

Jeremiah Horrocks
Public Lecture Series

A Comet at Christmas

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Joseph Caruana

Monday 9th December, 6:30pm (refreshments from 6pm)
Darwin Lecture Theatre, Preston Campus

In the Christmas story, 3 wise men from the East follow a star which leads them to Bethlehem. For many years, people have speculated that the star may have been a comet – and if so, have wondered which comet it might have been. It is unlikely that we will ever know for sure – but what we do know is that throughout history, the appearances of comets have been regarded as important omens, usually of great disasters. It is certainly true that comets bring significant messages, carrying records of the origins of the Solar System and the building blocks of life. In her lecture, Professor Monica Grady will discuss the importance of comets and what we have learned from them through observations from spacecraft and the analysis of cometary dust in laboratories on Earth.

Monica Grady is Professor of Planetary and Space Sciences in the School of Physical Sciences at the Open University in Milton Keynes. She obtained a degree in Chemistry and



Geology from the University of Durham in 1979, and a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in 1983. Her thesis concerned the carbon chemistry of meteorites, and she has continued this study throughout her subsequent career. Professor Grady has led major research programmes in the study of the origin and evolution of the Solar System through analysis of meteorites, the Moon, Mars, asteroids and comets. Her particular research interests are in carbon and nitrogen chemistry with additional expertise in the mineralogy of meteorites, especially of primitive meteorites and meteorites from Mars. Her work builds a bridge between the non-biological chemistry of the Galaxy and the origin of life on Earth. It also provides a framework within which the potential for life beyond Earth can be considered.

A full biography can be found at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monica_Grady



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