

The Making of Milton Keynes

DIVERSITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

The Open University: Continued

SIMONE in Space

Scientists at the OU work with industry and space agencies to design future missions to asteroids, to examine them at close quarters, collect samples and help us understand the impact hazard for Earth. Asteroids are left-over building blocks that never joined together to form planets, so they tell us a lot about the material and processes in the early history of the solar system, some 4.65 billion years ago.

Beagle 2

Beagle 2 was the UK-led Mars lander delivered to Mars in 2003, by Europe's Mars Express mission, to examine martian rock, soil and atmosphere for signs of past or present life. Having separated from Mars Express successfully, it entered the atmosphere but unfortunately no signal was received. Much of the technology developed for Beagle 2 is, however, finding uses on future missions and for applications here on Earth.



Image courtesy of QinetiQ

Why I became a scientist...

'I was always excited by the fact and fiction of space exploration, via TV shows such as Tomorrow's World and Doctor Who, as well as books on the subject. Around the age of 17 I realised I could build on the science I'd done at school and follow planetary science as a career, at university and beyond.'

Dr Andrew Ball (Planetary Scientist)

'When I was a young child (5 or so!), my parents taped something for me and managed to catch five minutes of "The Sky At Night". I was hooked, and knew from that moment that I wanted to study and become an astronomer!'

Dr Jonathan Horner (Astronomer)

'One day on the beach when I was about 5 years old my Dad explained how the moon caused the tides. Though I thought this was a ridiculous proposition, conversations like this fed my curiosity about how things work and why things are the way they are - I was thrilled to discover you could actually get paid for thinking about such things!'

Dr Carole Haswell (Astronomer)