



Lichfield Science & Engineering Society

PATRON

Ian Dudson CBE

H.M. Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire

PRESIDENT

Professor Rex Harris

FREng, FIMMM, FInstP, MIEEE

CHAIRMAN

Carol Hannam BSc

Summer 2015

Dear Member,

June brought us to the end of a very successful and exciting season of lectures, social events and visits. I have enjoyed and been stimulated by them and I hope that you have too. We tried to keep a varied selection of disciplines within the programme so that there was something of interest for everyone, but having said that, the lectures have been so good that they have been fascinating whether they covered one's own specialism or not.

The management and business of the Society was addressed at the AGM in May with 96 members present. I gave the Chairman's report and Deputy Chairman and Treasurer Bob Giles presented the Financial Report which demonstrated that our financial position was sound and that the subscriptions could remain the same. President Professor Rex Harris then took the Chair and presided over my election as Chairman. It was with sadness I had to report that, having completed her term of office as Secretary, Marion Sadler was stepping down from the committee. We shall miss her greatly as she has been such a stalwart of the Society and we owe her a great deal of gratitude. However we elected Irene Ordidge, in her absence, as Secretary and we welcome her to the post. The rest of the committee were willing to complete their terms and were elected en bloc: Bob Giles will complete his term of office as Deputy Chairman and Treasurer and has agreed to be Membership Secretary as well, Tim Sims will continue to support Mike Beeson as Assistant Visits Secretary and Mike will also handle publicity and keeping the website up to date. Jenny Arthur will maintain her contacts with the schools and Roy Foster will organise our social events. Claire Robinson remains an important member without portfolio. We were delighted when David Ward and Mark Richards, who have been co-opted Committee members for some months, were also elected. The committee's recommendation of the for the new President was accepted and Dr Zsuzsanna Nagy was duly elected to take over from Rex when he retires. She will be inaugurated at the annual dinner in October. She is Senior lecturer and Lead of the Neurodegeneration and Repair Team at the University of Birmingham. Many of us have already met Zsuzsanna when she delivered not one but two lectures on Alzheimer's disease. We welcome her most heartily to the team.

Monthly lectures

Following the AGM, Professor Timothy Peters, University of Birmingham, gave the historical lecture of the year as he considered Porphyria as the diagnosis of George III's illness. Using modern data analysis techniques and setting them against the symptoms manifested, Professor Peters concluded that a more accurate diagnosis would be that George III suffered from bipolar disorder. There were 116 Members and 2 visitors present.

Professor Peter Lambert, School of Life and Health Sciences at Aston University, brought the season to a resounding conclusion with his excellent and accessible lecture 'Rise of the Superbugs- the end of antibiotics?' Peter explored the problems caused by pathogens which have become resistant to antibiotics. We were encouraged to realize that here was a complete global battle. He was hopeful new antibiotics would be found, but warned that even so they would not be marketable until 2025/2030 at the earliest. It seems that the most efficient way of preventing resistance to antibiotics is to use two different antibiotics at the same time. We had 169 Members, 34 visitors and 4 students attending.



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Visits

Following our successful visit in October, reported in the Christmas Newsletter, another 20 Members went to Airbus Industries in May to see the building of the wings for the Airbus 380. This was another opportunity to see British engineering at its best, although one Member discovered that Airbus' engineering is not always perfect when the handle fell off the Visitors' Centre toilet door.

In June a total of 26 Members went to Hope Construction Materials cement works in Hope Valley, a beautiful part of the country and without doubt one of our most scenic venues. Our host explained why the limestone in the area is particularly suitable for making cement and a video made the process clear. The second party was also privileged to see inside the factory control room. Both groups went to the viewpoint, one in a howling gale, one in rain, to be awed by the size of the quarry and the works themselves.

A return visit to Rothamsted Research is planned for mid-July and is probably taking place as you are reading this.

The Constitution

The Chairman's report distributed to Members with the AGM papers gave due notice that the constitution could be changed at the AGM. It was. Paragraph 29 now reads 'The financial year shall terminate on the 31st March each year. Membership fees fall due on 1st September'. The following sentence 'Members joining after the 31st December shall pay half the subscription fee' has been removed. A second change to membership of the Society was also made but this did not necessitate an amendment to the constitution: the cut off date for the renewal of subscriptions will move forward from 'after the December lecture' to '1st November'.

