



Newsletter May 2024

Previous Meeting: **Monday 20th May at 7pm**

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

**Topics: YouTube Interview with Chief Engineer for the Mars Copter
AGM and Election of Society Officers**

Contents

President's Word	p. 2
Mar/Apr Observing	p. 3
Member Images	p. 4-7
Moon Phases	p. 8
Sky Chart	p. 9



Presidents Word

Hi everyone, this is almost a collectors piece as it is my last “President Word”! Why is that you may ask? Well it is because, for the second time, and hopefully the last, I am leaving the office of President at the AGM. So make sure you come along and wave me off (that is in “goodbye” as opposed to “ Don't do it”) and welcome your New President and Vice President. True, I will not be disappearing completely, as our longstanding Secretary Angela, is also taking a well-deserved break after even more years in post than I can remember. Guess who will be taking her place?

Technically all nominations should be printed in the newsletter a month before the AGM but this has never happened as far as I recall since we are usually still sorting out “volunteers” at the AGM. If you would like to take up a post say as an ordinary Committee member then you can still do so on the night. As I have said many times before, it is not onerous but it does give you a chance to help run the Society. So have a go.

After the AGM which we hope will be short, but slightly longer than usual, the plan is to show a YouTube video of an interview with the Chief Engineer for the Mars Copter. This is about an hour long and is pretty good. It contains a lot of detail about the construction of the copter, the proposed mission and the actual mission which was somewhat different. Definitely not to be missed!

I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM.



May/June Observing

General

Astronomical is now lost for our location returning in early August just in time for the Perseid meteor shower. This makes deep sky viewing difficult, though bright objects can still be seen, in particular star clusters (globulars M3 and M13) and bright planetary nebulae (M57). Bright double stars are another possible target, notable targets include Mizar in Ursa Major, Gamma Leonis or Algieba in Leo, Izar in Boötes is another interesting double with its orange and blue pairing. For those who wish to stay up later there is always Albireo in Cygnus with its striking yellow and blue combination. Failing this there is always solar and lunar observing!

Planets

There is not much to see with the planets as most are lost in the solar glare, however, Saturn will become more visible in the early morning as the month progresses, it is followed by Mars which will also start moving into view.

Comets

The one comet to keep an eye on is C/2023 A3 Tsuchinshan-ATLAS which is currently in Virgo and is only about magnitude 10, however, it may become a nearly great comet appearing near the horizon in the early morning in late September before rounding the sun and turning up in our evening sky in early to mid-October. It could reach almost magnitude 0, however, predicting comet magnitudes is tricky at best. Another comet, though not as spectacular is 13P/Olbers, which is visible now (magnitude 8-9) in Auriga, it is back after a 68 year sojourn to the outer parts of the solar system.

To find out more about observable comets you can visit Seiichi Yoshida's weekly update on observable comets, which can be found here: <http://aerith.net/index.html>.

Supernovae and Novae

There are no readily visible supernovae present at the moment, for information about current supernovae, please visit: <https://www.rochesterastronomy.org/snimages/>. There is however a recurrent nova T Coronae Borealis which has an outburst every 80 years or so, it is thought from current observations (recent dimming) that it could go off anytime no later than September. It could increase in brightness from magnitude 10 to 2, or about 1,600 times in luminosity. The star is actually a double star, with a white dwarf orbiting close to a red giant. The white dwarf is pulling matter off of the red giant and when it accumulates to a certain point it undergoes a thermonuclear explosion brightening the star significantly. They do not last long, so if/when it happens make sure you try to see it early on. For us Corona Borealis is climbing higher in the sky in the evening throughout this period so the nova should be easily observed.

Meteor Showers

There are no easily visible meteor showers, the next good one is the Perseids in August, peaking on the night of the 12th-13th. There is a first quarter moon, but it is fairly low in the sky and sets relatively early.

