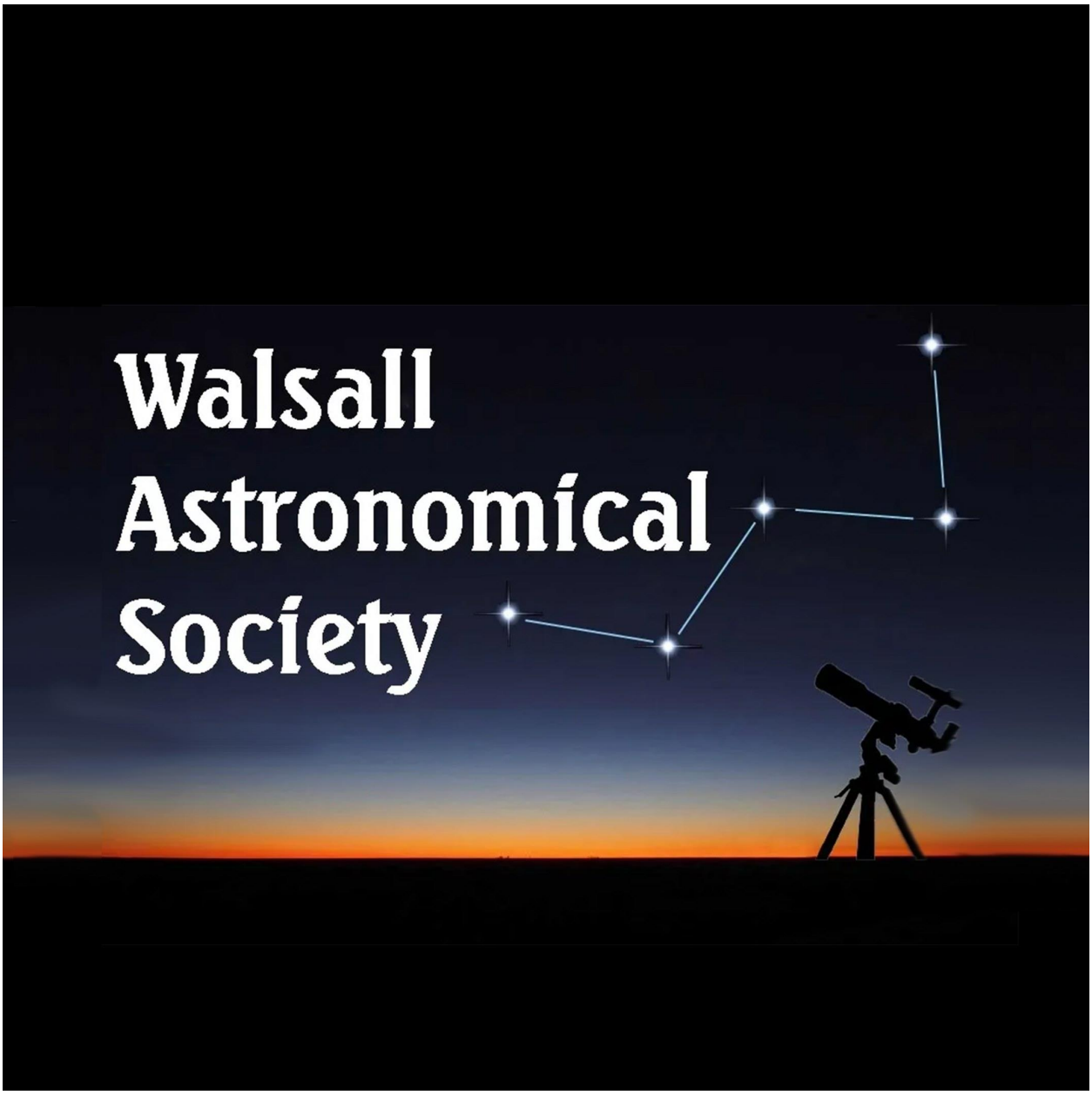
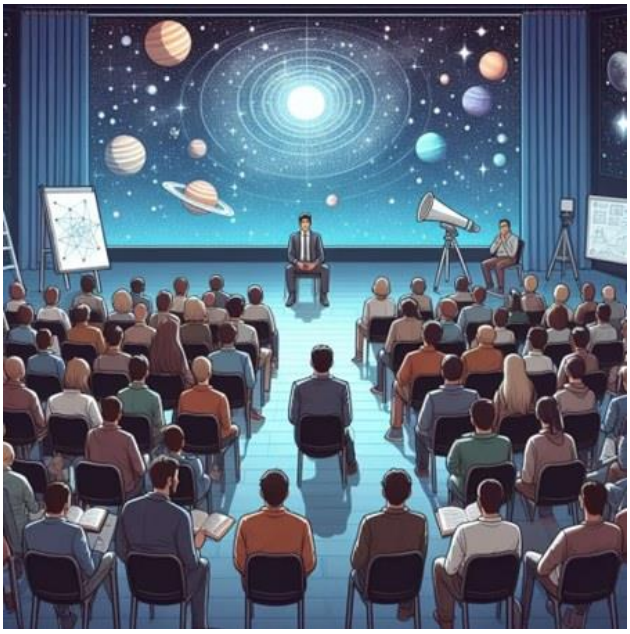


