

WELL DESIGNED!



Cicadas

Do you depend on an alarm clock to wake you in the morning? Many creatures have their own 'alarm clocks', and one of the most remarkable is an insect called the cicada. There are around 3,000 species of cicadas and most of their lives are spent underground in the larval stage.

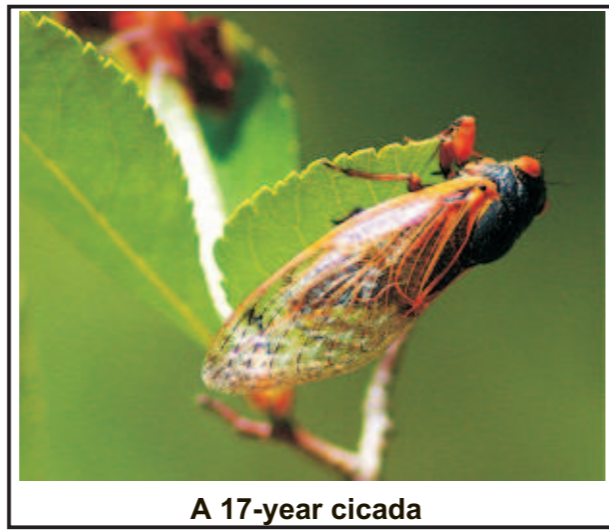
After hatching, the grubs burrow into the ground, where they live on sap from plant roots. For some cicadas this larval stage lasts a very long time. In North America, one species spends 13 years underground and another 17 years! Cicada grubs have some kind of clock which tells them when it is time to leave their underground life, and this happens exactly 13 or 17 years after the eggs were hatched! This strange cycle makes it more difficult for predators to rely on cicadas for food.



Cicada molting

EMPTY SKINS

In American forests, thousands of cicada grubs emerge together and climb the trunks of trees. They shed



A 17-year cicada

From wikipedia.com

their skins and turn into beautiful winged insects, leaving the forest floor littered with thousands of empty skins. As the transformed cicadas spread their wings, the males begin their 'song' to attract a mate. This loud clicking noise, which fills the forests, and can sometimes be heard a kilometre away, is produced by a special resonating chamber in the abdomen. There are two membranes known as the *timbals* which are buckled, like a tin lid being pressed in and out, to produce a series of loud clicks. The muscles that control the *timbals* can operate at 600 times a second! Each species of cicada has its own unique song, with the clicks coded so that only a mate of the same species is attracted. The cicadas' winged stage lasts only a few weeks, during which they lay their eggs. Then the whole cycle begins again, with the grubs burrowing into the soil to await their 'alarm call' 13 or 17 years later.

Evolution can't explain the origin of cicadas. Their special sound-producing chamber, with its *timbals* and special muscles, could never have evolved gradually. This, together with their strange, yet wonderfully synchronised, life-cycle are powerful evidence of design by a wise Creator.

Pause for a smile

Why do giraffes eat so little?
Because a little goes a long way!

What do you call a cat who's eaten a duck?
A duck-filled fatty puss.

Customer: Do you have any camouflage jackets?
Assistant: Yes, we have loads of them, but we can't find them.

Diner: Waiter there's a twig in my soup.

Waiter: Hold on sir, I'll call the branch manager.

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The REAL SCIENCE paper!

ORIGINAL VIEW ORIGINAL

No. 58

SEARCHING FOR OTHER WORLDS

NASA has launched a new space mission called *Kepler* (right). It's aim? "Finding Earth-size and smaller planets around other stars." Will it succeed?



An artist's impression of the Kepler spacecraft against a starry sky. (NASA picture)

Is there really life out there?

For centuries, people have looked at the night sky and wondered, "Are we alone?" Many people believe that because of the vast size of our universe, with its millions of galaxies and billions of stars, there must be other inhabited planets out there — we just haven't found them yet. Popular science fiction films have only added to these expectations.

In order to look for other earthlike planets, on March 7th 2009 NASA launched the Kepler spacecraft. According to NASA's special Kepler website, its task is to search for "terrestrial planets (i.e., those one half to twice the size of the Earth), especially those in the habitable zone of their stars where liquid water and possibly life might exist." It is specifically designed to survey our region of the Milky Way "to determine how many of the billions of stars in our galaxy have such planets."