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

The big event over the period was the magnificent aurora display on the night of the 10th-11th of May which was caused by coronal mass ejections (CMEs) related to an enormous sunspot AR3664 which rivalled the Carrington spot of 1859 that caused huge disruptions to the telegraph networks of the time. Fortunately, the CMEs were not that severe, but they were strong enough for the northern hemisphere's aurora to be visible as far south as Hawaii. Anyone who stayed up that night and who had clear skies in the UK would have easily seen the display. The improvement in phone camera technology meant that many people were able to photograph it for the first time hand holding their phones.

Marc Charron

Some solar images of the developing sunspot that caused the event.

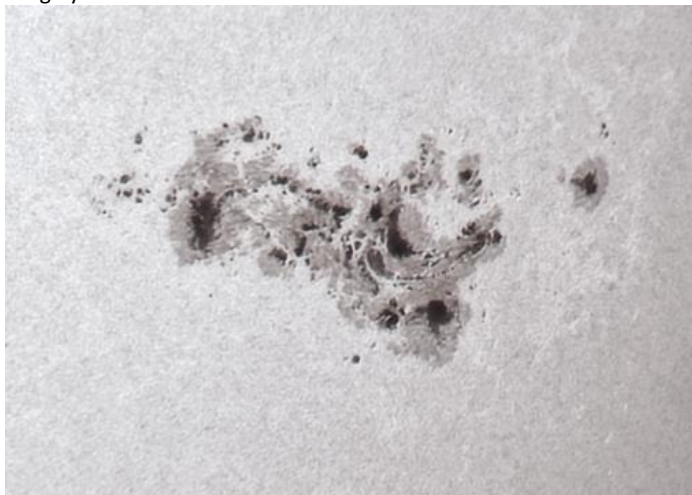
On the 2nd of May AR3664 didn't look particularly threatening, here we see an A380 passing in front of the sun during an imaging session (full disk images of the sun taken with Borg 90FL 500mm at prime focus.)



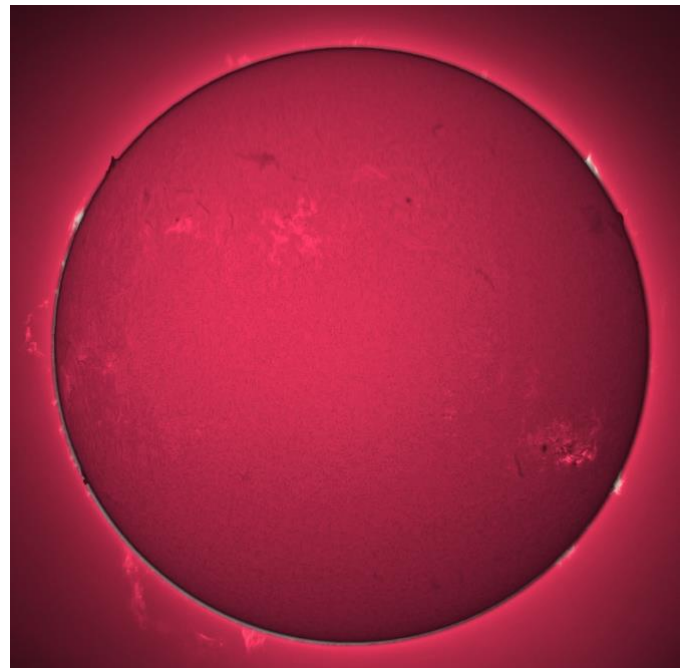
However by the 9th of May it was evident this was a significant active area, as it began to rival the Carrington spot of 1859. AR3664 reached naked eye visibility (with proper solar filter) and is hard to miss at the lower right.



Close-up of the spot taken on the 10th of May with the TMB 130/1200 showing how large and complex the spot was. It measured roughly 15 earth diameters across.



Ha image of the spot taken on the 11th of May, showing large prominences unrelated to the active area. Taken with PST.



