

## Astronomy In The Two Dales

### May

Tis May , let us dance. There is a lot to choreograph , this month , so let the ballet begin. The new moon on the 6<sup>th</sup> comes at a perfect time to observe the Eta Aquarid meteor shower , we can expect 30 shooting stars an hour emanating from the south east , best viewed at 4am on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Waltzing in on the 9<sup>th</sup> , Mercury transits across the face of the sun , THIS CAN ONLY BE SEEN WITH SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT , DO NOT LOOK AT THE SUN ! , this event can be seen in the UK and will not occur again until 2019 and then again in 2039.

The full moon fox trots in on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May , and this is a blue moon , being the fourth full moon of the quarter . This is followed by Mars making it`s closest approach to Earth on the 22<sup>nd</sup> , which is the best time to observe the red planet.

There has been much shoe shuffling in astronomy news , a Japanese orbital telescope , Hitomi , exploded and now several pieces of wreckage are hurtling around the planet . Beware of falling fire balls and cries of “Banzai”.

It is now believed that , the small moons and rings around Saturn are younger than the Dinosaurs , having formed around 100,000,000 years ago . The larger moons are believed to be the same age as the planet itself.

Now , we are being constantly told of threats to our existence and now there is another. Is it man made global warming ? No , that is an excuse to tax people for breathing , is it Islamic state , no , they were manufactured to keep us scared and buying stuff to make us feel better , so it has to be atomic war, right? , wrong again , the war heads oxidise over time so we have to buy new bombs every few years. The simple answer is it is the Sun.

Yes the sun is trying to kill us . Astronomers have observed stars smaller than our sun sending out super flares that are 10-100 times more powerful than anything we have seen in recent years. The last time a super flare hit the earth , it was 1859 and the flare melted telegraph wires and set fire to trees and grass . The aurora caused by the flare were seen as far south as Hawaii.

The following was reported in the *Cincinnati Daily Commercial* :

Later, these strange fires overran the entire heavens—now separating into streamers, gathered at the zenith, and forming a glorious canopy—then spreading evenly like a vapor, shedding on all things a soft radiance; again, across the sky waves of light would flit, like the almost undistinguishable ripple produced by the faintest breeze upon the quiet surface of an inland lake; a pale green would now cover half the firmament from the east, while rich crimson met it from the west—then the ruddy light would concentrate itself at the zenith, while beneath it fell in folds of beauty the mild purple and green. To the east and to the west lay huge fields of luminous clouds, tinted with a bright rosy flush, wholly unlike that produced by the rising sun and if possible even more beautiful.

That must have been some light show.

The Starman  
Reeth Informal Astronomy Group  
Reethastro.org

