

FRIDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER

Voyager 1 is a space probe launched on 5th September 1977. 13 days after launch on 18th September it was 11.66 million km away as it turned its camera back to look home and took this picture. It was the first time that the whole of the Earth and Moon were photographed together in a single frame.

From this **vantage** point the Earth and Moon look like close neighbours, but they are 384,000 km apart on average. A distance so large that you could just about line up all seven of the other planets of the Solar System between them, including all the gas giants.

This photo wasn't Voyager 1's mission objective, merely a happy bonus on its way to study Jupiter in 1979 and Saturn in 1980, sending back thousands of images of the gas giants and their moons. There would be more bonus photos too as its cameras looked back again in 1990 from a distance of 6bn km from Earth for a 'Family Portrait' mosaic picture of all the planets including the *Pale Blue Dot* as Voyager left our solar system.

- Why do you think NASA scientists turned the cameras around to look back home?
- How does this photo make you feel?



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