THE ADSTOCK SCIENCE CLUB

Do you know, it only seems like yesterday that I was sitting here, at my computer keyboard, trying to think of something interesting to write for the next issue of the Clarion. Well, here I am again; time seems to be rushing by at an inordinate rate, especially as you get older.

Well, since the end of January some of our more fortunate Science Club members have been to a number of free lectures exploring temporal issues in one way or another. Firstly in late January there was a lecture by Dr Francisco Diego from University College London, who presented a talk "Think Universe", at St Paul's Catholic School in Milton Keynes. Through his use of an exceedingly long piece of string and some strategically placed clothes pegs to represent the development of the Universe from the Big Bang to the present day, he introduced the forces that led to everything we see today, along with the formation of the periodic table and the development of life on Earth.

Then, in early February, Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe, who along with Sir Fred Hoyle proposed that space contains vast amounts of carbonaceous dust, gave a talk "From Dust to Life: Evidence of Cosmogenesis", at Buckingham University. During this lecture Professor Wickramsinghe argued that the bulk of this dust was the result of the degradation of micro-organisms and outlined his belief that life was delivered to Earth by comets nearly 4 Billion years ago. In fact he postulates that life in the universe was first formed around 300,000 years after the Big Bang, a mere blink of an eye in cosmological time.

The most recent talk "Neuroscience: Beyond the Laboratory", once again at St Paul's Catholic School, was presented by Dr Ellie Dommett, a lecturer in Brain and Behavioural Science from the Open University in Milton Keynes. She discussed the ways in which our latest knowledge and understanding of neuroscience is being both used and abused.

During her talk, Dr Dommett used a number of videos and slides for illustration. One of these was particularly memorable. It showed the various stages of development of neurons (nerve cells) from an embryo (picture far left), a foetus, an infant's brain, through adolescence and into middle age and finally to old age and senility. What struck me, and most other people who saw these slides, was that "senior moments" are definitely going to get a lot more frequent.

Both St Pauls Catholic School and Buckingham University hold regular "Bringing Science to the People" type lectures, the next one of these will be in the theatre at St Pauls Catholic School at 7:30pm on Thursday 3rd May, when Dr Geoff Parks (Senior Lecturer in Nuclear Engineering at Cambridge University) will be giving the lecture. The title is still to be decided upon.

Looking to our next TASC meeting at 7:30pm on Tuesday 17th April, we will be having a presentation by Dr Harin Sellahewa who is involved with research and development into Biometric technology i.e. Fingerprint recognition, eye scanners etc. at Buckingham University.

Anybody wanting further information about The Adstock Science Club and our future activities please call or email me.

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