August 2026

What's on this month



August brings a welcome turning point for stargazers across the UK as the prolonged twilight of late spring and mid-summer finally gives way to rapidly expanding windows of true night. After months of short observing sessions limited to midnight hours, the sky darkens significantly earlier each week, allowing for far more comfortable and prolonged sessions at the telescope. August skies are historically celebrated for their warm, pleasant atmospheric stability, which frequently offers superb transparency and steady astronomical seeing conditions. The late-summer night sky carries a distinctively deep, velvety texture, inviting both casual visual observers and seasoned astrophotographers to dust off their equipment and step outside into the garden to enjoy the shifting celestial panorama under increasingly cooperative skies.

We are still awaiting the NOVA in Corona-Borealis so keep your eyes peeled and on the sky!

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

Thursday 6th August: External Lecture - Dr Tyler Bourke - Square Kilometre Array

Thursday 13th August: General Club Meeting - Discussion on ALAN Radio Telescope Project

Thursday 20th August: General Club Meeting, for discussion and support - Observing with telescopes if clear

Thursday 27th August: What's Up for September

List of Lovell Lecture Series 2026 HERE for those interested.

What's Up Monthly Publication

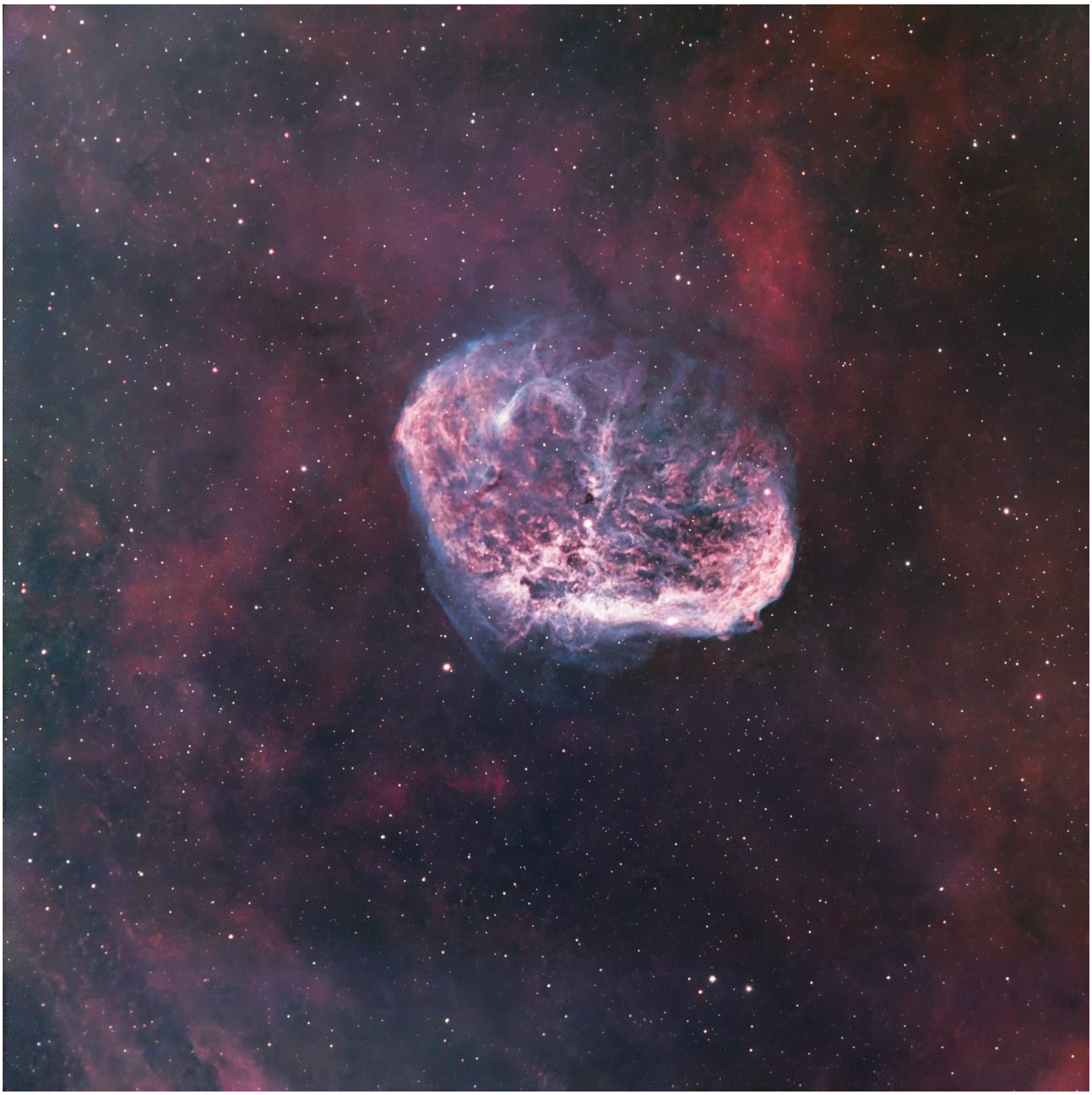
Members Gallery

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

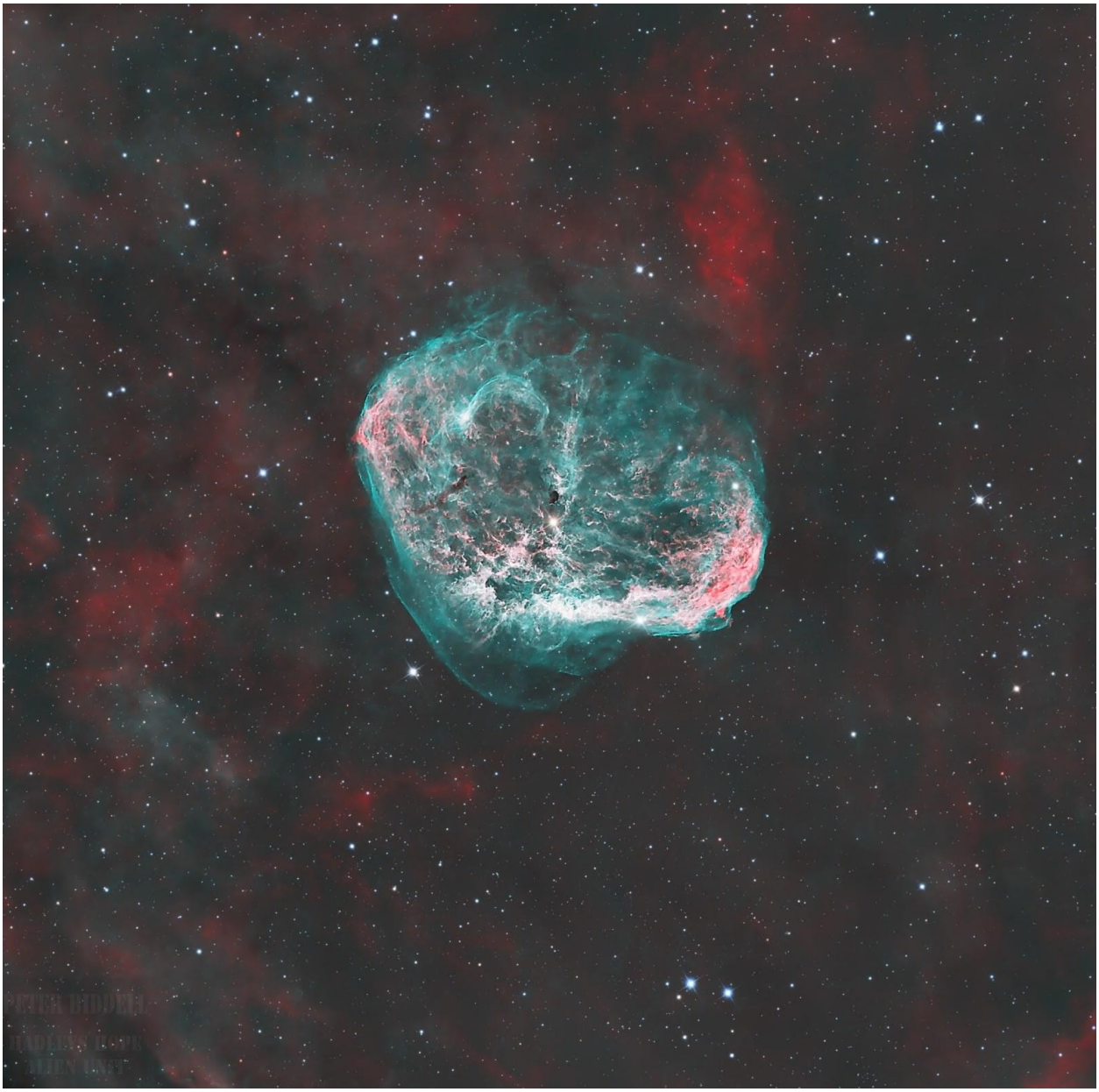
A few members this month all decided to capture the Crescent Nebula and Dumbell Nebula across a range of different equipment and processing.

