

Asteroids and impacts: Should we worry? What can we do?



by

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Look up at the night sky for a while and you will see a streak of light, as a meteor, the size of a grain of sand, burns up in our atmosphere. On average, every 5 000 years an object, large enough to make a crater one kilometer in diameter, strikes the Earth. We will look at past impacts, including that of 1906, that demolished 40 million trees, which may be related to even larger events in the last 10 000 years. We will examine the origin of these impacts and see what we are doing to predict and prevent them.

Dr Catchpole currently works at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge University, after retiring as Senior Astronomer at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich in September 2003. He spent twenty four years working in South Africa, obtained his PhD at UCT and has authored and co-authored over 120 research papers and articles and used a number of telescopes around the world, including the Hubble Space Telescope.

Thursday 15 June

18.00–19.00

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