



Chairman's Newsletter Summer 2026

Dear Member

This is my first Newsletter as Chairman and I would like to start by thanking my predecessor – Alan Hooper- for all his hard work during his three years in the Chair. He will be a tough act to follow!

I am pleased that the Society continues to flourish and we have had the following new Members since Alan's last Newsletter – David Cooke, Dr Elizabeth Wood, Prof Helen Atkinson, Prof Mamidipudi Krishna, Dr Liane Smith, Dr Louise Tilley, Mike Griffin, Martin Thompson, Dr Cathy McClay, Dr Leane Cullen-Unsworth, Prof Kathryn Moore, Tom Beamish. 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 death of Cedric Robinson a wonderful character who knew the LSES well.

AGM – The AGM was held on 14 May and attended by 102 Members. Unfortunately, I was double booked and unable to attend. You approved the Chairman's Report and the Accounts. The Society continues to enjoy sound finances, thanks to Peter's diligent attention.

The following Committee Members were appointed by you all.

Chairman -	David Dimeloe
Deputy Chairman -	Mary Hutchison
Treasurer -	Peter Stubbs
General Secretary -	Irene Ordidge
Membership Secretary -	Bob Giles
Education Officer -	Jenny Arthur
Social Secretary -	Carol Hannam
Publicity and Visits Secretary -	Mike Beeson
Immediate Past Chairman -	Alan Hooper
Committee Members -	Claire Robinson
	Mark Richards

Alan has already informed you that I will stand down as Chairman at the AGM in May 2027 and Mary will take over as Chairman.

We have a Presidential change later this year. Our current President Professor Janet Lord will stand down at the Annual Dinner on 14 October at Aston Wood Golf Club and hand over to Professor Corrine Spickett.

Monthly Lectures - After the AGM in May, Professor Kathryn Moore of West Midlands National Park Laboratory gave us a lecture entitled "**Seeing the Bigger Picture**" - attended by 102 Members and six Visitors. Her concept of creating the idea of a "West Midlands National Park", when the traditional view of a National Park, usually involves mountains and lakes, rather than urban conurbations and industrial sites, is revolutionary. One point Kathryn made was that usually the landscaping element to a new development involves filling in the spaces with "green" at the end and she is trying to persuade developers to put the green element more at the forefront.

Our 2025-26 lecture programme concluded with a lecture by Committee Member Mark Richards and Tom Beamish entitled "**Off Road to Net Zero**" - Powertrain technology for mobile machinery. This was very well attended – 130 Member, 14 Visitors and 2 Students. Both Mark and Tom work for JCB and are part of Lord Bamford's Innovation Team. JCB are working to achieve Net Zero but have



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found that switching from fossil fuels to electricity – the conventional route – does not suit the needs of all of their special vehicles. They frequently work on remote sites where there is no electricity, so recharging the vehicles is difficult. Also the duty cycles of their machines does not always suit electric power. To address these problems JCB have developed a range of hydrogen powered vehicles and set up a site producing commercial hydrogen in Tyseley, Birmingham.

Tom and Mark gave an excellent, enthusiastic lecture with high quality slides and videos. A very good way to finish our 2025-26 season.

Visits - Mike is finding it increasingly difficult to find local companies that will allow us to visit, however the recent visit to BSA Guns was a great success; an instance of “not what you know but who you know”. Or in the Society’s case “but who’s a Member”. BSA Guns don’t normally allow visits but their ex-MD spoke nicely to his successor for which twelve Members were very grateful. Birmingham Small Arms was founded from an amalgamation of Birmingham gunmakers in 1861 to supply weaponry to the military, later branching out into cycles, motorbikes and cars. Today, still in the original factory they make a wide range of airguns and export them worldwide. We were shown the barrel-making process where an oversized steel blank is drilled then forged down to the correct diameter, resulting in a startling increase in length, while at the same time the rifling is produced. Then onto the assembly of the firing mechanism and putting it all together. Finally we all tried the finished product on the indoor range - with varying success. BSA’s hospitality was excellent throughout so all in all a good visit. It is hoped that further opportunities will be arranged to accommodate the 24 remaining applicants.

One sad note; it was the last visit that regular and long-term visitor the late Cedric Robinson came on. We'll miss him.

Educational Support – The Society continues to support Student Awards of £50 to six local schools for Progress in STEM subjects. Details will be announced once this year’s GCSE and A Level results have been released. The Committee are also continuing to provide financial support to an engineering student at Keele University.

Social Events - Annual Supper – this was again held at Whittington Golf Club’s attractive Club House on 17 June and proved to be a most convivial evening for the 52 members and guests that attended. Our Patron, Lord Lieutenant Liz Barnes was present as was our President, Professor Janet Lord and her husband Derek. The Speaker was Colin Walton - The Honorary Clock Winder. When Colin moved to Lichfield in 1989 he moved near to the Lichfield Tower Clock which was stopped at the time. However, when it did work it was out of time and the chimes were out of synchronization. He volunteered at Lichfield City Council to become the Honorary Clock Winder and he gave a very interesting talk about the history of the clock, its movement to the current location and the renovation and operation of the clock.

Our 2026-2027 lecture programme, which commences on 8 September is included with this mailing, along with an Invitation to the Annual Dinner.

I wish you and your families an enjoyable summer break and thank you for your continued support.

David

David Dimeloe,

Chairman