

SKYNOTES for November 2017

An easily printable version to encourage active observing among members of the Nottingham AS

All times given below are in Universal Time (UT)

PHASES OF THE MOON

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Date and time</i>
Full Moon	5:23am on November 4 th
Last Quarter	8:10pm on the 10 th
New Moon	11:42am on the 18 th
First Quarter	5:03pm on the 26 th

This month the Moon is closest to the Earth on the 6th, and furthest on the 21st.

THE PLANETS

Mercury is an evening object throughout November, and reaches greatest eastern elongation (22 degrees) on the 24th. But, as is typical in the autumn, the planet is not well placed for observation from the northern hemisphere, being more than 25 degrees south of the celestial equator. So even on the 24th it will be setting less than one hour after the Sun.

Venus (magnitude -3.9) remains bright in the morning sky, but all the time moving closer to the Sun, so that by the end of the month its elongation will have diminished to a mere 10 degrees, and it will be rising barely three-quarters on an hour before the Sun.

Mars, in the constellation of Virgo, continues to slowly draw away from the Sun in the morning sky, and by the end of this month will be rising over 4 hours before sunrise. By then it will be shining at magnitude 1.7, and will have an angular diameter of 4.2 arcseconds.

Jupiter, after passing through solar conjunction in late October, will be moving away from the Sun in the morning sky, and by the end of November will be rising over two hours before sunrise.

Saturn, still more than 22 degrees south of the celestial equator, passes from Ophiuchus into Sagittarius, but will become increasingly difficult to observe as November wears on, setting barely an hour after the Sun by the end of the month, as it heads for solar conjunction a few days before Christmas. Unfortunately for UK observers, Saturn will be just as far south when Christmas 2018 arrives!

Uranus, about 10 degrees north of the celestial equator in the constellation of Pisces, is well placed for observation this month, being above the horizon throughout the night. At magnitude 5.8 it is theoretically within the limits of naked eye visibility, but realistically you will need binoculars to go searching for this planet. Through a telescope it appears as a pale greenish disk, 3.6 arcseconds across.

Neptune is nearly 8 degrees south of the celestial equator in the constellation of Aquarius, and shining at magnitude 7.8.

METEORS

The **Taurids** have two maxima, the first on November 5th and the second on the 12th. Conditions are very unfavourable for the earlier maximum this year, as it occurs close to the Full Moon, but the second fares rather better, with a waning crescent Moon in the morning sky.

Circumstances this year are very favourable for the **Leonids**, which reach maximum activity on November 18th, close to New Moon. Twenty events might be seen per hour under ideal conditions.