

Astronomy Talk 28th February 2017

Rocks from Space

Ron Westmaas, who is chairman of the Crewkerne and District Astronomical Society, came to give us this talk. We started by looking at history, and how it took a long time for people to accept rocks could come from space, especially as Isaac Newton had said it was impossible. Evidence became incontrovertible in 1795 with the Wold Cottage meteorite and soon after with the L'Aigle event in France.

Mostly they come from the asteroid belt, and are mostly carbonaceous. We looked at the main types, chondrites, achondrites (85%), stony iron and iron in some detail.

We then went on to hear about what happens on entry. It depends on mass and velocity, and Ron showed what happens going from small ones up to very massive ones, e.g. the Chicxulub event.

So what can we do? Ron explained why he thought we'd not be able to do much, but mentioned many of the ideas for destroying or deflecting bodies before they hit the Earth.

At the end Ron showed examples of many types.