

October's meeting was the first of the winter when it was dark before the start. Winter drawers on - as they used to say in 60's comedy shows! It's also now a full year since we re-started our full meetings with half-time refreshments. Many thanks to Sue and the kitchen team for keeping us all so well provided for the year.

The speaker this month was our own Bud Budzynski with the appropriately named "T'aint Rocket 2 – The Quest for Space". Bud's talk was an entertaining run through how we humans could get to the moon, the planets and beyond. Our current rockets will only get us so far – probably to Mars – considering the short human lifespan, the need for sustenance and the hazards of space travel. Bud considered various ways that are being considered including thermo-nuclear and anti-matter propulsion. All very fanciful at the moment, but probably no more so than rockets to the moon would have been in 1900.

He opened up to the floor to suggest possible methods. These included taking the weak link (people!) out of the process and sending AI craft with human DNA to populate suitable planets. Another was the possibility of a Star Trek style transporter system. An old favourite (as promoted by Stephen Hawking) is a "solar sail" initially propelled by Earth based lasers.

Many thanks to Bud for a great talk.

After the break we had images from Gordon McKenzie, Ken Honour, Bud and Terry Evans. Ken's images of the "Towers of Creation" in M16 were timely as NASA released the first JWST image of this feature on the same day.

The programme for 2023 is starting to come together and we agreed that we would try for another observing evening in September 2023. Perhaps we're pushing our luck as this year's event worked so well, but we'll see!

Next month's talk will be by Steve Tonkin on *Ten Ways the Universe Tries to Kill You*. Let's keep our heads down until then!