THE ADSTOCK SCIENCE CLUB

One of the aims of the Adstock Science Club is to help our members learn more about science, past, present and also what we can expect in the future. In the last year we have had a good go at achieving these aims. We have managed to entice a number of scientists, leaders in their own field, to provide us with talks on subjects such as forensics. Dr John Bond, a real life CSI has provided invaluable insight into a number of murder mysteries in both the UK and the States. He gave us a fascinating talk on how finger prints can be obtained, even from old rusty bits of metal, and how this led to a number of murders being solved. In fact some of his techniques have been shown being used in the television CSI series.

Another talk, which was given to us last April by Emeritus Professor Mike Glazer, a well-respected leader in his field, was on "100 years of Crystallography". A few months before his talk Professor Glazer featured on the radio program "In Our Time" and was interviewed by Melvyn Bragg. This, I believe, is still available to listen to on BBC's i-Player service.

In May, Dr Harin Sellahewa, from Buckingham University's computer research department showed us how emailed pictures can be used in crime scene investigation from the hidden information embedded within the picture data file. Information about the type and even make of the lens and optical sensor chip being used to the make and model of the camera or mobile used to take the picture can, in a growing number of cases, be extracted from just one picture. Be careful of what pictures you put on Facebook, you never know who may be looking at them.

Apart from external speakers, we also had talks from some of our members. A most interesting talk was given by John Foggitt, who works in the computer industry and has worked for companies such as Acorn Systems and Amstrad in the development of their technology. His talk was about the evolution of the microprocessor and of the development, in particular, of the Reduced Instruction Set or RISC processor, the likes of which are now being used in everything from laptops to mobile phones.

Not wanting to be outdone, yours truly, has also given a number of talks, okay mostly showing interesting documentaries with a little bit of waffle, on subjects as diverse as "the hidden life of the cell", Quantum Biology, Fracking, Data Security and "Life on Mars".

Anyway, enough about the past, let's have a glimpse into the future.

Our next meeting which will be on Thursday 13th February, will be a talk given by another one of our members, Mr Demetri Petrou, who I believe has a degree in Astrophysics, all about the planet Jupiter. This will cover such topics as its formation, structure and composition, its role and place in our Solar System. He will also be taking a look at its significance in our culture and how it was used as a navigational beacon by ancient civilizations.

In March, again one of our members and my next-door neighbour, Mr Mark Beach, will be talking to us about computer and video gaming, its history from "ping pong" to "Grand Theft Auto". He will also be looking at some of the technology behind them and their significance in today's society especially in modern warfare and what the future holds.

If you are interested in either of these please call me on the number below or send me an email.

Marius Stuart *01296 712 561*
marius.stuart@btopenworld.com