1 - Crescent Nebula - Dave Timmins

2 - Crescent Nebula - David Kyte



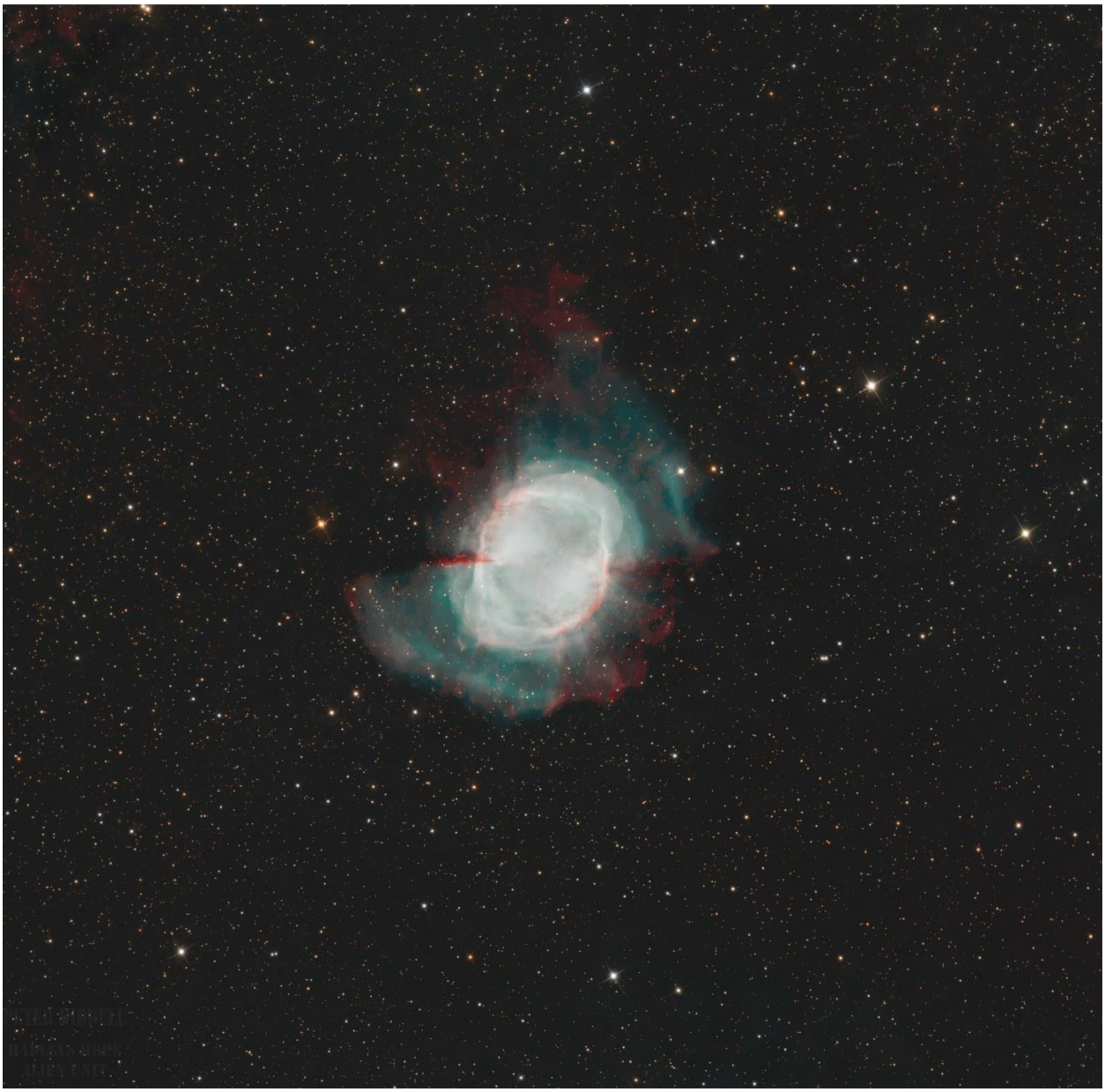
