
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

News Report

Comets



History was made in November 2014 when **a probe** was landed on a comet in deep space. The probe, called Philae, was launched 10 years earlier and travelled 6.5 billion kilometres to its **rendezvous**.

Although the landing **didn't go entirely to plan** a huge amount of important **data** was sent back to Earth from the comet.

This data is studied by scientists to help us understand more about our own planet. **Impacts** from comets were very important to the evolution of the Earth and it is believed by some that they may even have brought water and life here.

It is thought that comets are made from material left over from when the outer planets in **our solar system** were **formed**. Another theory is that many may have come from outside our solar system.

These huge balls of frozen gasses, rock and dust with their **distinctive** 'tails' have **fascinated** humans ever since we started looking up into the night sky.

The most well-known is perhaps Halley's Comet. It can be seen **with the naked eye** and **is visible** from Earth every 75 to 76 years. It was first recorded in 240BC and since then its appearance has been described regularly throughout history.

In 1066 it was drawn as a fiery star in the **Bayeux Tapestry**. It was first photographed in 1910 and in that year it was so close that the Earth actually passed through its tail.

Vocabulary

a probe

a device which is used to collect information

rendezvous

meeting

didn't go entirely to plan

went a little bit wrong

data

information

impacts

hits, collisions

our solar system

our sun and the planets that go around it

formed

made

distinctive

easy to recognise

fascinated

been of great interest to

with the naked eye

without needing to use equipment such as telescopes

is visible

can be seen

Bayeux Tapestry

a famous decorated cloth showing scenes from English history in the 11th Century

This story is based on an original BBC News story:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-29746430>