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Skyrmions and clustering in light nuclei

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It is almost 60 years since Skyrme introduced his model of nuclei as topological solitons (Skyrmions) in a nonlinear pion theory. I shall review the Skyrme model and discuss some of the successes and failures of Skyrmions. In particular, I will describe some recent work that yields improved results for binding energies and clustering in light nuclei, by extending the standard theory of Skyrmions to include the next lightest sub-atomic meson particles traditionally neglected. Related Skyrmions in magnetic materials will also be briefly discussed.

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