

Walsall Astronomical Society



September 2026

What's Up Monthly Publication



What's on this month



September brings a welcome shift for stargazers across the UK as the autumn observing season officially begins. With the autumn equinox taking place this month, nights are lengthening noticeably, offering significantly more hours of true astronomical darkness compared to the short nights of midsummer. Seasonal observing conditions tend to improve with crisper, clearer atmosphere and steady seeing conditions, making it an excellent time to dust off optical equipment and head outside.

Don't forget to send us any images you have taken or post them on the Facebook Group!

Thursday 3rd September: Lecture - Mike Lewis - Astrophotography Image Stacking

Thursday 10th September: General Club Meeting, for discussion and support -
Observing with telescopes if clear

Thursday 17th September: General Club Meeting, for discussion and support - Observing
with telescopes if clear

Thursday 24th September: What's Up for October

List of Lovell Lecture Series 2026 [HERE](#) for those interested.

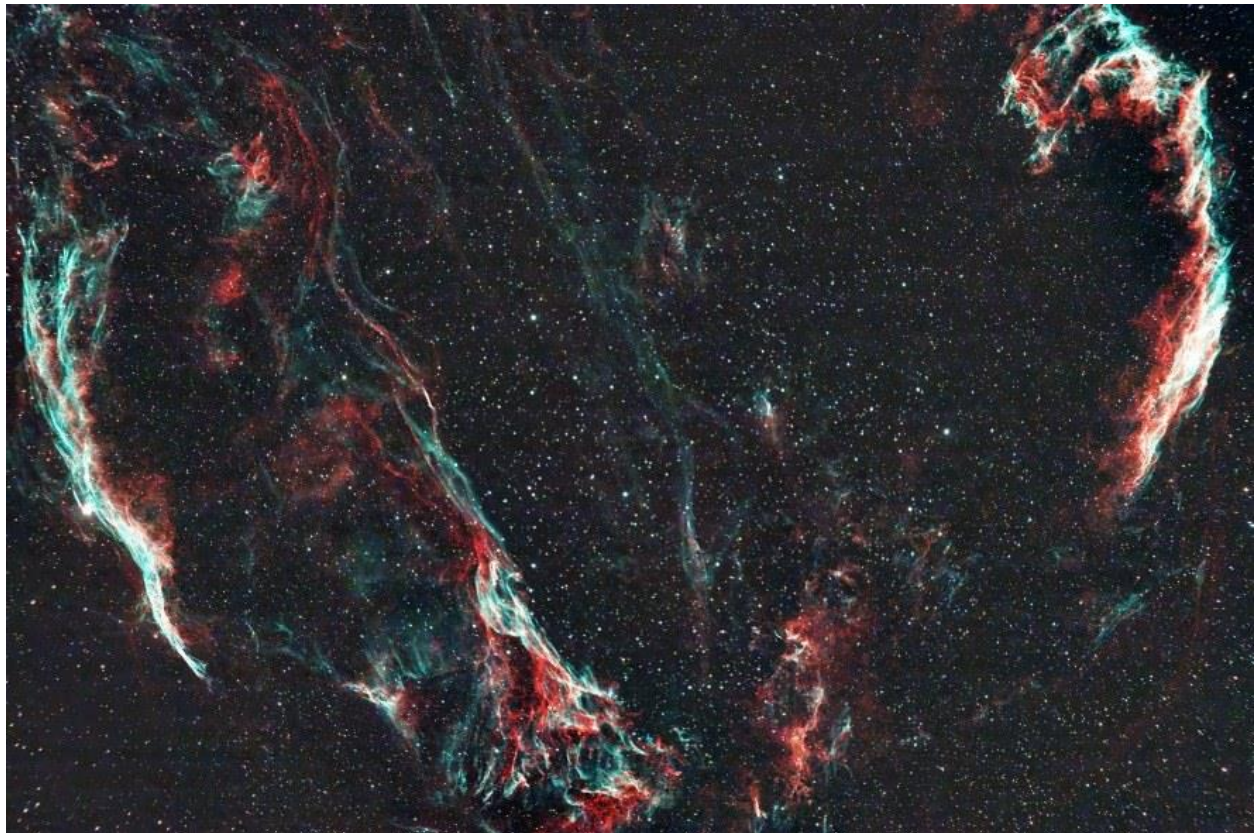
Members Gallery



This section is to display some of the images that our own club members have taken during the previous month. Please feel free to submit any images via email, or post on the Facebook Group [Here](#)



