

## Finally

Congratulations if you have got this far; you are clearly an individual with immense powers of persistence to have endured this narrative. No doubt you will have grasped the fascination I have with people. They are so diverse and I have the view that, no matter how unlikely it may appear at first acquaintance, everyone has a story of interest to tell and it is my job to discover it. (I am getting close to giving up when asking the question “tell me the story of your life”)

Some like the comfort of established ways but to me the allure is novelty. Having parked my car in the same office car park for twenty years, I chastised myself every time I did it again. No one can accuse me of any consistency on the golf course!

Now, I count my bounty to be married to Margaret. She tolerates my many hours at the observatory communing with the Heavens but realises the satisfaction I engender by starting to learn our place in the cosmos. Is there life out there? Of course there is. Just consider the numbers. On three occasions the Hubble Space Telescope has been pointed at random points in both Northern and Southern Hemispheres for days on end, gradually accumulating more and more information. One of the reasons to select each target was because it was in an area with apparently nothing to see. The area of sky imaged each time is the size of a grain of sand held at arms length. In each instance over a thousand galaxies were seen, each containing around 100 billion stars. (100,000,000,000,000 stars per image). When looking at stars close to Earth we find that most have planets. It does not take a mathematical genius to calculate the likelihood that there are legions of stars out there with planets that are similar to our home.