



Newsletter February 2023

Next Meeting: **Monday 27th February at 7pm**

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

Topic: Member's Evening – Bring your own telescope!

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Presidents Word

Another month passed and very little opportunity to use the telescope where I am. The skies opened up now and again, but not really long enough for all but a quick gaze around, especially as I need to re align my scope after the power crashed on me last time losing all the settings. A definite hazard of GoTo scopes.

At the time of writing I am still hoping to get a glimpse of the comet either via binoculars or perhaps through the 10" Dob. It should be high on the sky now although it is still likely to be lost in the light pollution from Glasgow unless I am lucky. Still fingers crossed!

Unfortunately, the initial dates for the Star Party arrived under full cloud cover so it had to be put off for one week. Despite that the weather still got in the way and it has now been pushed into October. A shame but that is the problem here in Scotland.

It is good to see that several of our new members have taken the opportunity to try out some of our stock of telescopes. We still have a few available and. I am pleased to say that thanks to Mr Stephen Lambert from Newton Mearns, we have recently been given a 130mm motorised Newtonian. So if you would like to try it – just ask!

This month is Members Night, as you will know and, although I cannot be there myself, I am hoping that there will be plenty of telescopes and equipment to look at and lots of advice on what to buy/not to buy plus the pros and cons of the various accessories. Join in and take advantage of the experiences of others before you buy.

If anyone wants a small project I have a nice 130mm Newtonian that we would like converting to a Dobsonian type mount as that is something that the Society does not have. I have some rough sketches for dimensions but that is as far as I have got. If you are handy at woodwork and would like to take on the project let me, Stephen or Marc know.

Looking at Space Mission news, I note that the Europa Clipper mission to Jupiter is progressing towards its launch date in October 2024. Still a year away but worth keeping an eye on. When launched it will take six years to get to Jupiter arriving in 2030. Will it find the much hoped for life in the sea beneath the frozen surface of Europa? Now that would be something!



February/March Observing

General

Yes! Galaxy Season is nearly upon us. The Winter sky will be soon ceding its place to the Spring sky with all the galaxies it brings with it. Leo is rising in the east and brings with numerous galaxies, the best being perhaps the Leo Triplet of NGC 3628, aka the Hamburger Galaxy and Messiers 65 and 66. Not far from this group lie to other interesting galaxies, M95 and M96. Following Leo is Virgo and Coma Berenices, which is bridged by Markarian's Chain which is part of the Virgo Super Cluster of galaxies, though one may have to stay up a little later to see this well. Ursa Major is also well placed high in the sky with numerous galaxies in it or nearby including M81 and 82, Bode's and the Cigar Galaxies, M101 the Whirlpool Galaxy, as well as two interesting targets near Merak, namely M108, the Surfboard Galaxy and just next to it M97, the Owl Nebula. Even though galaxy season is nearly upon us, there are still numerous open clusters still visible from Perseus, through Auriga and into Gemini. M44, the Beehive Cluster, is an excellent target as it is fairly large in the sky and can be easily seen with binoculars or a small telescope. Globular clusters are also about to make a comeback with M3 in Boötes and M13 and M92 Hercules as they rise in the east.

Planets

The planets are becoming less viewable as the period progresses. Mercury, Saturn and later Jupiter will be lost on the glare of the sun, leaving only Venus, Mars and Uranus reasonably well placed for observing in the western evening sky. There will be one conjunction of note, on the 1st and 2nd for March Venus and Jupiter will be just over the moon's angular diameter apart and will be visible together in a small telescope at low power.

Comets

Comet C/2022 E3 (ZTF) is now fading but is still viewable with modest equipment. As of the 18th of February or so it was magnitude 7, it will continue to fade as it moves away from the sun, possibly being a dim as magnitude 11 by the end of March. It is also getting lower in the sky to the right of Orion which will make it harder view later in this period.

Meteor Showers

There are no major meteor showers in March.