1 - M31 - Andromeda Galaxy - Mike Lewis



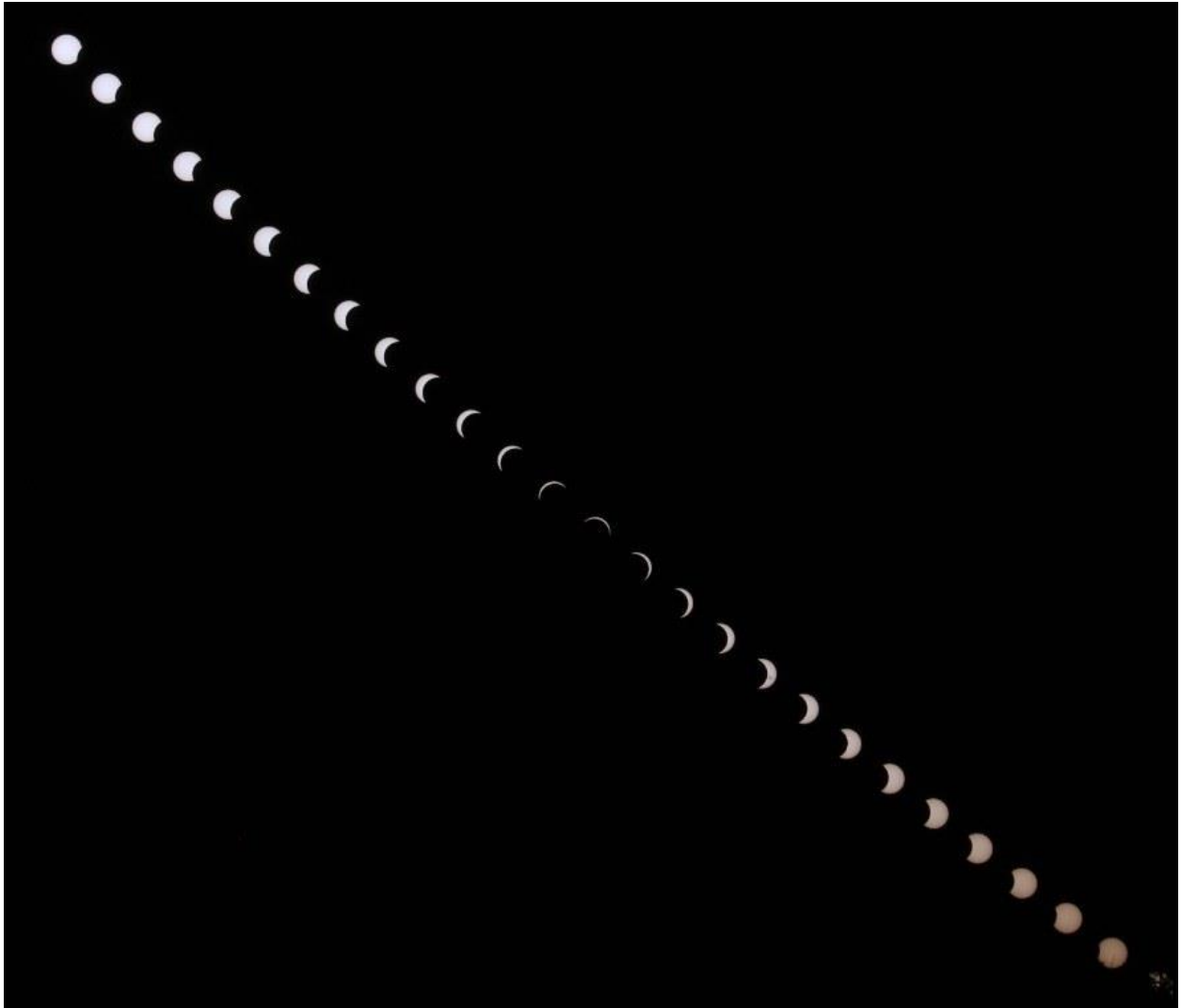
2 - Cygnus Loop - Veil Nebulas - Mike Lewis



