

# THE ADSTOCK SCIENCE CLUB



## 2012 in Brief

Another year gone and what have we done? Well, actually, quite a lot!

Overall last year The Adstock Science Club hosted eight talks given by outside speakers. The first of these was in January 2012 and was by Mark Hemsell from Reaction Engines Limited and covered the development of the Skylon rocket plane and its revolutionary SABRE engine, this has recently been gaining coverage both in the national press as well as on TV. In fact this talk was quite revolutionary in its own right, due to security issues it was conducted totally over a Skype video link.

In April we had Dr Harin Sellahewa from Buckingham University talking about the science of Biometrics or how computers are able to recognise faces. Our next talk, in July, was about the development of a particular type of skin cancer by Parvathy Harikumar a post graduate research student, also from Buckingham University. This was followed in August by, well, more of a demonstration than a talk about water divining. Ron Dudley-Smith of the UK Dowsing Association had us all running round with bent metal coat hangers trying to get them to point to whatever we could, lots of fun.

In September, Dr Ellie Dommett from the Open University gave the talk "Brain Science in the Real World" and this was followed in October by a discussion about "Philosophy and Science" presented by Paul Radcliffe from the U3A philosophy group. Finally, Dr Mark Nightingale from the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy gave a presentation on Atomic Fusion research and its role in future power generation. What was just as interesting was hearing about some of the politics which lay behind it.

Apart from these "in house" talks some of our members also went to a number of external lectures. These included talks about Cosmo-genesis, the future of Nuclear Power, future energy challenges, the Bloodhound 1000mph car and Diabetes and its link to obesity. I'm sure I have probably missed out a couple here, but you get the picture.

TASC members didn't just go to lectures we also went to see some amazing things such as the particle accelerator at the Diamond Light research facility at Harwell Science and Innovation Campus. Some of us also paid a visit to the Central Laser Facility at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Didcot. Here they use one of the most powerful lasers in the world to try and recreate the conditions of the universe at the instant of the Big Bang.

So, what are you waiting for, instead of sitting round in front of the "Tele" vegetating, why don't you join us once a month and give your brain a workout? Well anyway, the walk will do you good.

Lastly I would like to say a fond bon voyage to one of our favourite and most extraordinary amateur astronomers, Sir Patrick Moore, who on the 9<sup>th</sup> December last year crossed the final frontier and left this world in search of a new cosmic adventure. He was an inspiration to a whole generation of children, myself included, some of whom went on to become budding young scientists, astronauts and even a famous guitarist. As a young lad during the Apollo moon landings in the 1960s, with his infectious enthusiasm he showed me a new and exciting world and made astronomy and science a wondrous experience which I will forever cherish.



Thank you Sir Patrick!