

# Astronomy in the Two Dales

## April

This month on the 16th to the 26th of April we have the Lyrid meteor shower. At their peak on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April as many as 30 meteors an hour may be seen streaking out from a point in the north eastern sky. There have been fantastic displays in the past - the best in 1803, when there were 700 meteors seen every hour. Below is a diagram of the constellation Lyra indicating where the meteors will appear. For the best view wrap up warm and lie down on a rug or a sun-lounger away from artificial light and look steadily up high in the sky (you don't have to look directly at Lyra).

The Lyrid meteor shower is among the oldest of known meteor showers, for which records go back 2,700 years. It is the result of the Earth passing through the dust left by a comet. By an irony of history the comet concerned is comet Thatcher – whose long tail the Earth will pass through just a fortnight before the general election.

April is a sparse month for planets. We still have Jupiter in the evening sky, but for those of us who are out and about at one o'clock in the morning, the planet Saturn may be seen to rise in the east as Jupiter is setting in the west. If you have binoculars or a bird watching telescope you may be able to make out the rings of Saturn. The test for those with telescopes is if you can discern the gap in the rings called the Cassini division, which was discovered in 1675 by Giovanni Cassini at the Paris Observatory.



**Stay Safe:** Never look directly at the sun, and never look in its direction when using binoculars or telescopes. If going out after dark, wrap up warm and make sure someone knows where you are.

Sun	1 <sup>st</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	Moon	1 <sup>st</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>
Twilight starts	06.05	05.31	04.56	Rises	16.45	04.07	14.34
Sunrise	06.41	06.09	05.37	Sets	05.32	14.31	03.37
Sunset	19.43	20.08	20.35	Phase			
Twilight ends	20.20	20.46	21.16	Full	4 <sup>th</sup>	New	18 <sup>th</sup>

Reeth Informal Astronomy Group. See our website at [www.reethastro.org.uk](http://www.reethastro.org.uk)