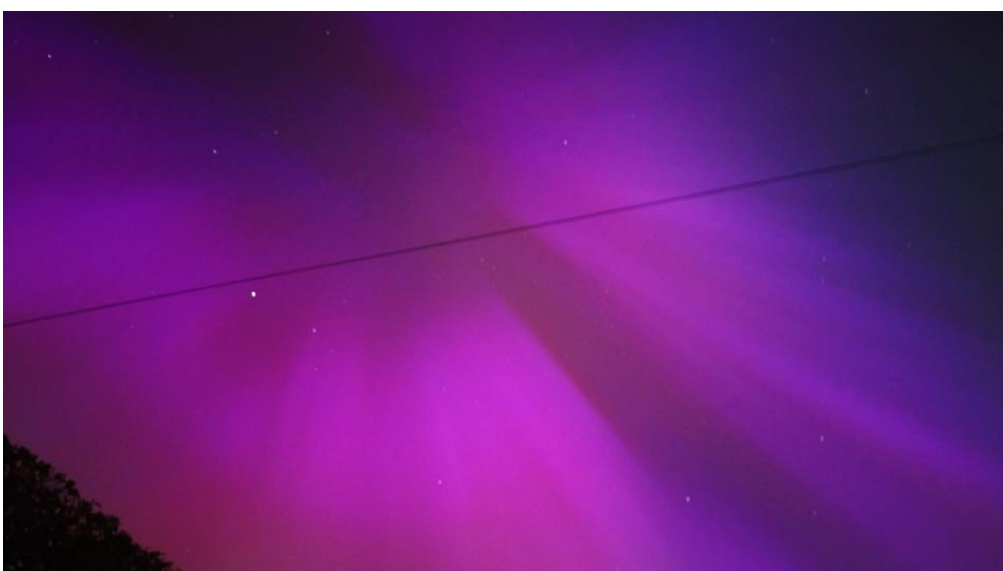
Aurora Images

Paul Cameron

Images taken with Pixel 4 phone and Pentax K3 Mark 2 camera

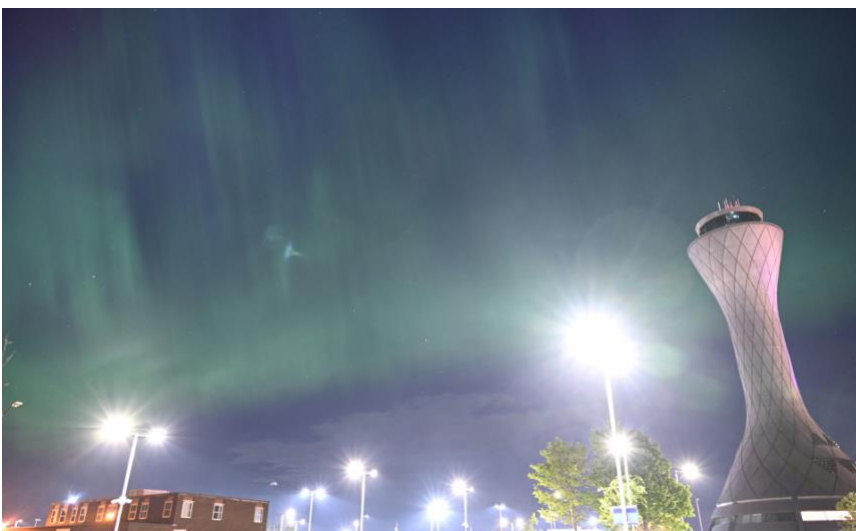
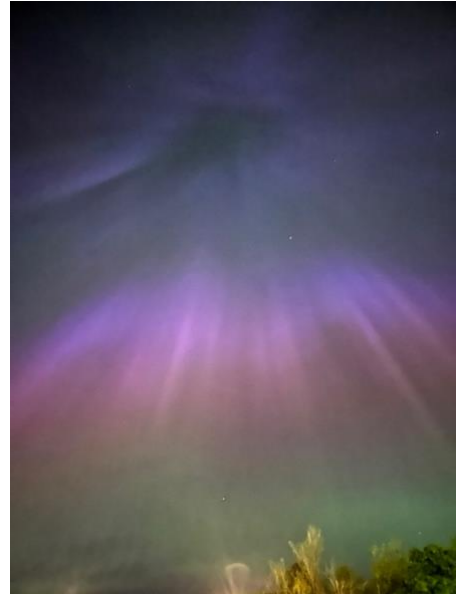


