

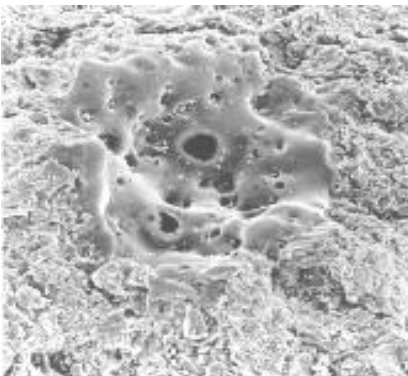
## Spaxton Nights

Man's greatest achievement?.....nasal hair clippers? Sherbet dips? Flip flops? Or landing on the moon? Hmmm, tricky...I think landing on the moon just about has it, but some people still don't think it happened despite the fact that there is a satellite in orbit round the moon that has photographed the actual landing sites....foot prints and all, so let's put the record straight.

There is one piece of evidence that cannot be tampered with, and which is above any conspiracy theory: moon rocks, yes moon rocks. You can't just pick up any old rock and call it a moon rock, because earth rocks have been subjected to weathering, something that various universities who study them would have picked up on fairly quickly.

So what's this evidence then? Well to begin with, the earth has something that the moon doesn't - a lovely thick atmosphere (any of you who have been to the village quizzes will know what I'm talking about!). Our atmosphere is a bit like an onion, it has distinct layers, each layer having less and less air until it just fades to nothing at about 300 miles up. This atmosphere protects us from almost everything falling to earth including things called micro meteorites; these are tiny particles of rock the size of sand grains and even smaller. When the micro meteorites enter Earth's atmosphere, they burn up causing a shooting star so they never reach the ground. But the moon has no atmosphere to speak so its surface is constantly being bombarded by all manner of stuff from space from micro meteorites (traveling at 10,000 to 25,000mph) to radiation from the sun, so the rocks on the moon get peppered by impacts causing small craters to form on their surfaces.

There is no way these small impact marks can form on any other rocks than the moon rocks that were collected by the astronauts on the Apollo missions and brought back to earth. Even 'ordinary' meteorites don't have them because on their fiery journey through the atmosphere the outer surface gets melted off removing any features. There are many more things that prove that we landed on the moon but you'll be delighted to hear that I'll stop here. Actually, I won't quite stop here - I've just got to say a bit more...



Believe it or not this picture is of a micro meteorite impact site on a moon rock, although I grant you it does look like a corn flake; the smooth areas were melted when the impact happened. It's only about 2mm across.

Now I've turned you non believers into believers I'll move on to what's happening in the sky this month.

On the 21/22 of December are the Ursids meteor shower; sadly there is a full moon around that time so only the very bright ones can be seen - look toward the north and you never know you might catch a meteor. Jupiter rises about midnight midway through the month, but on the 4th it rises with a half moon close by at about 1.30am, seen in the eastern sky it's very pretty sight. Don't forget to look out for a big fat hairy bloke in a sledge being pulled by reindeer on the evening of the 24th ....if you believe that you'll believe anything.....even men on the moon.