

Astronomy Talk 14th December 2021

My Study of Astronomy as a Mature Student

Mike Young, who is a member of BNSS gave us this talk. He first described his career from HNC to engineering to health service administration, and finally working for Statoil on contracts. When he retired, he moved to this area and developed an interest in the night sky.

The open University (OU) was founded in 1969, and we were given a bit of its history. Then we looked Mike's course and the modular structure of courses at the OU. Different subjects can be mixed, and there are summer schools, tutorials, etc.

Mike has covered the equivalent of years 1 and 2 of a BSc and is starting on year 3. He showed us some of the things he has covered in his courses so far, e.g., cosmic distance measuring, the source of elements and the Hertzsprung-Russell (HR) diagram. He's now moving more to Earth science-based modules, including the structure of Europa, the Earth, etc., and such things as the rock/carbonate cycle on Earth.

Lastly Mike covered additional things that the OU offers, e.g., free "Open Learn" courses.

The talk stimulated a lot of discussion, and we hope some of the attendees will be encouraged to follow in Mike's footsteps.

Afterwards Kate Earl gave an excellent view of the night sky using Stellarium, followed by various Christmassy astronomical odds and ends. Much appreciated!