Stephen Wolohan



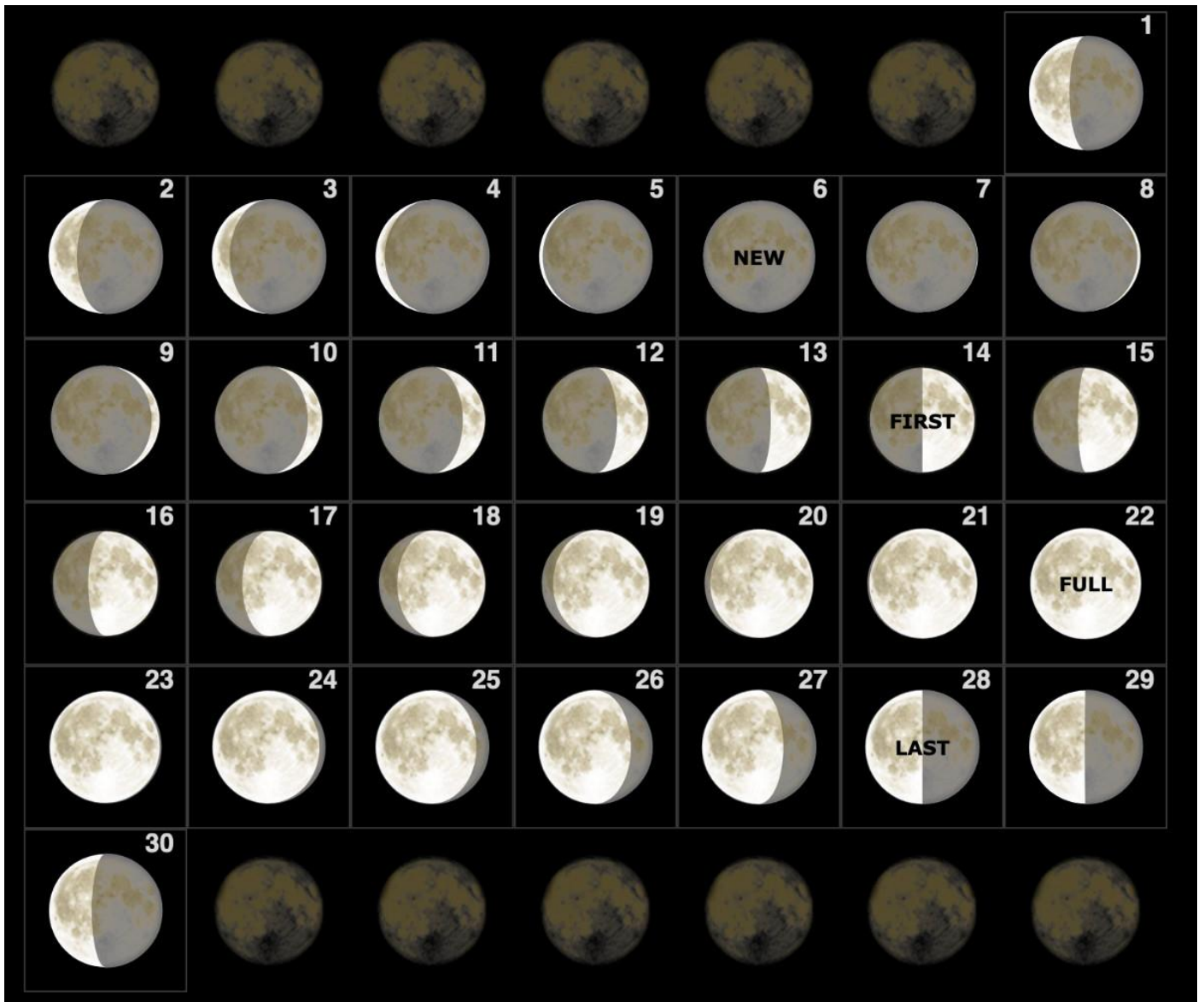
Marc Charron

Images taken from Edinburgh Airport (3 landscape images taken with Nikon Z7ii with 24mm-200mm lens at 24mm, the portrait image taken with iPhone 12)



