

Astronomy Talk 19th August 2017

Tim Peake, Space and the ISS

Bill Coombes gave us a very detailed talk, looking into what Tim Peake has done.

Tim received the CMG recently, which is a measure of the respect with which he's viewed. When he applied to be an astronaut, there were 8,000 other applicants. Last year there were 18,300, and some of this is surely down to the excellent publicity Tim Peake has provided.

Of the 8,000, 8 were chosen, and had to go through a 7 year training regime, including wilderness survival, learning Russian and many group activities to test their ability to be cooped up together for long periods in stressful situations. The background needed is also very demanding, and his having more than 3,000 hours flying experience as a pilot as well as having been an Apache helicopter pilot trainer put him in a good position. One also has to meet demanding physiological tests. Bill showed us an ESA video of some of the exercises undertaken.

Tim Peake went to the ISS on 15th December 2015, and worked on about 250 experiments, many of them involving schools and education. Bill showed a video of a live connection with a school's amateur radio group, which was one of 10 UK schools that Tim Peake spoke to.

We also had a video of Tim Peake's return and touchdown. He said what he really wanted was rain and fresh air after his time on the ISS, and he was carried in a chair, having lost about 40% of his muscle mass, and 15% of his brain mass.

It looks almost certain that he'll return to the ISS, as he has been such a good PR gents for ESA, apart from his educational outreach projects. We were also told that Tim never stops smiling!