

The November meeting continued our “getting back to normal” programme and the main item was a talk by Steve Tonkin entitled “How old is the Universe?”

Steve’s main theme was how the accepted age of the universe has changed over the last 2,000 years or so. From mythology, through bishop Ussher’s Bible based work to Darwin’s geological studies, he led us through the initial “guesses” at the age of the Earth and the universe. More modern observations using radioactivity, through universal expansion seen as red-shift to the Cosmic Microwave Background got us to more and more precise determinations of the beginning. However, he left us with the current conundrum of significantly different values for the Hubble Constant – and thence the age of the universe – depending on whether you measure the early universe or its current state. Perhaps an update will be required in a few years! Many thanks to Steve for his wide ranging and thought provoking talk.

After the tea and cake interval (as ever, thanks to Zena and her crew!) we restored the Monthly Notes / What’s up in the Sky item which was very ably given by Stuart Davis. These notes are also on this Blog (and we hope to continue to have this on a monthly basis from now on). The Object of the Month item was also re-started when Terry looked at the often overshadowed M33 – the Triangulum Galaxy.

We also had some images from Bud, Ken and Terry despite the rather poor weather of the last few months. A number of “outreach” events are planned and a small team has been put together for these visits. Let’s hope for decent weather.

The December meeting will be the Christmas Social so remember to bring along something (either savoury or sweet) to share with the rest of the group. Also this is your opportunity to shine with a short talk – on any subject really. The success of the event does depend on people getting on their hind legs so please do come forward.