Giant leaps forward

New committee member Mark Richards has dragged us forward into the 21st Century at last. He has taken upon himself the task of recording the monthly lecture and questions and dovetailing them with the speaker's PowerPoint presentation. These recordings are not for general release and they are therefore protected in the Members' area of the website. To access them go to the website - www.LSES.org.uk - within the blue banner at the right click on 'Members' area'. A dialogue box will now open which asks you for the password. Type in Newton – this is case sensitive. If you now scroll down to the bottom to 'Recorded lectures' you will find the list of lectures which have been recorded. Now you all have the password again let's hope the website gets more hits! I don't know what the Brazilians know that Science and Engineering Members don't, but Mike Beeson tells me that we have many more hits from Brazil than from home territory!

Summer Supper

A sunny evening, a wholesome buffet, good company and an interesting and informative speaker brought our season to its end. Andrew George, Principal Archivist Staffordshire Record Office, had examples from the archive for us to see, touch and enthuse over. He had ancient wills, documents signed by Erasmus Darwin, charters with the royal seal and some of our own archive. Our own archive produced a problem in that it went back only to 1991 and we should be looking for documents from 1985. So here is a plea! If you have old programmes or copies of old committee minutes or any other articles of interest will you please let me have them and Andrew will be eager and willing to add them to the stored archive.

Membership and lectures

For the first time Members and their guests queued in the road for the June lecture. This is testament to the quality of lectures we have had on offer and in this case it didn't matter because we were in the Main Theatre. However when we are in the Studio we clearly have a problem with the number of



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Members attending and the number of seats available. Your committee have put numerous measures into place in an effort to alleviate this but we need to go further.

We have been in discussion with The Garrick and they have agreed to ticket 50 of the seats for each lecture. This means that if you have a very particular desire to hear a lecture you will be able to pre-book a seat. **This facility will be available only for members and the details are on the separate sheet with this mailing.**

We will trial these measures for one year and then reconsider. I know this will cause either dissent or approval! I do ask that you direct all your comments to me, either personally or by email, and I will log them all and then your committee can discuss and act upon them at a later date. Please help us in this enterprise, it is a big step to have taken because the very last thing we want to do is to change the ethos and the atmosphere of this unique Society within this very small city.

The 26th Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture

On Tuesday 17th November 2015 Professor Dame Wendy Hall has agreed to deliver the Erasmus Darwin Memorial Lecture entitled 'The Evolution of the World Wide Web'.

Dame Wendy is Professor of Computer Science and Executive Director of the Web Science Institute at the University of Southampton. She was one of the first computer scientists to undertake research in multimedia and hypermedia and her current research includes applications of the Semantic Web and exploring the interface between the life sciences and the physical sciences. She has helped shape policy for science, engineering and education, whilst being eager to promote the role of women in science, engineering and technology.

Tickets are on sale now at The Garrick Box Office at £10 for members and £12 for the public. I urge you to buy them quickly as we anticipate that it will have a wide public appeal.

Within this mailing

You should find your membership renewal notice, programme card, documents for autumn visits, the September discussion lunch, the annual dinner in October and details of the pre-booking system. The Treasurer asks that you please remember to pay your subscription early. The Visits Secretary has asked me again to urge Members applying for visits to return, either by e-mail or post, the form enclosed with this mailing and also to acknowledge receipt of details for a visit. The Members' Area will have a note of when they have been sent out. Not to be outdone, the Social Secretary requests that you remember to enclose a stamped addressed envelope with all lunch, supper and dinner applications. Copies of all forms are posted in the Members' Area of the website.

In closing

You will think that I am always singing the praises of your committee. You are correct. You are a member of a unique institution: the programme, visits, social events and website do not just happen, they come about by the sheer hard work of committee members. I should like to thank them all.

So on into summer - may it be filled with sunshine, sandcastles, barbeques or tea in the garden with a book. Whatever are the fun and frolics you have planned, remember September and our opening lecture 'Building integrated Photovoltaics' on the 15th. Perovskite is the clue you need to look up!

Happy days, happy times.

Carol Hannam
Chairman