

Voyager: 101 Wonders between Heaven and Earth
and the edge of the Cosmos
by Stuart Clark.
Atlantic Books 2012.

Occasionally, and only occasionally a book is published which is not just a 'wow!' on every page but a wow from the front to the back covers.

Stuart Clark, former editor of Astronomy Now, and Atlantic Books have, with Voyager, produced one of the most wonderful books I have ever seen. Starting with Earth herself, and in 231 pages, Clark takes the reader on a journey to the depths of space, some 46.5 giga light years away. And a light year, as the excellent glossary explains, is the distance covered by light in a vacuum during one year, which is 9.5 trillion kilometres.

Voyager, named after the eponymous space craft which was launched by NASA in 1977 to explore deep space, has 101 entries, each with a beautiful photograph taken by our ever more powerful space telescopes, and a detailed text explaining the image and giving its distance from the earth. From planets to moons to galaxies the pictures are absolutely breathtaking and enthralling.

Voyager is a book for anyone over the age of about seven, as it functions on a number of levels, photographic record and scientific explanation to name the most obvious two. It would enthrall a youngster getting interested in the solar system and delight and amaze adult readers. If I have one tiny quibble, born of my middle aged eyes rather than my sense of aesthetics, it is that the printing of white letters on black paper, though incredibly clear, is a tad harsh on the eyes!

Voyager is a gem of a book, something to come back to time and again and see more than one saw before.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh