
THE LUNAR SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT & REVIEW OF THE YEAR

2010

Today's Lunar Society, like its illustrious predecessor, still continues to play its part as a forum in which its membership works to do exactly what its logo says: 'to stimulate ideas, broaden debate and to catalyse action' on issues that are crucial to the diversity and culture of the city and the wider region beyond.

At the start of my tenure as Chairman of the Society last year, I laid out my vision and objectives: to help in finding ways of healing a 'fractured' society, to produce a more varied programme, to reduce costs wherever possible, to streamline the administration and to extend the compass of the Society. With the help of the Executive Committee, my first year in office has seen many of those objectives achieved:

Six Strategic sub-Committees, are now fully constituted and working, producing good, exciting results.

A fuller and more varied programme of events, with excellent Speakers, covering the needs of all members and, in many cases, at reduced costs.

The continuation, in conjunction with Dipali Chandra, of the streamlining of the administration and governance of the Society and, even in these difficult economic times, to develop sponsorship.

Through encouraging recruitment, more new members have joined the Society.

Good contact and lively dinner discussions between Ian Austin, MP Minister for the West Midlands, and the Lord Mayor, Councillor Michael Wilkes and Executive Committee Members have continued.

Feeling that there was a need to collaborate more closely with like-minded membership organisations and Societies, we have shared events with the Birmingham & Midland Institute, the Centre for West Midlands History, the Birmingham & Edgbaston Debating Society, ThinkTank, the Transport Planning Association and Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The 2009-10 programme has been full and varied, with visits and events all over the city.

In July we held a joint event with the Regional Transport Planning Association and

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Peak Oil: implications for business, planning and transport. The guest speaker was David Strahan, Oil Depletion Analysis Centre and author of *The Last Oil Shock*, provided a fascinating explanation of implications for business and the environment.

September was packed with three very different events. Dr. Richard Clay kept us fascinated and we marvelled at Matthew Boulton's 'Art of Making Money' at the Barber Institute of Fine Art and the Boulton & Watt Commemoration Lecture saw Professor Julia King, Vice Chancellor of Aston University, inspire us with her 'Sustainable Technologies for Transport.' In conjunction with Edgbaston Debating Society, and in celebration of Matthew Boulton, Paul Mountain, Lunarman, spoke on behalf of the Society, against the motion that Birmingham is now not as important a centre as it was at the time of Matthew Boulton over a delightful dinner.

In October there were three events. Editor, Marc Reeves took us through the use of digital production of the Birmingham Post at Fort Dunlop and we were entertained at Soho House by Phillida Ballard's talk and imagery in Boulton's 'Lost Gardens of Soho.' Professor Echinque, Cambridge University provided a critical insight into the sustainability of land use and transport in outer neighbourhoods, hosted by Aston University.

Over 150 members and guests were joined by Edward Miliband MP Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, our honoured Guest Speaker at the Annual Dinner in November. His incisive and informative speech was followed by questions from the floor, which were fully answered. The Lunar Medal was presented to John Charlton along with Life membership of the Society. We joined with the Birmingham & Midland Institute for our Winter Social, 'Dibdin in the West Midlands', telling the tale of the 18th century actor's journey through the area in song and story, performed, in costume, by Jeremy Barlow and David Timson and was followed by an 18th century buffet supper. It was with great pleasure, on this occasion, we also welcomed the company of the Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Vivienne Wilkes.



THE LUNAR SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT & REVIEW OF THE YEAR

2010

In January, this year, we brought to an end, the commemoration of the life of Matthew Boulton, with an event at the University of Birmingham, in conjunction with the Centre for West Midlands History. In 'The Death of Matthew Boulton 1809: Ceremony, Controversy and Commemoration', Dr. Malcolm Dick gave us a most enlightening lecture on this massive event and again, the Lady Mayoress was present.

The impact of visual communication on the future of business and social cohesion was explored through image and art form by Professor Mario Minichiello of Birmingham City University in February and the Lunar Society's 7th Annual Lecture in March was given, to a packed auditorium at ThinkTank in the city's Eastside, by the eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator, Jonathan Porritt CBE. His talk on sustainable development and renewable energy brought some very interesting questions and was followed by a most enjoyable buffet.

Later this year, Dr. Jacqueline Mitton of Cambridge University will give the Boulton & Watt Commemoration Lecture, looking at Women in Astronomy from the 17th century; Science Capital will launch its big Scientific and Medical programme in June, Sir Arnold Wolfendale will speak at the BMI and Vince Cable MP is our guest speaker at the 2010 Annual Dinner.

This has been another transitional year and my sincere thanks are due to the members of the Executive Committee for their support and in particular to our indefatigable Secretary, Dipali Chandra, who has transformed and streamlined the administration and who never fails to keep us all informed and supplied with those things we need to help us move the Society ever forward.

Marion Roberts
Chair of the Society
May 2010

