

Sackville School visit

Monday 21st March 2016

The Year 12 BTEC in Hospitality students had a great idea. Why not lay on a “coffee and cakes” morning - ask the Head of Science to give a talk on Astronomy – a subject very close to his heart, and one in which he has been deeply immersed for some years. Having agreed things with their teacher they decided to make contact with East Grinstead U3A to see if we would like to come along for an hour or so.

As a result, thirty U3A members – largely drawn from our Science and Technology group on account of the talk subject matter – turned up eager to participate. We were not disappointed. After a welcome and introduction from the Head, the students made us very welcome, and despite the room being packed as tightly as a sardine can they made sure that we were all fed from a table absolutely groaning with cakes; biscuits; sausage rolls (I think, but never had a chance to find out!) and refreshed with a choice of coffee or tea etc.



Seven YEAR 12 students with their teacher

Once we were all seated, the Head of Science, Steve Bush introduced us to Astronomy, his favourite subject, and one on which he proved both entertaining and highly knowledgeable. After a quick Cook’s tour, starting with the Aristotelian Earth-centred ideas we rapidly progressed through to Copernicus. We then found out in passing that Isaac Newton was not a very nice person, and that Galileo didn’t invent the telescope – it was invented by Hans Lippershey in 1608. But Galileo produced his version in 1611, and had the idea of pointing it at the heavens, rather than at Dutch men o’ war looming on the horizon.



Steve Bush – Sackville Head of Science

We learnt how to look at the Sun safely and had a chance to handle the soon-to-be-awarded Science prize that has been crafted out of a weighty meteorite. Our members loved every minute! Personally, I wish I could be back at school if all Science teachers could have been like Steve Bush

The rest, as they say, is history. And as a result the school has achieved an important status nationally in Astronomy. Steve Bush was recommended, by one of his old students, for a Patrick Moore medal, of which he is rightly very proud.

With a bit of luck our U3A members will be able to view the heavens for themselves this coming Autumn, because Mr Bush has promised that we will be able to arrange a private visit to the school's very own observatory. I can't wait!

John Wells
22nd March 2016