



Newsletter January 2022

Next Meeting: **Monday 24th January 7pm**

Location: **Kyle Academy,
Overmills Road,
Ayr KA7 3LR**

Topics: AAS January Meeting - "My Imaging Setup" – Marc Charron
"JWST – What's the Fuss all About" – Graham Longbottom

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Presidents Word

Well! its 2022 and we have a new year to look forward to! So, first of all, A Happy and Prosperous Year to you all from the AAS Committee.

This year, current indications and “reading between the lines” hint that, at last, Covid19 might be on its way to fading into the noise of modern life. It's not going to go away but hopefully it will stop restricting almost everything that we want to do. In the meantime however we need to continue to be extra vigilant and can I ask those attending our meetings to take a lateral flow test not less than 24 hours beforehand? I know it’s a pain, I hate them myself but that extra caution might make all the difference.

What has happened so far? Well on Christmas Day the James Webb telescope finally took to the skies and so far everything seems to be going to plan. The communications antenna deployed, the various course correction burns took place, the solar panel and heat shield all unfurled successfully and the mirrors unfolded and have been moved into position. All amazing technical feats. I think that all that remains now is the rest of the journey and then the final orbit burns to place it into the so called halo orbit at the Lagrange Point. After that we look forward to some spectacular imaging and hopefully new frontiers of science. This will probably begin April/May - not long to wait.

Early in January we had the Quadrantid Meteor shower one of the best of the year. I made a special effort to get myself out to have a look. What did I see? Well, its Scotland and looking North from Fenwick! I saw light pollution from Glasgow and wall to wall cloud. Fortunately it wasn't a surprise. Did you see anything?

This year, for a change, I made several new year resolutions nothing stupid like “going to the gym” or anything like that but sensible ones like clear out my “toy room”. What is more I have actually been doing it. It's amazing what you find. One thing was two boxes of old Sky at Night DVDs in fact something like CDs 20 to 55, old, but interesting. I had a look at a couple and there is some interesting, if old, stuff on there. Anyway lucky for you all, I intend to bring them to the meeting on Monday and you can all have your pick – Free of charge _ I don't want to bring any back with me, I am clearing out!

Looking forward to seeing you again on the 24th.

Graham

Acting President



January / February Observing

General

The weather continues to disappoint, but in case we do get a break, there are plenty of winter things to observe in the winter sky. Orion becomes dominant early in the evening with Cassiopeia, Perseus, Auriga and Gemini remaining high in the sky, with their open clusters well placed for observing. Pegasus and Andromeda are heading to the southwest, so the Andromeda galaxy is still easy to spot early in the evening. To the east Leo rises early in the evening meaning galaxy season is not very far away, especially for those who don't mind staying up late. Ursa Major is also rising high in the eastern part of the sky, making M81 Bode's Galaxy and M82 the Cigar Galaxy easily visible, as well as a host of other objects such as M108 the Surfboard Galaxy, M97 the Owl Nebula, and to a lesser extent M51 the Whirlpool Galaxy and M101 the Pinwheel Galaxy.

Planets

This period is dire for the planets, Venus and Mars are just visible in the morning sky and do not rise very high before the sun comes up, though Venus will reach maximum brightness on Feb the 9th. Saturn is approaching its solar conjunction on the 4th of Feb so is not visible, Jupiter will do so a month later so will be hard to see as it approaches conjunction. Neptune is also low in the western sky so will be hard to observe, which leaves Uranus as the only planet well placed for observation Ares.

Comets

There are no easily observable comets from our location during this period. 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko remains at the top of Cancer and can be seen and photographed with reasonable optics (Mag 9-10 until March), and not too far from it in the sky, is comet C/2019 L3 (ATLAS) (Mag 9.5+) which will travel down the right hand side of the right sided twin of Gemini. Comet 19P/Borrelly will make an appearance, at first low in the sky in the southwest then climbing towards Uranus later in the month. On the 18th of March (9pm ish) it will pass within 20 arc minutes of the planet. As with the other two comets it is telescope only at magnitude 9-10 during this period.

Meteor Showers

There are no major meteor showers in this period.

ISS

The ISS is visible in the evenings until the 4th of February and in the mornings starting from the 20th of Feb. Consult <https://www.heavens-above.com> for specific times and locations. If you are interested in ISS lunar or solar transits here is a site with predictions that you can make for your location: <https://transit-finder.com/>.



Member Images

Contributions are welcome from all our members, so if you have something you want to show please do send it in so that it can be included in the Newsletter.

Marc Charron

Due to the weather I have not had a chance to do much astrophotography. To answer Graham's question about Quadrantid meteors, yes, I did manage to both see and capture one on camera at 22:55 on the 3rd of Jan.