3 - Crescent Nebula - Mike Lewis



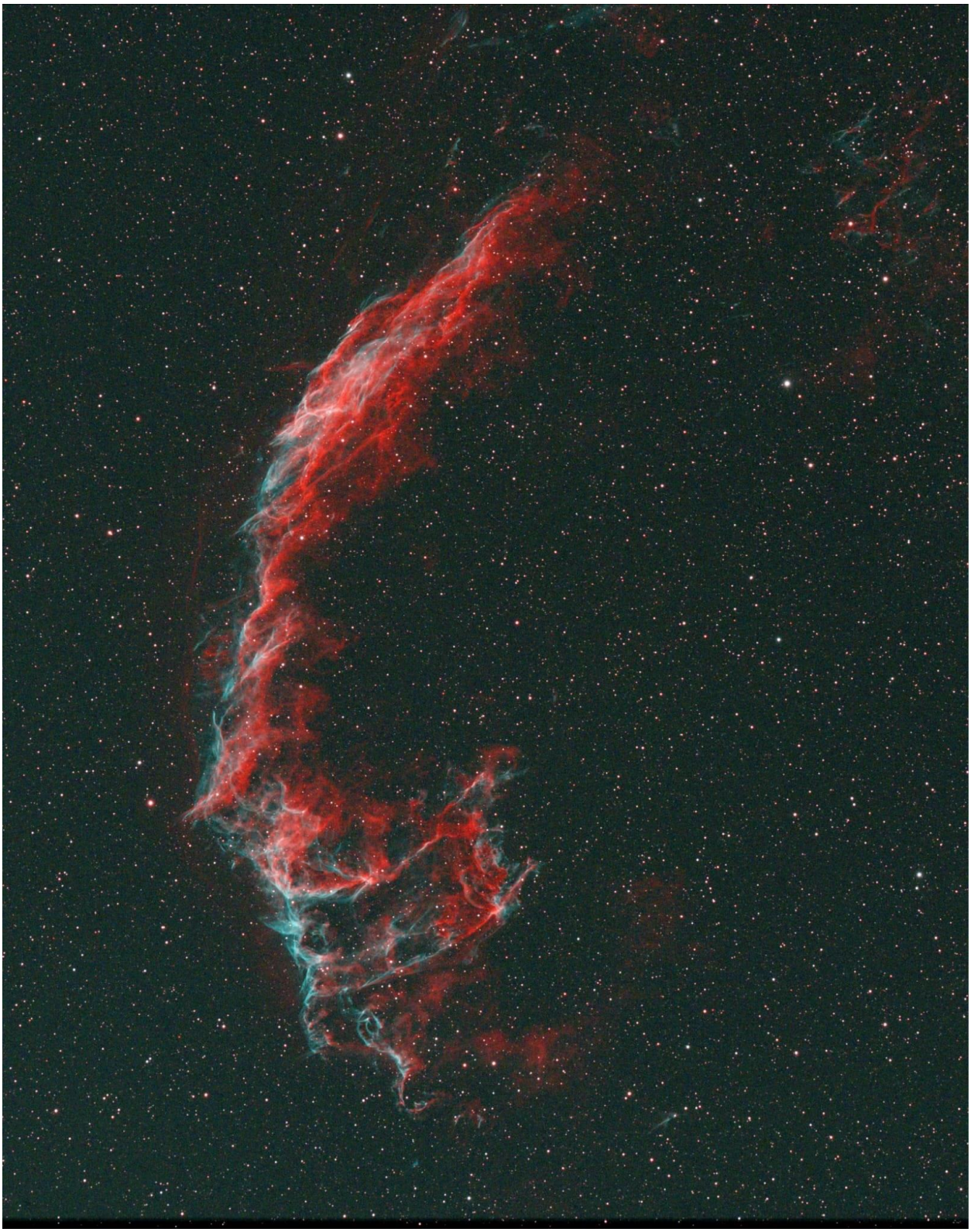
4 - Crescent Nebula - Peter Biddell

