

Can you find Love on the Moon?

By Wendy McCorry, Science Communicator

How would you like to visit a place where you could experience Bliss, Joy and Love at the same time, and where all ladies are guaranteed to find their Romeo? Staying in the Ritz (Jeans are permitted, as long as you have Manners) and wake up to the delicious sight of Bacon every morning. Spend your time taking in the wonderful spectacle of the local wildlife – Falcon, Parrot, Swann, Dove, Lamb, Fox and Wolf. If you get thirsty after all that exploring, don't worry, in this locality you can always find Beer. Every one of your needs is catered for, with a Cook, Gardner and Draper close at hand, (but do steer clear of the Leakey Plummer). Your spiritual needs are also looked after- you are welcome to visit the local Rabbi, Nunn, Abbot or Pope!

“...some craters are Black, Green and Brown”

Think all of this sounds too good to be true? Well



“Magnificent desolation” was Buzz Aldrin’s memorable description of the Moon’s surface made as he stood there in July 1969. This is apparent from this image of the crater Copernicus photographed thirty five years ago during the final Apollo lunar mission.

of course every foreign trip has its potential risks – there’s always the small chance you could end up in Hell, feeling Grimm and trying to avoid the Grave.

So where is this unique holiday destination? Is it Spain, New Zealand or the Caribbean? Well, you could say it is quite literally out of this world, as all these amazing facilities can be found on the Moon! Now, before you run off to pack your suitcase, you may be disappointed to learn that no, a holiday resort has not been built on the Moon (yet!). These are, in fact, the names of some of the craters found on the Moon’s surface. Craters are (mostly) circular pits caused by the impacts of asteroids, comets and meteorites colliding with the Moon. Unlike the Earth, the Moon has no atmosphere to protect it from these high-speed bombardments, and no wind or rain to take away the remnants of such events.

The larger lunar craters are named after famous scientists, artists and scholars such as Curie, Da Vinci and Darwin. Look at the Moon through a pair of binoculars and you may be able to see the prominent Copernicus Crater in the upper left quadrant. Then take your eye down towards the Southern Pole to see the magnificent Tycho Crater, with its rays of ejected material extending for thousands of kilometres. As is only fitting, there are also craters named after astronauts- Gagarin, Armstrong and Aldrin, to name but a few.

“the Moon has no atmosphere to protect it from bombardments ”

Visitors to Armagh Planetarium may be aware that, in 1977, a lunar crater was named after our founder, Dr Eric Lindsay. Lindsay Crater is approximately 33km across and is located on the near side of the Moon (the side we can see from Earth), between two plains - Mare Tranquillitatis and Mare Nubium.

Many of the smaller craters are given common



Image Credit: NOAO

Earth's Moon The prominent craters Copernicus and Tycho are clearly visible. The dark areas are the 'maria' or seas. Don't pack your swimsuit though as they are ancient 'seas' of cooled lava!

first names from a variety of different languages, such as Alan (Irish), Boris (Russian) and Sung-Mei (Chinese).

So next time you take a moonlit stroll along the beach, why not impress that certain someone with the interesting fact that Frost has been seen on the Moon. Ask your friends what colour they think the Moon is, and then amaze them by telling them that, actually, some of its craters are Black, White, Green and Brown! And if you happen to be talking to a certain George W. Bush, you might like to casually inform him that Osama can currently be found on the Moon!