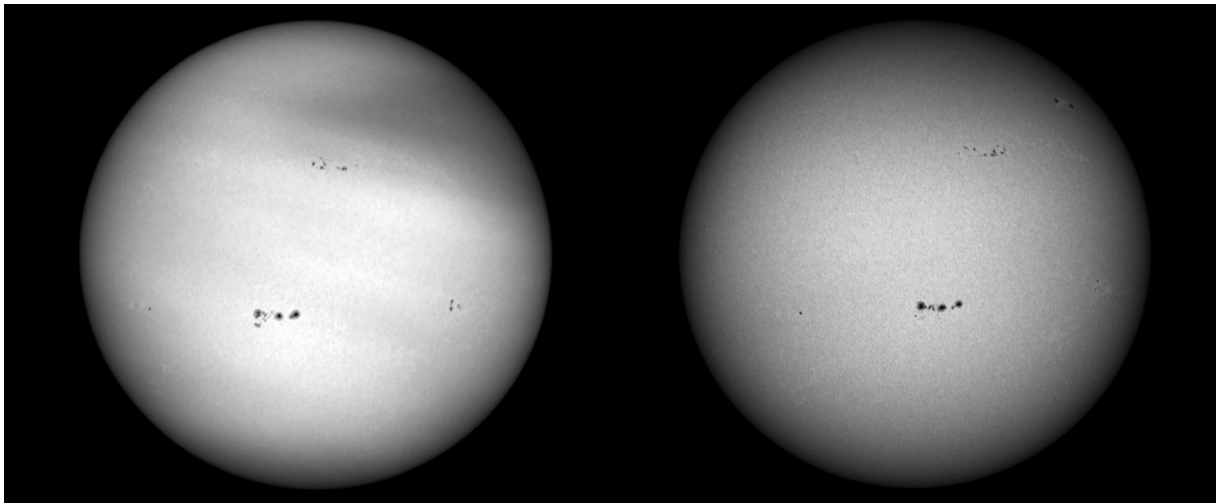


Venus was at inferior conjunction on the 8th of January, unfortunately, I was not able to get a telescope on it, but I did manage to get one image using a telephoto lens, before being clouded out (was published on www.spaceweather.com on the 9th).

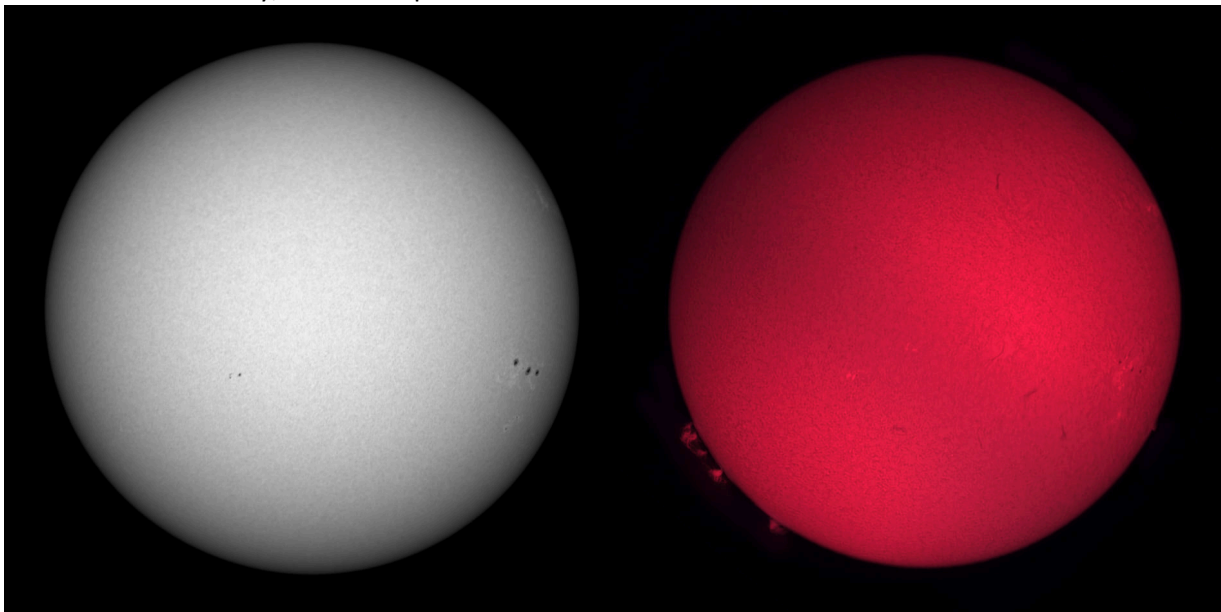


The sun has remained very active as can be seen by these photos:

