairman's Christmas Newsletter 2021

Dear Member,

Looking at my last two letters there doesn't seem to have been much of a change. Zoom has kept our lectures going, Alan's Virtual Visits have taken us halfway round the world and we're still maintaining Membership at a pretty normal level. But it's not the same; as a Society we should by definition be socialising, and we can't.

The December meeting was an attempt to do so and very pleasant it was. However only 70 people attended, not all of whom were Members and the cost was not sufficiently justified to encourage us to have a live lecture in January. The January speaker wasn't keen either so I'm afraid it'll be back to Zoom. The Committee keeps the situation under review and when we think it safe and desirable to return to the Garrick be assured that we will.

The September talk by President Professor Carolyn Roberts gave a fascinating insight to how science can help the police with murder and other cases involving bodies in rivers and canals. Not by any means the comfortable laboratory based science that is often shown on television. In October science writer Michael Marshall described the many and various theories of the origins of life, both the likely and less likely ones. He said afterwards that he was impressed with the LSES's ability to ask searching questions.

The cancellation of the Darwin Memorial Lecture for the first time in over 30 years was a disappointment to us all. Several alternatives were tried but it was clear that getting in touch with sufficiently eminent people in these times is very difficult; offices closed, working from home etc.

The live meeting in December was not only an excellent lecture by Dr Sophie Fielding from the British Antarctic Survey on the RRS Sir David Attenborough. Both of them should be well on the way to Antarctica now, an interesting sideline is that the JCB which forms part of the ship's load has built-in satellite tracking so if no-one else knows where the SDA is, Committee Member Mark Richards does.

That meeting was also a good opportunity to congratulate Dr Fred Mitchell on his imminent hundredth birthday. Fred has supported the Society since its inception, being a regular presence at meetings and from time to time holding several of the Society's offices. He served in Bomber Command during the war and went on to become a leading figure in the field of clinical biochemistry; among other achievements he invented the test for cholesterol. He was presented with one of the Society's paperweights and three of the Society's cheers.

One good sign for the future is that the Visits Secretary has managed to arrange several real visits for the coming year. Details are attached, places are restricted so apply early. Also with this letter comes the current list of those Members who agree to their details being published.

Sadly, as has been the case for what seems a very long time, neither the Committee nor anyone else knows what 2022 will bring or when we will get back to seeing each other life-size. I can only thank all the Members and the Committee for their continued support and wish you all a Happy Christmas and a better New Year.

Best wishes,

Mike Beeson

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