3 - Milky Way and Perseid Meteor - Tom Gormley



4 - M15 - Great Pegasus Cluster - Peter Biddell



5 - Solar Eclipse - Mike Lewis



6 - Solar Eclipse - Dave Timmins



7 - Solar Eclipse - Mike Lewis



8 - Solar Eclipse - Ash Jingar



9 - M31 - Andromeda Galaxy - David Kyte

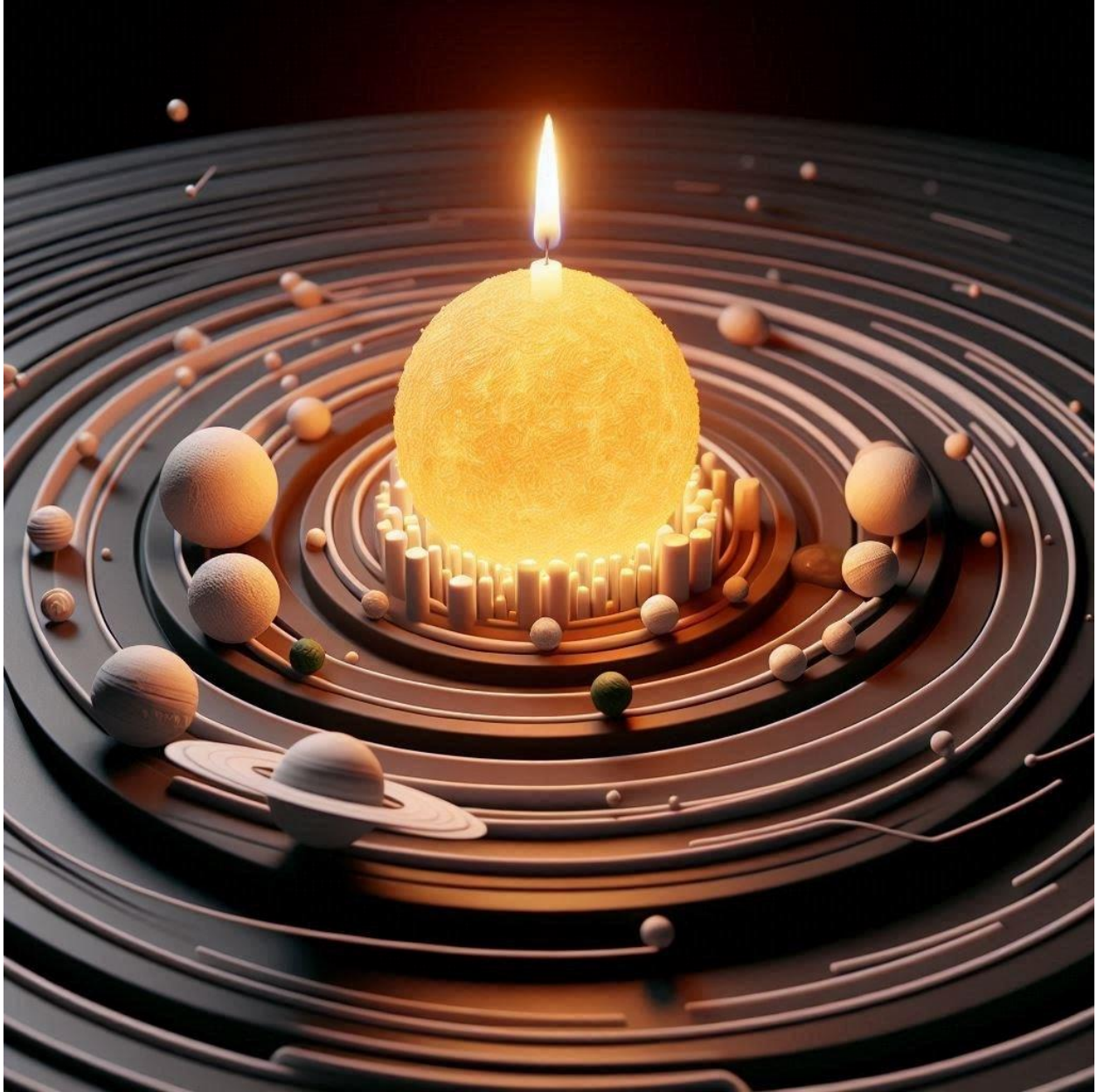


Seestair S50

Lunar

 Alain DeNoise/stacked/01°W,52°N/2026-07-03 01:25

Anniversaries - September



Here are some significant astronomy anniversaries that occurred in September throughout history:

- **September 1, 1859 – The Carrington Event:** The most powerful geomagnetic storm in recorded history caused by a CME. It created disruption with technology and aurora's visible as far as the Caribbean.
- **September 5, 1977 – Voyager 1 probe is launched:** The probe is the furthest any probe has travelled and still communicates with NASA today.
- **September 17, 1789 – Discovery of Saturn's moon Mimas:** William Herschel discovers Mimas using his '40-foot telescope'. A reflecting telescope with a 48 inch primary mirror. The large impact crater on Mimas inspired the look of the Star Wars Death Star.
- **September 22, 2006 – Hinode satellite is launched:** The Japanese probe studies solar activity of the sun using a range of equipment including Extreme UV and X-ray telescopes.
- **September 23, 1846 – Neptune is officially discovered:** Johann Gottfried Galle discovered the planet. The discovery was a triumph of mathematical astronomy, as it was found based on the gravitational perturbations it caused on the orbit of Uranus originally predicted by Urbain Le Verrier.
- **September 30, 1880 – First photograph of a nebula:** Henry Draper is able to take a 51 minute exposure of the Orion Nebula (M42) using an 11-inch refracting telescope. A huge milestone in astrophotography

These anniversaries highlight key discoveries, milestones, and events that shaped the field of astronomy and space exploration.

The Moon



🌖 Last Quarter - 4th September

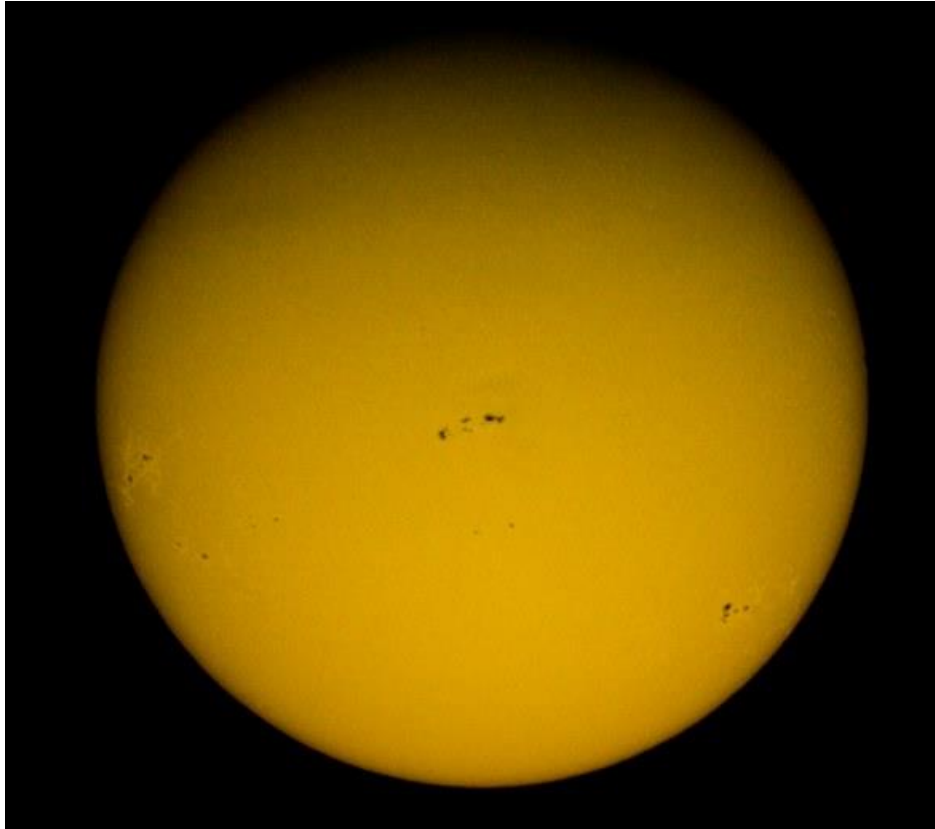
🌑 New Moon - 11th September

🌒 1st Quarter - 18th September

🌕 Full Moon - 26th September

Full Moon Phase Calendar details ([Here](#))

The Sun



Aurora - Solar activity in August 2026 is forecast to be high as we reside near the peak of **Solar Cycle 25**. Expect frequent sunspots and a high probability of M-class and X-class solar flares. This level of activity increases the likelihood of geomagnetic storms, which can trigger aurora borealis sightings even in the southern parts of the UK.

Aurora Watch UK is a great phone app, that can alert you when the auroral activity is increasing,

Always use the correct solar filters when viewing the Sun, if you have any doubt please contact us or talk to one of the club committee members.

What to Watch For

- **Sunspots:** High-resolution solar filters or solar scopes reveal increasingly active sunspot groups.
- **Flares & CMEs:** Use solar telescopes or online observatories to track M- and X-class flares.

- **Aurora Potential:** Monitor auroral alerts (Kp index ≥ 5) following any CME hits—northern UK may catch rare Northern Lights.
- **Radio Effects:** Amateur radio operators might experience shortwave disruptions during geomagnetic or flare events.

