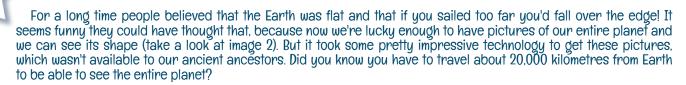






Beyond the Horizon





Now imagine how far into space you'd have to travel to fit all the 300 billion stars of the Milky Way (our Galaxy) into one shot! This is way beyond our abilities at the moment, but we can photograph small sections of the Galaxy. This picture from the Chandra X-ray Observatory shows the very centre of the Milky Way. This is the most chaotic and dangerous part of the Galaxy, and home to a supermassive black hole.

Anything that gets too close to a black hole is pulled into it with such a strong force that it has no chance of escape. The boundary that marks the point of no return is called the event horizon. Past this not even light will return: this monster will pull it in forever. The blue haze in this picture includes piping-hot gas floating perilously close to the event horizon of our Galaxy's supermassive black hole. But astronomers have found that just a tiny amount of this gas will be gobbled up by the black hole, and the rest will be "spat out" before it gets too close.

## COOL FACT

Image 2 shows a picture of the Earth as a whole planet from space. It was taken by astronauts during the Apollo 8 mission in 1968. This was the first manned spacecraft to reach the Moon, which they orbited around before returning safely to Earth. The crew were the first people to ever see this view of Earth!