Moon Phases

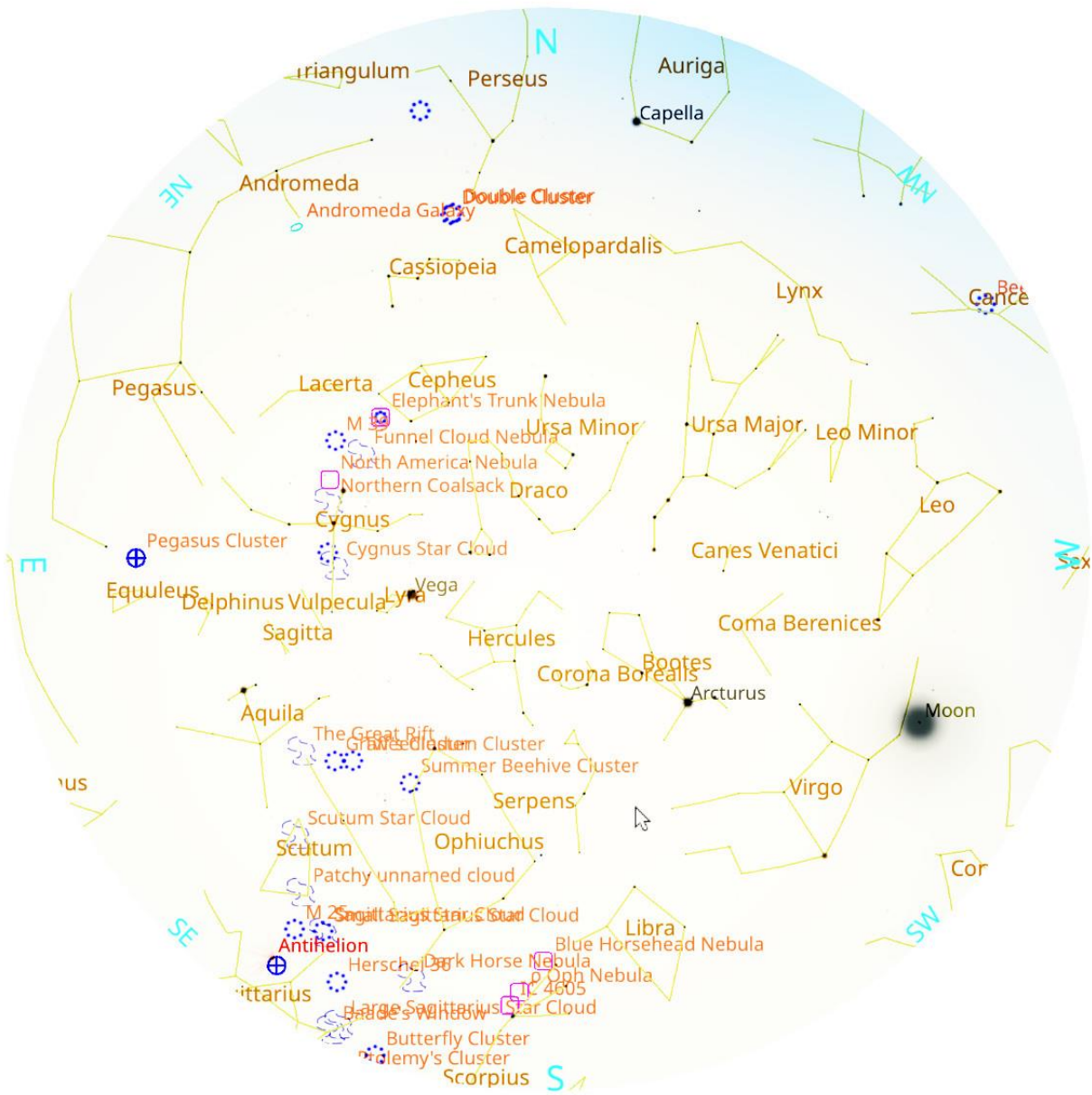
June 2024



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



June 2024 Sky Chart



FOV 191° 23.3 FPS 2024-06-15 00:00:33 UTC+01:00

Taken from: Stellarium