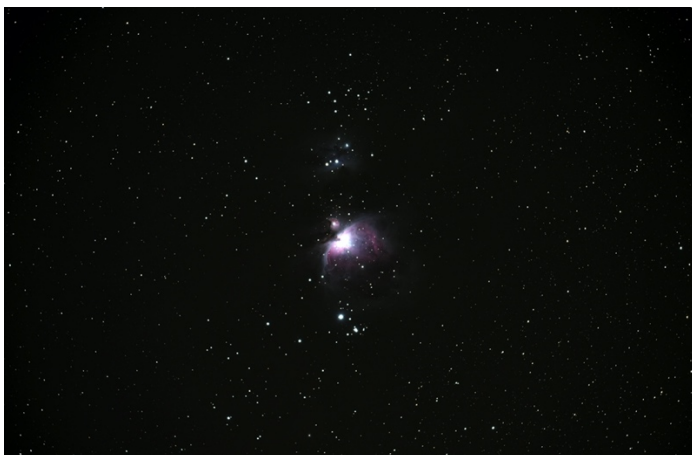
Sun on the 27th and 28th of December



Sun on New Year's day, some nice prominences.



A view of Orion's sword

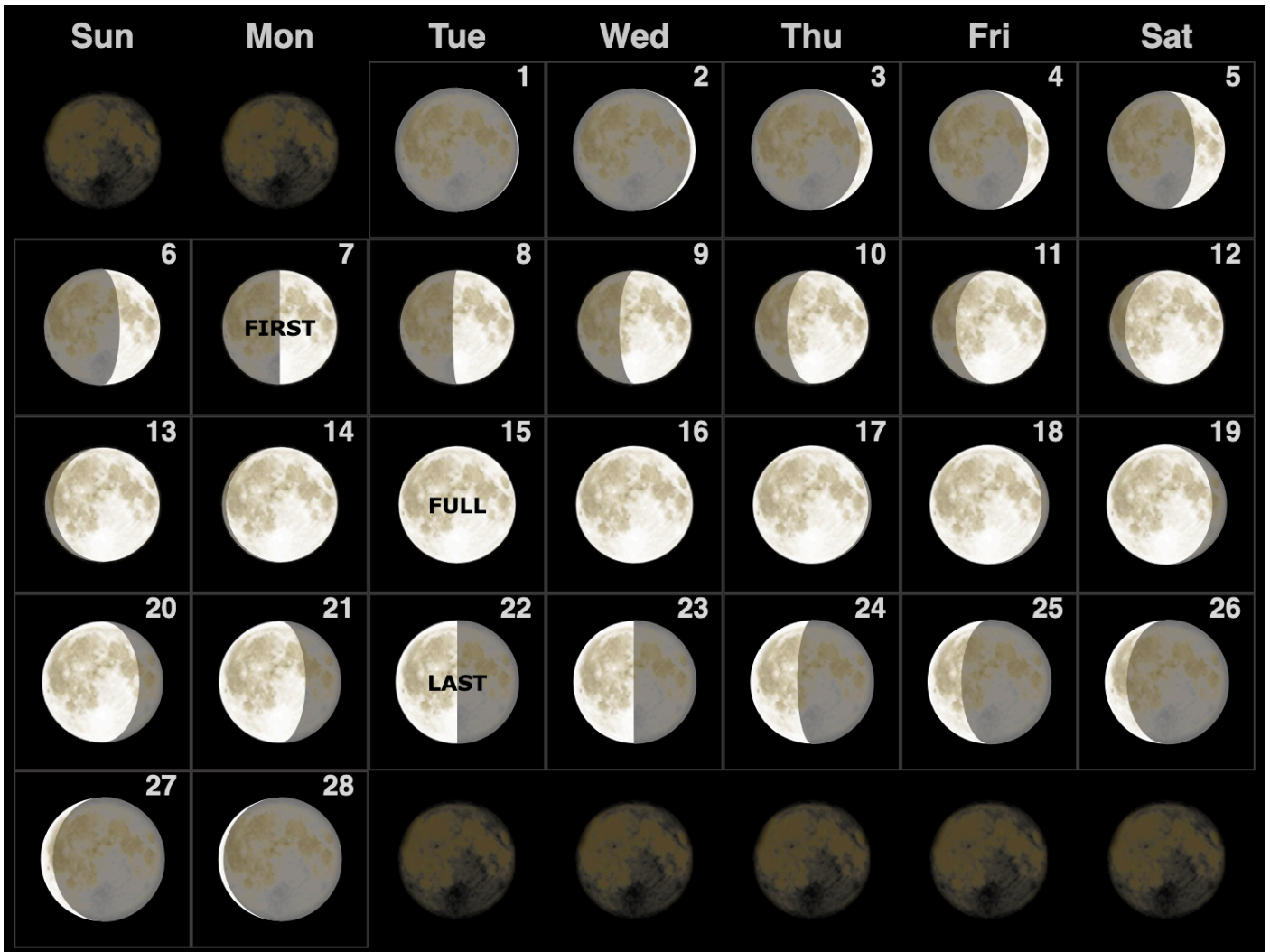


And sometimes it is Starlings, not Starlinks!



Moon Phases

February 2022



February 2022 Sky Chart

