

Astronomy in the Two Dales

August

This month we have a change in format , as long as he who parks sideways will let us have the space . The table of times has been banished and replaced with a star chart , showing the brightest stars and their constellations. The smokey stripe across the chart is the Milky Way , which is our galaxy that we are part of . The Milky Way appears as a stripe as we are on the outer fringes and we are looking back toward it , edge on.

This month we have the best meteor shower for the northern hemisphere , the Perseid's , not to be confused with golf ball size hail . Visible from late July , peaking on the 12-13th of August , and this year the new moon is on the 14th of the month , so , with clear skies a good show could be had with as many as 100 meteors an hour being visible. Look to the north eastern sky , after dark , preferably after midnight.

The moon is full on the 29th and is a super moon , cue fanfare , meaning that it is at it's closest point to the earth and may appear larger than normal , a great opportunity for moon observation. A good tip from the great man , Sir Patrick Moore , was to use a pair of 30 denier tights as a primitive moon filter by stretching them over the telescope aperture or binocular lenses he was using , this prevented the brightness of the full moon from hurting his eyes. **WARNING** : being caught rummaging through your wifes drawers for tights may result in more than sore eyes.

The planets are hiding from us this month , with Saturn setting in the south west before 11pm and Mars only just rising before dawn in the north east, yet we are armed with our star chart and can find the W shaped constellation of Cassiopeia. The Cassiopeia constellation is named after Cassiopeia, the vain and boastful queen in Greek mythology. She boasted she was more beautiful than the sea nymphs , daughters of Poseidon and he sent a sea monster to prey upon Cassiopeia's people. The only way to placate the sea monster was to sacrifice her daughter , Andromeda , and it was the travelling hero , Perseus who saved her.