5 - Dumbell Nebula - David Kyte

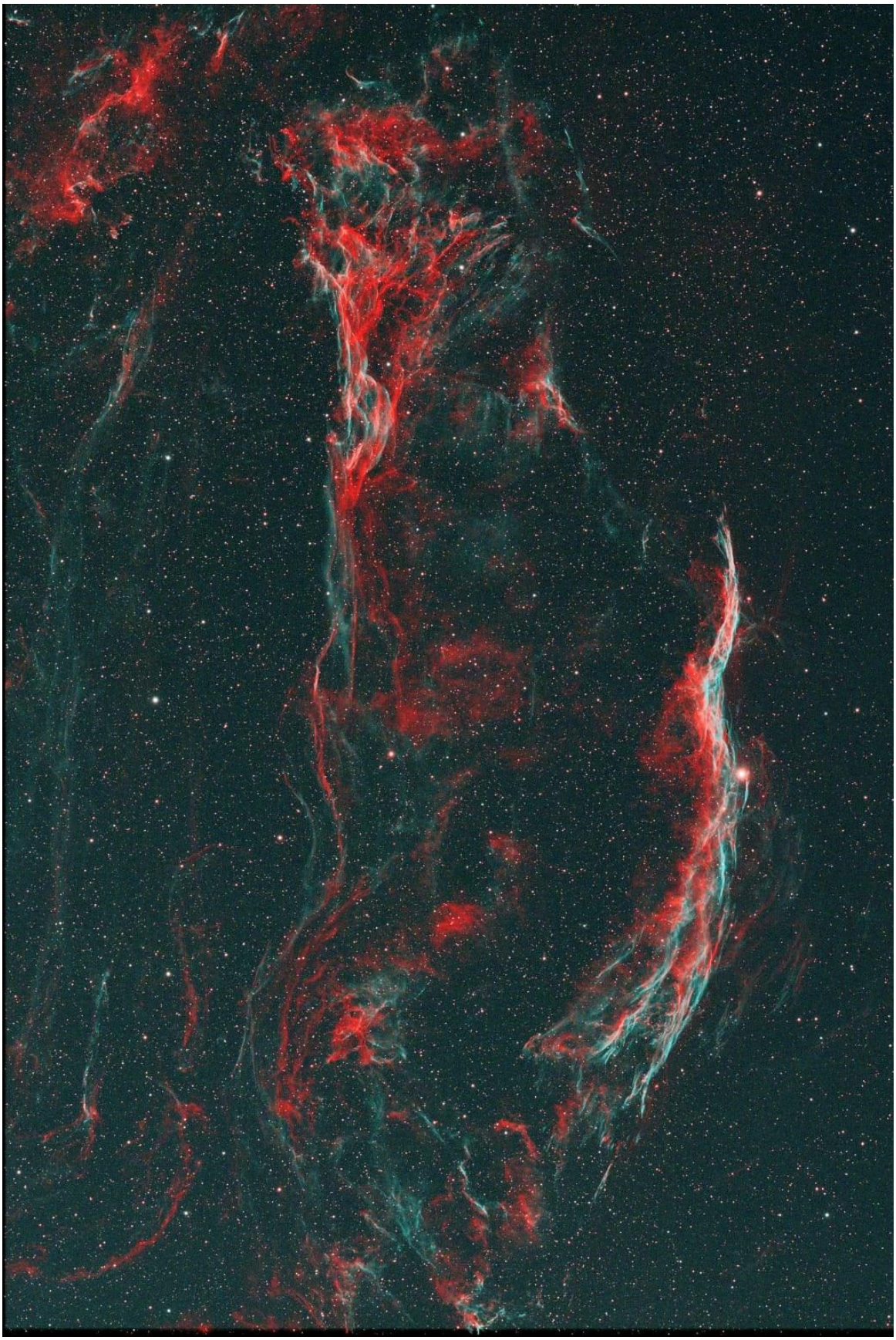
6 - Dumbell Nebula - Keith Thompson



