

My reflection on an interesting day at the National Space Centre

Leicester, 24 June 2026

Well, that was a nice day out. How on earth did Colin know we would be needing a sanctuary in an air cooled coach and venue. A great choice; obviously his psychic powers were full orbit.

A very pleasant, competent driver (Sue), a smooth relaxing journey. Café adequate, prices reasonable. A most enjoyable day.

There was a wide variety of interesting informative literature clearly available on placards around the venue. Hands-on activities/games catered for all ages. The main focus was child based but there was much for those in their wisdom years to enjoy.

For example, I found a few members of our group enjoying 'Playground', an app new to me. I only witnessed the tail end of their fun but have since found I have this app built into my mobile phone. This spurred me on to have a go at home and I've had some fun trying to put sunglasses and funny hats on dogs as I recall the group were doing on Wednesday. I came late upon their session so not sure what else they played around with.

An ego trip for me was getting correct most of the 'memory choice' test questions. Child's play really, pressing a picture in response to a question, but it felt uplifting. (Thanks Colin & Dawn for directing me to the game.)

I hadn't realised that 'Snoopy' was the NASA space emblem (one of the questions). When a student (yonks ago) our cohort had lots of fun working out and discussing the interplay, the hidden psychology behind the cartoon, Charlie Brown and Snoopy etc., so I could identify with NASA's decision to choose Snoopy as an emblem. Of course they gave additional reasons.

The Patrick Moore Planetarium 20 minute event

The dome was amazing, though the 20 minute session was too short. Fast scene changes were frustrating and left little time for one to process each change and, for me, reduced the value element of the presentation. The speed made me dizzy. Yes, in all probability this was their intent (experiential learning mode), but longer sequences would have enabled me to explore what I was seeing and feeling, to peep rather than close my eyes, missing some aspects that may have been of interest. Of course one could argue that this was intended to be a taster, yet the moving rocket was a central feature of the presentation. Hence the sense of wonder over distance was, for me, reduced.

One Step Beyond

I became more engrossed in this once I had established the role of Ziggy the doll, which at first I found distracting. I wasn't sure why it was there then realised the show was designed

to hold the attention of younger children. For me it was pleasant yet moved my attention away from the astronauts. Perhaps that says more about me than the content!

Some of the psychological attachment and loss issues faced by astronauts leaving families, going up in the sky not knowing whether they would return, and the effect upon the family left behind were addressed through Ziggy doll's safe return to the astronaut daughter doll. The charming emotional clip at the end was just right, subtle, point made and reassuring for little children. Well done to the video production team.

Some further reflection

We are in a fast-moving world today. I was listening to an old film this week. I took particular notice of the speech time in old films and noticed that even the fastest dialogue in older films is slower than the normal speech in many modern films. Scenes were also panned more slowly, just an observation.

Did I enjoy the day? Yes, greatly. Did I hear others mention they enjoyed the day? Yes. Was it an informative experience and fun day out? Yes, definitely.

Thank you once again, Colin, for a great day out.

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