ISS

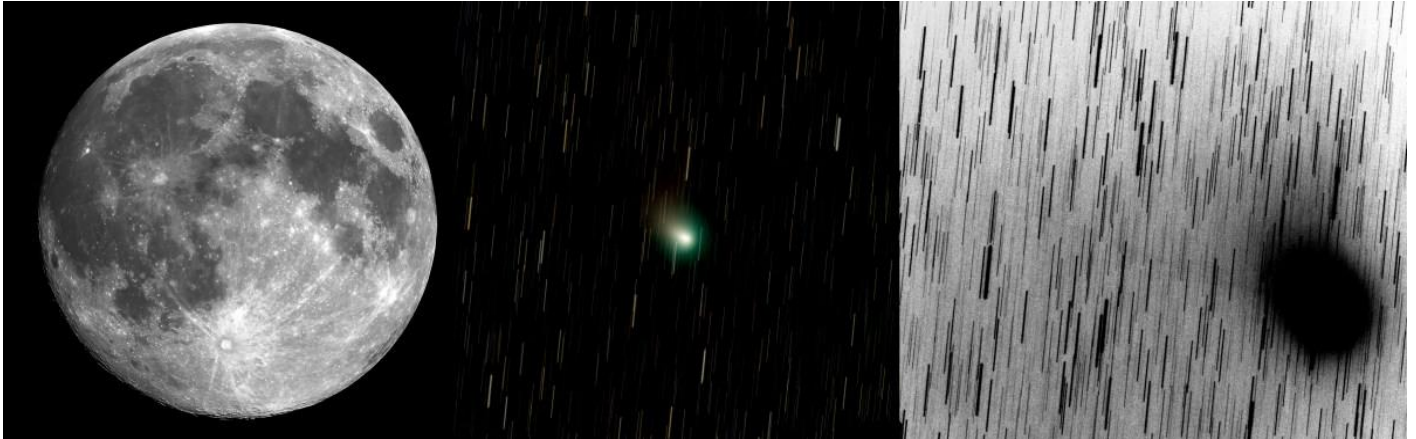
Consult <https://www.heavens-above.com> for specific times and location. Check out <https://transit-finder.com/> for details and any possible solar and lunar transits.



Member Images

Images by Marc Charron

The comet C/2022 E3 on the 4th of February with a very bright moon hindering photography. With some extreme processing I did manage to capture a bit of the ion trail in the right most image. Taken with TS-86/460 SDQ.



Here is the comet to the lower left of Mars and to the upper right of the Pirate Moon Cluster (NGC 1647) taken on the 12th of Feb. Some dark dust lanes can also be seen to the lower right of Mars as well. Taken with Nikon D5600 with 135mm f2 lens.



Here is an image of the Orion Nebula taken with the TMB 130/1200 with a 0.6x focal reducer.

