

Astronomy in the Two Dales

June

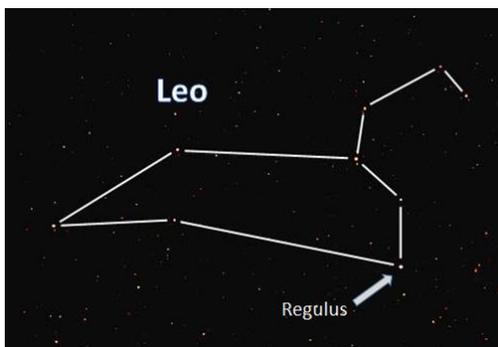
Summer is here! On June 21st at 17.38 pm the summer solstice occurs, marking the mid-point of our year with short nights and long days, an astronomer's worst nightmare - there is nothing more we astronomers like than clear dark skies (and freezing cold temperatures).

This month we have two opportunities to view the inner planets when they are at their furthest point from our sun.

On the 6th of June the planet Venus reaches greatest eastern elongation of 45.4 degrees from the Sun. This is the best time to view Venus since it will be at its highest above the horizon. Look for the bright planet in the western sky after sunset. If you are using binoculars see if you can see the line dividing the sunlit and dark side of the planet – which should appear as a half-disk. The 6th of June is also the final night of Astronomy Watch on the green in Reeth, check Reethastro.org website for weather information and confirmation of the event going ahead or look outside and see if the sky is clear, wrap up well and come down to the green after 10.00 pm.

On the 24th of June the planet Mercury also reaches greatest western elongation of 22.5 degrees from the Sun. This is the best time to view Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the morning sky. Look for the planet low in the eastern sky just before sunrise. But be careful if using binoculars or telescopes and stop before the sun rises.

The moon is full on the 2nd and after about 10.45 can be seen near a bright object in the southern sky. This is the planet Saturn, which rises much earlier but only becomes visible when the sky begins to darken. In the western sky Jupiter is setting and just to its left can be seen a bright star, Regulus, part of the constellation of Leo, the lion. Mythology has it that this is the Nemean lion whose hide no weapon could pierce, killed by Hercules, the Greek hero, who stunned it with his club and then strangled it. So beware of men carrying clubs and declaring themselves to be cat inspectors.



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	1st	14th	28th	Moon	1st	14th	28th
Twilight starts	03:49	03:37	03:40	Rises	20:00	03:34	17:43
Sunrise	04:41	04:33	04:35	Sets	04:24	19:07	02:24
Sunset	21:31	21:44	21:46		Full	New	
Twilight ends	22:24	22:39	22:42	Phase	2nd	16th	