Astronomy in the Two Dales

May

Well, this month we have some shameless self-promotion, as the Reeth Informal Astronomy Group is hosting an Astronomy Watch on the green in Reeth as part of the Swaledale Festival.

On the evenings of Sunday 24th and Monday 25th of May and on Saturday 6th of June, weather permitting, we will have a group of telescopes set up to observe Jupiter, Saturn and Venus. We will also have some double stars and clusters to see once it gets reasonably dark. In addition, on the 6th of June, Marcus Grover, from Grover's Optics shop in Northallerton will be supporting the event with a display of astronomy equipment, hints and tips.

Our website www.reethastro.org.uk will have the latest weather forecast and confirmation whether the event is going ahead each night. The main event starts at 10.00 pm and is free to attend though there will be a bucket for donations (any proceeds over and above our costs will be split between the Festival and other local causes). If it is fine we should be set up by around 8.30 pm if you want to see the telescopes in daylight – and we hope to have at least one equipped with a solar filter allowing early-birds a quick view of our nearest star before it sets. You can come and go as you please but remember to wrap up warm and wear sensible shoes as the event is on grass.

This is the time of year when we have the changing of the guard, in star terms that is. The winter stars are setting before midnight and the summer stars are now prominent.

Vega, in the East is the fifth brightest star in the sky and part of the constellation Lyra (the harp), which is associated with the harps of Kings Arthur and David.

Arcturus is a red giant star in the constellation of Bootes (the herdsman), and is the fourth brightest star in the sky. There are up to 29 stars in this constellation that are visible with the naked eye. Join us on the green in Reeth and we will see how many can be seen through one of our telescopes.

Finally, there is a minor meteor shower in early May called the Eta Aquarids. The shower peaks around May 6th or May 7th and appears to radiate from the direction of the constellation Aquarius. These meteors are believed to be caused by dust left in the orbit of Halley's comet. But you will need to be up early - the best time to view this meteor shower is around 2am, looking in an Easterly direction.

Sun	**1st**	**14th**	**28th**	**Moon**	**1st**	**14th**	**28th**
Twilight starts	04:49	04:20	03:54	Rises	17:48	03:34	15:34
Sunrise	05:31	05:06	04:45	Sets	04:40	16:15	02:45
Sunset	20:40	21:04	21:26	Phase			
Twilight ends	21.22	21:50	22:17	Full	4th	New	18th

Reeth Informal Astronomy Group. See our website at www.reethastro.org.uk

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.