The Planets



Here's a summary of the positions and visibility of the planets in September 2026 as seen from the UK:

CAUTION - This time of the year some of the planets are close to the sun. Looking at the sun through any none specialist equipment is very dangerous.

Mercury

- **Position:** Low in the eastern sky before sunrise early in the month, transitioning into superior conjunction.
- **Magnitude:** ~ -0.6 to -1.2
- **Visibility:** Part of the month (early morning twilight only).

Venus

- **Position:** Prominent low in the western sky after sunset in Virgo.
- **Magnitude:** ~ -4.0
- **Visibility:** Whole month.

Mars

- **Position:** Rises late in the evening, visible high in the eastern sky prior to dawn.
- **Magnitude:** ~ +0.5
- **Visibility:** Whole month (late night/pre-dawn).

Jupiter

- **Position:** Rises during the late evening hours, reaching high elevation in the sky before dawn.
- **Magnitude:** ~ -2.2
- **Visibility:** Whole month.

Saturn

- **Position:** Reaches opposition in September; visible all night long low in the south.
- **Magnitude:** ~ +0.4
- **Visibility:** Whole month (All night).

Uranus

- **Position:** Rises in the mid-evening in Taurus; well-placed for binocular viewing overnight.
- **Magnitude:** ~ +5.7
- **Visibility:** Whole month.

Neptune

- **Position:** Located near Saturn in Pisces; reaches opposition in September, visible all night via optics.
- **Magnitude:** ~ +7.8
- **Visibility:** Whole month.

Comets, Meteors & Asteroids



Meteor Showers

September offers a few smaller opportunities for **meteor shower observing**, including:

- **Aurigids** (August 28 – September 5), peaking on the 1st September with ~10 meteors/hour. It may be trickier to see with a quarter moon until late at night, so if you can head to darker skies that would be beneficial to seeing more meteors.
- **Epsilon Perseids**: Peak activity on 9 September 2026. A minor shower with a ZHR of ~5 meteors per hour, visible from the UK late at night under favorable Moonless skies.

Asteroids

No bright asteroids visible with the naked eye this month

Binocular/Telescope level Asteroids

- **1 Ceres:** Visible from the UK using binoculars or small telescopes in the constellation Sagittarius at magnitude +8.4
- **4 Vesta:** Visible from the UK with small optics in Gemini, glowing at magnitude +8.1 in the pre-dawn sky

Comets

In **September 2026** there are a couple of comets, however will need telescope equipment to see:

- **Comet C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS):** Visible with binoculars/small telescopes from the West Midlands in early pre-dawn hours, tracking low in the sky as it approaches solar perihelion.

Deep Sky Targets



For Telescopes & Astrophotography

September is with us and by mid month should be dark by 9pm, we will get some better astronomical levels of darkness (as can be seen [HERE](#)) with the summer milky way prominent

As discussed at the What's Up talk last Thursday here are some great targets to have a go at.
Good luck all!

Constellations

- **Pegasus:** Prominent in the eastern sky, anchored by the Great Square.
- **Andromeda:** High in the east, housing our nearest major spiral neighbour.
- **Cassiopeia:** Distinctive 'W' shape rising high in the northern sky.
- **Cygnus:** Transiting high overhead along the bright Milky Way band.

Galaxies

- **Andromeda Galaxy (M31):** Massive spiral galaxy easily located in Andromeda.
- **Triangulum Galaxy (M33):** Face-on spiral galaxy in Triangulum, ideal for wide-field imaging.

Deep Sky Nebula

- **North America Nebula (NGC 7000):** Large emission nebula in Cygnus resembling the North American continent.
- **Veil Nebula Complex (NGC 6960 / 6992):** Supernova remnant loop glowing brightly in Cygnus.
- **Elephant's Trunk Nebula (IC 1396):** Expansive star-forming emission region in Cepheus.

Sharpless (SH) catalogue items

- **Sharpless 2-106 (Sh2-106):** Compact bipolar emission region and star-forming cloud in Cygnus.
- **Sharpless 2-155 (Sh2-155 / Cave Nebula):** Dim, complex diffuse emission nebula in Cepheus.

For Binoculars

With 7x50 wide angle binoculars sweep the milky-Way from Cassiopeia through Perseus and Auriga to Procyon. Enjoy the Hyades and Pleiades at the same time.

