

Preface to the Second Edition

I'd like to thank Chris Caron of Springer, both for his suggestion that I should update *Where Is Everybody?* and for his encouragement throughout the painful process of updating. I'm pleased that the second edition of the book will appear in Springer's Science & Fiction series, the brainchild of Chris and his colleague Angela Lahee, because any discussion of the Fermi paradox sits at that stimulating intersection between science and science fiction. A dozen years after the publication of the first edition I believe even more strongly that Fermi's question is one of the most pressing problems in science, but it remains the case that SF authors have contributed at least as much to the debate as professional scientists.

I've discussed the Fermi paradox with too many people over the years to mention them all by name, but I would particularly like to thank Milan Ćirković, Mike Lampton, Colin McInnes, Anders Sandberg, David Waltham and Willard Wells for sharing ideas, papers and manuscripts with me.

And of course I must thank Heike and Jessica, who make all this worthwhile.

Stephen Webb
Lee on the Solent, July 2014

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This book is about the Fermi paradox—the contradiction between the apparent absence of aliens, and the common expectation that we should see evidence of their existence. I was fascinated by the paradox when I first met it, some 17 years ago, and it fascinates me still. Over those years, many authors (too many to mention here, though their names appear in the reference list at the back of this book) have enthralled me with their writing about the paradox. Their influence upon this work will be clear. I have also discussed the paradox with many friends and colleagues; although they are too numerous to mention individually, I am indebted to them all.

Several people have contributed directly to the writing of this book, and I would like to take this chance to thank them. Clive Horwood of Praxis, and John Watson of Springer, have been very supportive of the project; the book would not have been completed had it not been for their advice and encouragement. (I would also like to thank John for sharing his favoured resolution of the paradox over an enjoyable working lunch.) Stuart Clark provided many useful comments on an early draft of the manuscript; Bob Marriott caught several errors and solecisms in a later draft (Bob also sent me a list of 101 resolutions of the paradox—75 of which I agree with); and I am extremely grateful to Steve Gillett for putting me right on many scientific points. (I am, of course, responsible for those errors that remain.) Several authors and organizations kindly gave permission to reproduce figures; I am particularly grateful to thank Lora Gordon, Geoffrey Landis, Ian Wall, Susan Lendroth, Reinhard Rachel, Heather Lindsay and Merrideth Miller for help in obtaining suitable figures. I would like to thank David Gasper, for sharing his recollections of a childhood incident that affected us both. Finally, of course, I would like to thank my family—Heike, Ron, Ronnie, Peter, Jackie, Emily and Abigail—for their patience. I spent time writing that I should instead have shared with them.

Stephen Webb
Milton Keynes, July 2002



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