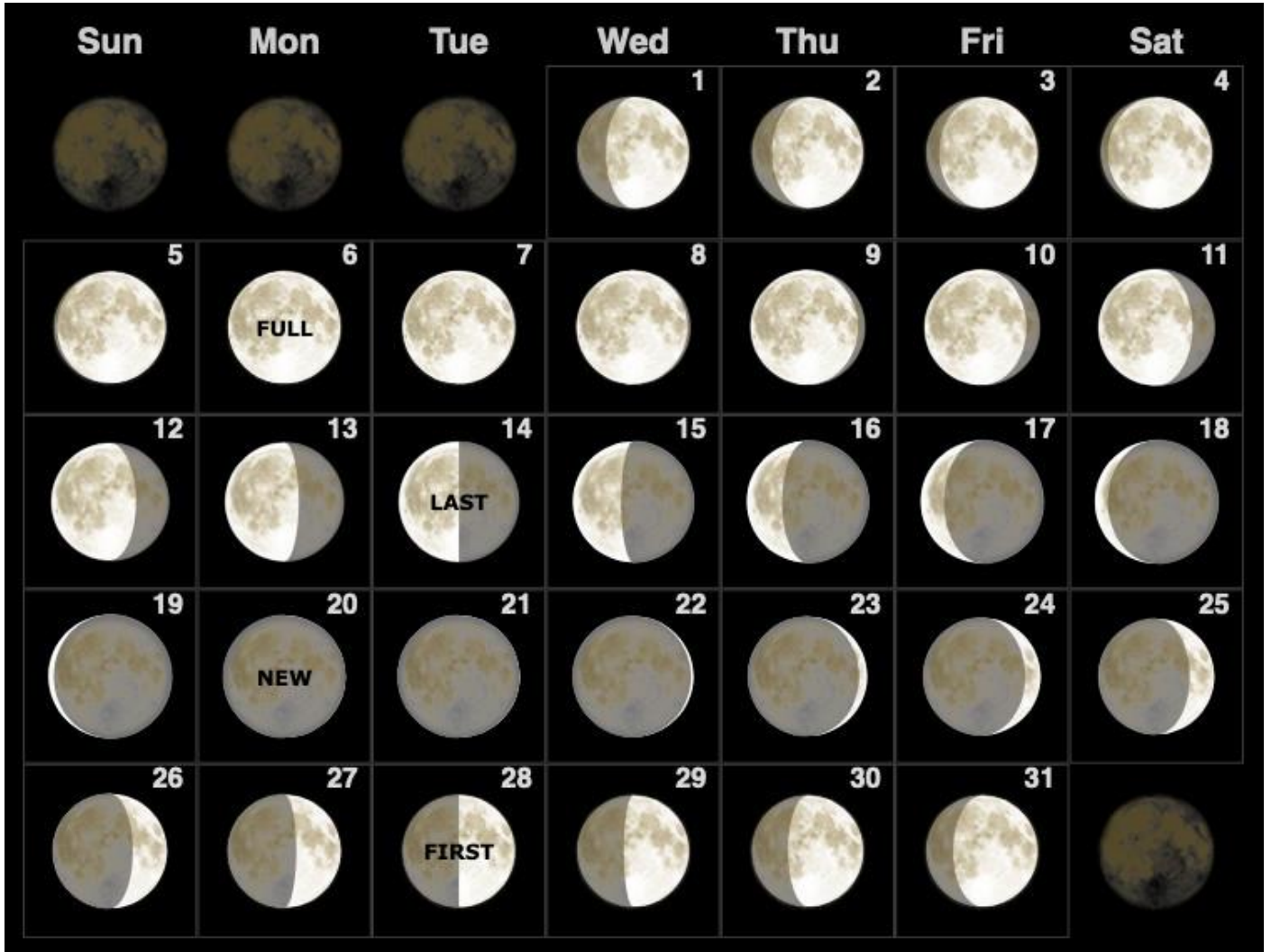


And lastly the Leo Triplet taken with a 150mm f4 Newtonian at f3 using a Starizona Nexus 0.75 coma corrector and reducer.



