



Nancy Hine

Nancy Hine is a second year PhD student studying the evolution of galaxies in different environments. She obtained her Physics degree with the Open University before completing a Masters by Research in Astronomy at the University of Hertfordshire. She is actively involved with the department's outreach programme as one of two coordinators of the student outreach group, as well as helping with group visits and open nights at the Bayfordbury Observatory. Nancy also helps to supervise undergraduate practicals at the Observatory and is Chair of the South East Physics Network Postgraduate Student Representative Panel.

Research: My research project involves studying galaxies in the early Universe as they start to form a proto cluster in a high density region (i.e. where there is a high density of dark matter). Proto clusters are thought to evolve into the large galaxy clusters that we see in the local Universe today. Theory predicts that galaxies will evolve more quickly in these proto clusters than in other parts of the Universe, which is changing more rapidly from galaxies forming lots of stars, to passive galaxies where little star formation takes place. I am studying a particular proto cluster in some detail and comparing it to other regions of the Universe to test this theory.

Personal path: Having originally obtained a degree in Economic and Social History and Sociology at the University of Birmingham, I trained as a chartered accountant in London. I worked for 14 years as an accountant before deciding that I wanted to do something more meaningful with my life. I next trained and worked for a couple of years as a counsellor, before deciding this was not for me. I started studying astronomy with the Open University for fun whilst practicing as a counsellor and soon decided that this was what I wanted to do. Six years and many stressful hours tearing my hair out over my books later, I had my degree. During this time I went back to accountancy to pay the bills, was made redundant, was unemployed for a while and then worked as a self employed accountant on a part time basis. I am now thoroughly enjoying my PhD and believe that it is never too late to change your career. Hard work and perseverance can get you to where you want to be. As well as doing research my PhD has so far enabled me to travel to Hawaii to observe at the James Clarke Maxwell telescope on Mauna Kea, to attend a conference in Dubrovnik and to talk to people about my research at the World Science Fiction Convention. I look forward to seeing what the next year will bring.