However, the search for extraterrestrial life is based on several false assumptions and unproven theories about the origin of life and its supposed evolution.



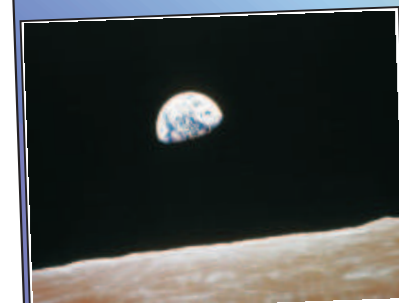
From NASA website

THERE IS SOMEONE THERE!

People who scan the heavens for evidence of extra-terrestrial life often miss the real message of the stars. This message was summed up 3,000 years ago by king David: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth." (Psalm 19: 1-4). The vastness and complexity of the cosmos points to the existence of a wise and powerful Creator.

It seems likely that earth will turn out to be the only inhabited planet in the universe, but this doesn't mean that we need to feel alone. The God who created this vast cosmos has revealed Himself, not only through the Bible, but also by becoming one of us in the Person of Jesus Christ. Earth became the "visited planet!" "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." (John 3: 16). He "became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1: 14). Those who lived with Jesus, and witnessed His death and resurrection, had no doubt that He was truly God.

The greatest discovery anyone can make is not life in outer space but the new life that Jesus gives to all who turn to Him in faith, believing He died for their sins and receiving God's forgiveness through Him. Millions of people down through the centuries have discovered that not only is "someone there", but they have come to know Him as a heavenly Father and Friend — a relationship that will last for ever. How about you?



Earth from the moon. Men have walked on the moon, but God walking on earth is even more amazing

The Pleiades star cluster

GEN & EV

SETI IS SEARCHING FOR NON-RANDOM SIGNALS, WHICH WOULD INDICATE INTELLIGENCE

WOULDN'T IT BE EXCITING, GEN, TO DISCOVER THAT THERE WERE OTHER INTELLIGENT BEINGS TRYING TO MAKE CONTACT WITH US?

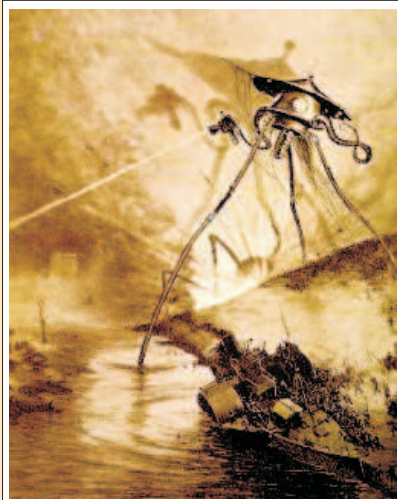
SO, A CODED MESSAGE WOULD BE PROOF OF INTELLIGENCE, EV?

SO WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT THE CODED INFORMATION IN DNA PROVES INTELLIGENCE, TOO?

Drawings by Michael Higgins

Getting the message

THE SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) programme was set up in 1984. According to its website: "The Mission of the SETI Institute is to explore, understand and explain the origin, nature and prevalence of life in the universe. We believe we are conducting the most profound search in human history — to know our beginnings and our place among the stars." SETI's main activity is to scan the heavens for non-random signals using powerful radio-telescopes. There is a good deal of "noise" coming from outer space, but it is random and meaningless. If a non-random, coded sequence were detected it would be seen as evidence that someone out there



In *War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells (1898) Martians trying to escape their dying planet used "tripods" to invade earth.

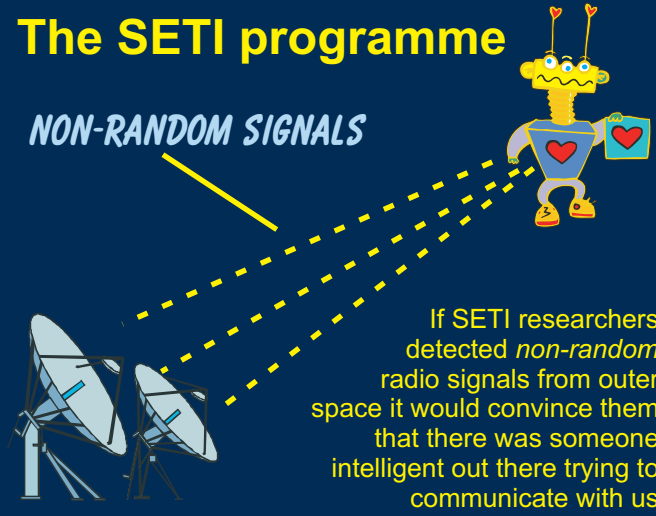
was trying to make contact. In 1999 the SETI@home project was launched which allowed people to join the search using their home computers. Over 5 million people worldwide are now involved in this, as yet, unfruitful search.

Science fiction films often depict aliens as being hostile — even though they usually speak American English! In H.G. Wells classic story *War of the Worlds*, it was Martians who were out to get us. Modern movies like *Independence Day* have a similar theme.

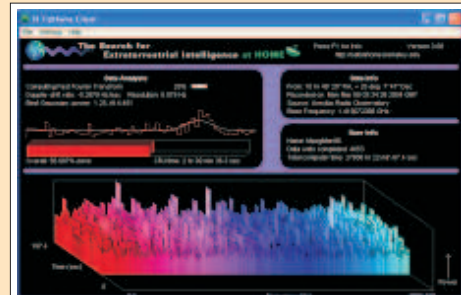
SETI has been running for 25 years, without finding any evidence that intelligent aliens exist. Still, many live in hope. Astronomer Seth Shostak says he expects to get a conclusive signal and proof of alien contact between 2020 and 2025. The search for E.T. has even spawned a new "science" called *astrobiology*. Yet the argument that "there must be other inhabited worlds out there" is based on wishful thinking rather than sound scientific principles. So far we only have evidence for the existence of *one* inhabited world — our own!

The SETI programme

NON-RANDOM SIGNALS



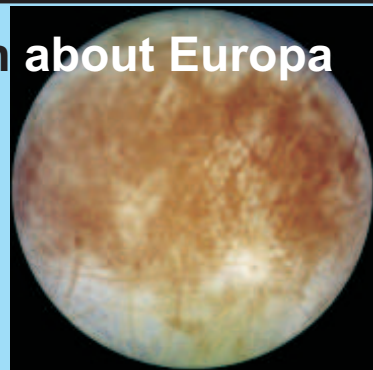
If SETI researchers detected *non-random* radio signals from outer space it would convince them that there was someone intelligent out there trying to communicate with us



Screen-shot of the SETI@home project

Oceans of speculation about Europa

The planet Jupiter has many moons. One of the larger ones is Europa, 3,100 kilometres (1,900 miles) in diameter, only slightly smaller than earth's moon. The surface of Europa (right) is covered in ice which has lots of cracks in it. This has excited many E. T. researchers, who believe there may be an ocean of liquid water under the ice, and that some kind of life may exist there.



No-one knows how thick the ice is, and there is no proof that there is an ocean underneath. However, some scientists are considering a space mission to Europa which would include a *cryobot* — a nuclear-powered probe that would melt through the ice into the ocean beneath to search for alien lifeforms.

The belief that there may be life under Europa's icy surface is based on lots of speculation, and several false assumptions. There is only one fact: Europa is covered with ice which has cracks in it. There is no proof that there is liquid water below it. Even if there were, why would these researchers expect to find

life? Firstly, because they believe that life on earth began in the sea, although there is no evidence for this. Secondly, because they believe that, given the right conditions, life will spontaneously evolve from non-living matter — but there is no evidence for this, either. In fact, secular scientists still can't explain how life on earth began — it's still a mystery to them. True, observable science tells us that life only comes from life.



Artist's impression of the Cryobot

TO BOLDLY GO...



Science fiction films like *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* have popularised the idea that there are other civilisations in the universe, and that if only we can travel fast enough and far enough we shall meet up with them. It is often assumed that other civilisations would be more advanced than us, and possibly a threat to us. There have been many sightings of UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects), such as the one below at Sheffield, UK on 4th March 1962. Many people believe they are alien spacecraft from other worlds, but the vast majority can be explained as natural objects like clouds, aircraft, or even



hoaxes. There is no evidence they are piloted by visitors from outer space.