Moon Phases

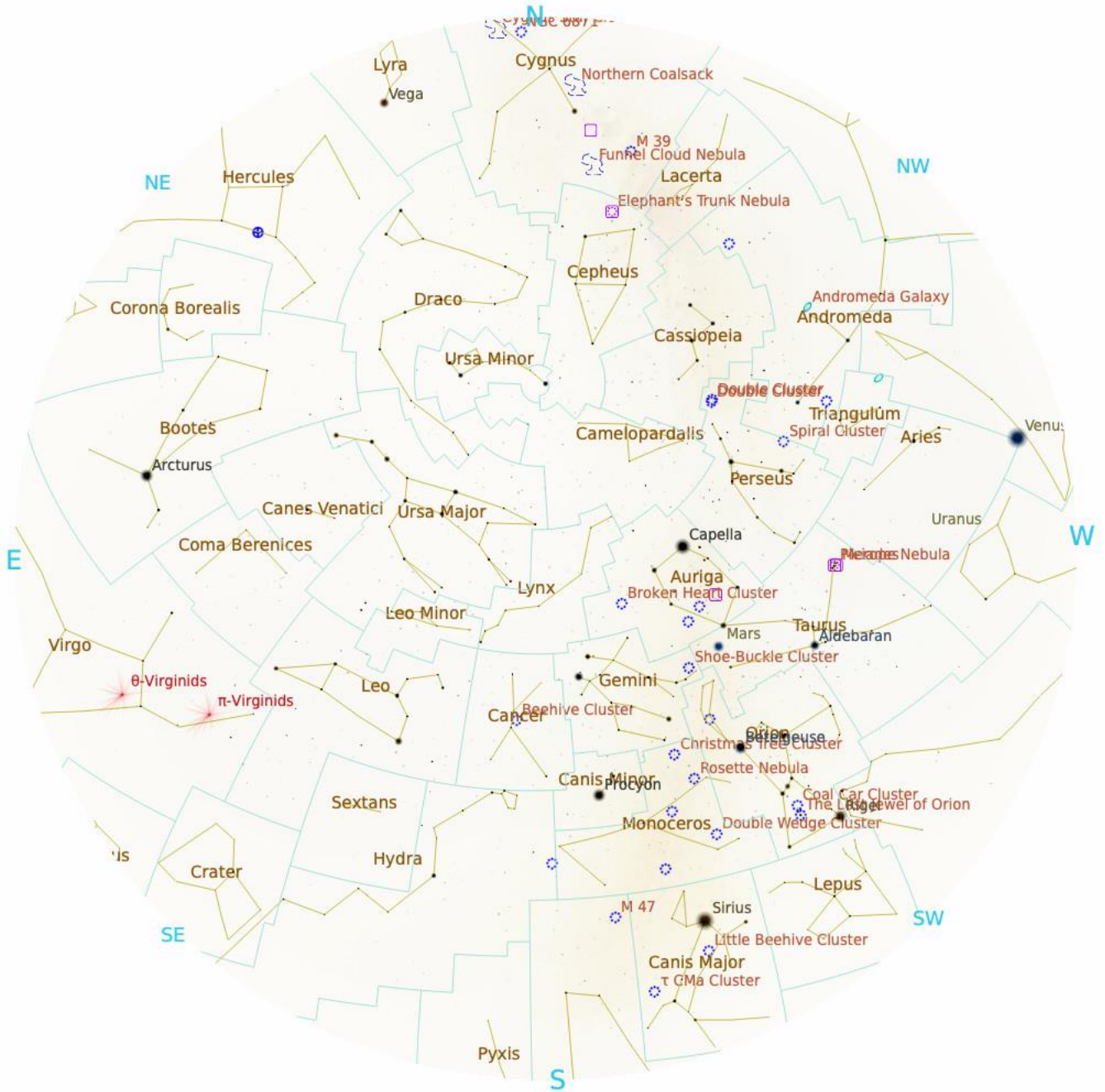
March 2023



Credit: <https://www.moongiant.com/calendar/>



March 2023 Sky Chart



FOV 193° 22.8 FPS 2023-03-15 21:00:00 UTC+00:00

Taken from: Stellarium



Alexs' Space

The Ayrshire Astronomical Society Library

Welcome to the Library, it contains a galaxy of interesting items for your enjoyment. Most of the items have been donated, and all are suitable for family viewing, reading or listening. If you wish to donate an item to the Library it would be most welcome and who knows? You may even see your name in print.

There are 5 sections to choose from: VHS Tapes, DVDs, Audio books (CDs), Books and Novels. You may borrow more than one item at a time. To order please give or send to Graham (president@ayraastro.com) your name and details of the items that you wish to borrow. An example order can be found at the end of this article so, without further ado; its' time to press the launch button.....

The Menu

VHS Tapes	
V1	2001 A Space Odyssey by Arthur C Clarke
V2	2010 A space Odyssey by Artur C Clarke
V3	Britain's Blue Streak Space Rocket by the MOD

DVDs			
D1	Avatar	D8	Great To Be Young - Musical
D2	Ad Astra	D9	My Fair Lady - Musical
D3	Arrival	D10	Alien
D4	Enders Game	D11	The Martian
D5	Interstellar	D12	Apollo 13
D6	How to Use a Telescope	D13	Zulu – a War Film
D7	ET	D14	The Monument Film – a War Film

Audo Books (CDs)	
A1	A Girl on a Train by Paula Hawkins – 9 CD in 3 Parts
Part 1	3CDs
Part 2	3CDs
Part 3	3CDs
A2	The Sands of Mars by Arthur C Clarke
A3	Animal Farm by George Orwell – 3 CDs
A4	1984 by George Orwell – 10CDs in three parts
Part 1	3 CDs
Part 2	3CDs
Part 3	4CDs

Code	Title	Author
	Technical Books	
BK1	The Solar System	Brian Cox
BK2	The Universe	Brian Cox
BK3	History of Time	Stephen Hawking
BK4	The Universe	Stephen Hawking
BK5	Tim Peake From Space	Tim Peake
BK6	Space Encyclopedia	D K Books
BK7	How Space Works	D K Books
BK8	Earth and Space	D K Books
BK9	Space Handbook	D K Books
BK10	Edge of Physics	D K Books
BK11	Gods in the Sky	Alan Chapman
BK12	Astronomy	Ian Ridpath
BK13	The New Astronomer	Carol Stott
BK14	Science is Magic	Steve Mould
BK15	Secret Space Projects	Dan Sharp
BK16	Mythology	Tim Bulfinch
BK17	Quantum Theory	Tim Bulfinch
BK18	The Sky at Night in 2023	Collins
	Novels	
NV1	The Martian	
NV2	The Bodysnatchers	
NV3	A Far Sunset	
NV4	2001 A Space Odyssey	
NV5	2010 A Space Odyssey	
NV6	Rocket to Limbo	
NV7	The Sky is Falling	
NV8	Light of the Stars	
NV9	Earth Light	
NV10	A Fall of Moondust	

Example Order

Name Patrick Moore
Contact No Your mobile or home phone
Title How to Use a Telescope
Ref and Part No D6

Once your order is in (at least 3 days before the meeting) you will receive it at the next meeting and it should be returned at the following meeting.

Good Luck, I hope that you enjoy your choice. The Books and Novels will be listed next month.

Alex Baillie 2023