Bright Star Clusters

C42 [Search](#)

M15 [Search](#)

M2 [Search](#)

C47 [Search](#)

M14 [Search](#)

NGC 6760 [Search](#)

NGC 6366 [Search](#)

NGC 6712 [Search](#)

The Moon

Ideal for exploring craters, mare, and mountains at any phase.

Bills Bulletin



Hi guys we are back again for another look at articles I hope you will be interested in. I have included some more science articles and summaries this time. It's often worth having a look at the abstracts and the conclusions as they are more detailed than the summaries if you are interested in a subject. The body of the article can be a bit bogged down with maths but have ago some are very readable cheers bill

Sun

Eclipse path from space

[ESA - MTG-I1 captures eclipse path of totality over Europe](#)

Eclipse from space

[ESA - Proba-3's eclipse hours before totality in Europe](#)

[ESA - A double eclipse for Proba-3](#)

More eclipse

[Amazing Views of Wednesday's Total Solar Eclipse - Universe Today](#)

Earth

Weather satellite improved accuracy 🤪

[ESA - MTG-I2 completes Europe's latest weather trio](#)

Moon

Space x booster hit the moon new crater found following day

[SpaceX rocket's impact crater on the moon spied by Korean lunar orbiter \(photos\) | Space](#)

Wheels for the moon

[NASA Challenge Tests Wheel Designs for Moon Base Mobility - NASA](#)

Next Chinese launch

https://apple.news/A5yIDlhk_QO2kDEBMrJaHXw

Planetary

Autonomy rules Percy wow

[The first self-driving vehicle on Mars has proven to be a smashing success - Ars Technica](#)

Asteroids

Mars moon shaped by glancing impact

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41550-026-02956-w>

Comets

Exoplanet

Bow shocks show where dying stars could form recycling plants

[MOTHRA Shows Us A Star Being Recycled in the Helix Nebula - Universe Today](#)

[Numerous bow shocks in the outer Helix Nebula | Nature](#)

Astro biology

Milky Way

Our galaxy collects others and from the distribution of globular clusters another merger has been found

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41550-026-02931-5>

[Hubble Solves Merger Mystery From Milky Way's Early Years - NASA Science](#)

Galaxies

Star birth rates slow in M31

[Hubble Reveals that Star Formation is Slowing Down in the Andromeda Galaxy - Universe Today](#)

Cosmology

We may know what the little red dots are

<https://phys.org/news/2026-08-red-dots-pulsating-monster-stars.html>

[The JWST Little Red Dots Could Be 'Black Hole Stars' - Universe Today](#)

Making gravity waves more detectable

[A Quantum Trick for Spotting Gravitational Waves - Universe Today](#)

Telescopes

Overlaying nasa style

[NASA Telescopes Create Colorful 'Craft' From Nearby Nebula - NASA Science](#)

Compare dwarf mini and Seestar s30 pro

[SeeStar S30 Pro vs Dwarf Mini: Which to Buy?](#)

Observing

Lion nebula

[Lion Nebula Roars to Life With NASA's Webb - NASA Science](#)

Citizen science project

[Backyard Worlds: Cool Neighbors - NASA Science](#)

Space flight

Swift capture update

[NASA Swift Boost Spacecraft Prepares to Continue Mission - NASA Science](#)

[NASA Updates Next Steps for Commercial Swift Boost Mission - NASA](#)

Up up and away in a beautiful balloon

[NASA Scientific Balloons Prepare for 2026 Fort Sumner Campaign - NASA](#)

Voyager 2 repair

[https://apple.news/AyAReflgyT_ag6wceHN-BOQ](#)

ESA reusable concept

[ESA - Phoenix 3: concept study for a reusable European spacecraft](#)

Autonomous finding your way

[NASA's Starling Mission Opens New Frontiers in Space Navigation - NASA](#)

Multimedia

Nancy Roman podcast

[Roman Series: NASA's New View of the Dark Universe](#)

[Roman Series: Jupiters Around Other Suns - NASA](#)

Schedules, links and contacts



-
- *TV - BBC Sky at night ([Here](#))*
 - *Upcoming Space Launches ([Here](#))*
 - *Moon Phases ([Here](#))*
 - *Dark Sky Calendar ([Here](#))*

- *Clear Outside - Astronomy weather forecast ([Here](#))*
 - *Cloud radar map ([Here](#))*
 - *Beginners guide ([Here](#))*
 - *Walsall Astronomy Facebook Group ([Here](#))*
 - *Walsall Astronomy Website ([Here](#))*
 - *Contact: Info@walsallastro.com*
-