IN THE NEWS

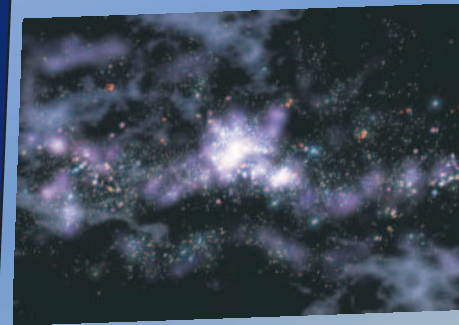
New-found galaxies upset theories



Astronomers have discovered mature galaxies "in the centre of five of the youngest clusters of galaxies known in the universe," reported *Science News* (1st April 2009). This discovery will "call into question the leading theory of galaxy formation." According to conventional astronomy, the universe began with a "big bang" 13.7 billion years ago — although this is disputed by creationist scientists. The problem with this new discovery is that these galaxies have been dated at "only" 5 billion years old, yet are "just as massive as galaxies like the modern-day Milky Way, which took at least 10 billion years to mature."

Chris Collins, an astronomer at the Liverpool John Moores University in England, said, "No doubt the theorists will want to say that tweaking [the model] in very dense regions will suffice, but I think the problem could be more general than that." The standard theory is that galaxies form when *cold dark matter* (a theoretical material which has never been detected) draws gas and stars together. Supposedly small, lightweight galaxies form first, then merge into bigger bodies. Simulations suggest that these galaxies should only have reached 20% of their present weight in the time available.

Chris Collins said, "Our result is strong evidence that, for reasons we as yet do not understand, the process of galaxy assembly at early times was much more rapid and efficient than the [dark matter model] in the simulations would have us believe." Although the dark matter scenario for galaxy formation accurately predicts many features over a wide range of cosmic history, "it seems that in these extreme cluster environments, something else is needed."

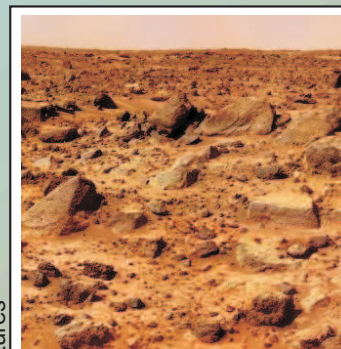


This is not the first time such discoveries have been made. In 2004 NASA reported the discovery of a "giant string of galaxies" in the "early universe" (left). Current models of how the universe evolved "can't explain how a string this big could have formed so early." Maybe that "something else" is to consider the creation model for the origin of the universe, the view that the cosmos was created in a mature state at the command of God the Creator?

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DOES WATER = LIFE?

Although the planet Mars now seems to be a barren, icy desert, there is evidence that water flowed there in the past, and in 2008 NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander discovered evidence that there is liquid water there now. Searchers for E. T. life are quite excited about this, because water is essential for life as we know it, and finding it raises their hopes that some kind of life may exist there.



Martian desert



Phoenix Mars Lander (artist's impression)

However, they are making the assumption that life will arise from non-living matter if conditions are right, and this is a false assumption. Even if Mars (or any other planet) had oceans of water it would not mean we should expect to find life, since no-one has ever been able to demonstrate that life can come from non-life. The origin of life on earth remains a total mystery to people who reject a supernatural creation.¹

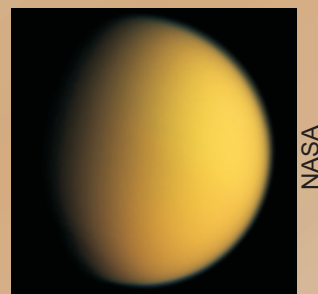
E. T. searchers are also interested in Titan, Saturn's largest moon (below, right), which has a diameter of 5,150 kilometers (3,200 miles), and is even larger than the planet Mercury. The temperature of Titan's surface is -179 degrees C (-290 degrees F), too cold for liquid water, but it has an atmosphere. Titan has been described as an "earth in cold storage", with the suggestion that, if it warmed up in the future, life would emerge. Once again, we see the false assumption that life will simply "emerge" if conditions are right, which flies in the face of true, observable science.

E. T. searchers are really pinning their hopes on, as yet, undiscovered planets in other parts of our galaxy, or even in other galaxies. But their hopes are still based on the same unprovable assumptions about how life begins.

1. See "Origin of Life Mystery", *Original View* No. 49.



Water is essential for life, but that doesn't mean that we should expect to find life where we find water



NASA