

THE ADSTOCK SCIENCE CLUB



Well, my wife, Jennifer, and I had a great holiday earlier this year, some of which we spent in Orlando Florida. I have to admit the main reason we ended up in Orlando was to see the Kennedy Space Centre and Cape Canaveral with the idea of giving a talk about our experiences later to The Adstock Science Club. I'm not sure if I can convince our treasurer, Tony Bates, to let me claim the cost of the trip from science club funds. I've got a feeling he might not.

At our August meeting I gave the talk about our visit, where I outlined some of the history behind both the Kennedy Space Centre and Cape Canaveral. I also discussed man's, well America's, early attempts to reach space following their humiliation by being beaten to it by the Rusks in 1957 with the launch of Sputnik 1 and then again in 1961 by putting the first man in space, Uri Gagarin. We also took a look at some of the pioneers who contributed to these early endeavours, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Robert Goddard, Herman Oberth, Sergey Korolyov and finally Wernher Von Braun who was instrumental in turning round America's ailing space program to eventually give them their first major success, landing the first man on the Moon in 1969.

In September we watched and discussed an interesting and enlightening documentary titled "End of the World, how will it happen?" which was actually about the so called "population time bomb". In fact it gave a much more upbeat and positive message than the title would suggest; the message being that if only the top world economies could reign back their use of fossil fuels this would allow less developed countries to advance at a faster rate without significantly increasing greenhouse emissions. Also, by the end of the century it is expected that the overall world population will have plateaued out at 11 billion and in fact then start to fall.

Lastly I hope to have a couple of interesting talks to finish the year off with. On the 23rd of October Gordon Rogers, who runs the Crendon Observatory will be telling us all about "Churchill's Toy Shop". A secret project by Winston Churchill to enlist specialists in weapons development to produce innovative and novel ordnance free from the constraints of the sluggish WWII MOD in London. This all took place at the Firs in Whitchurch, just down the road. Our other talk hopefully will be by our very own pilot Simon Braithwaite, and will take a look at the life of a modern day airline pilot and what it takes to keep 400 or so people aloft 3 miles high.

I must mention that the second talk is a bit "up in the air", so to speak, has yet to be confirmed and may not be possible this year, however I am keeping my fingers crossed.

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