7 - Dumbell Nebula - Peter Biddell



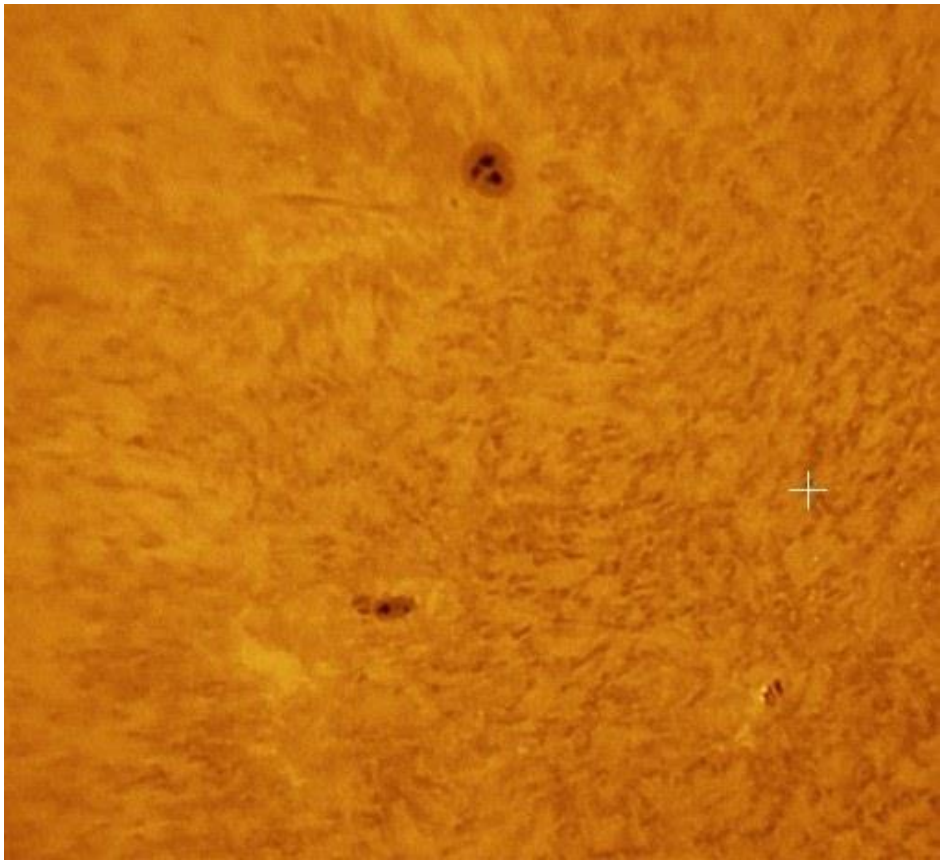
8 - Eastern Veil Nebula - David Kyte



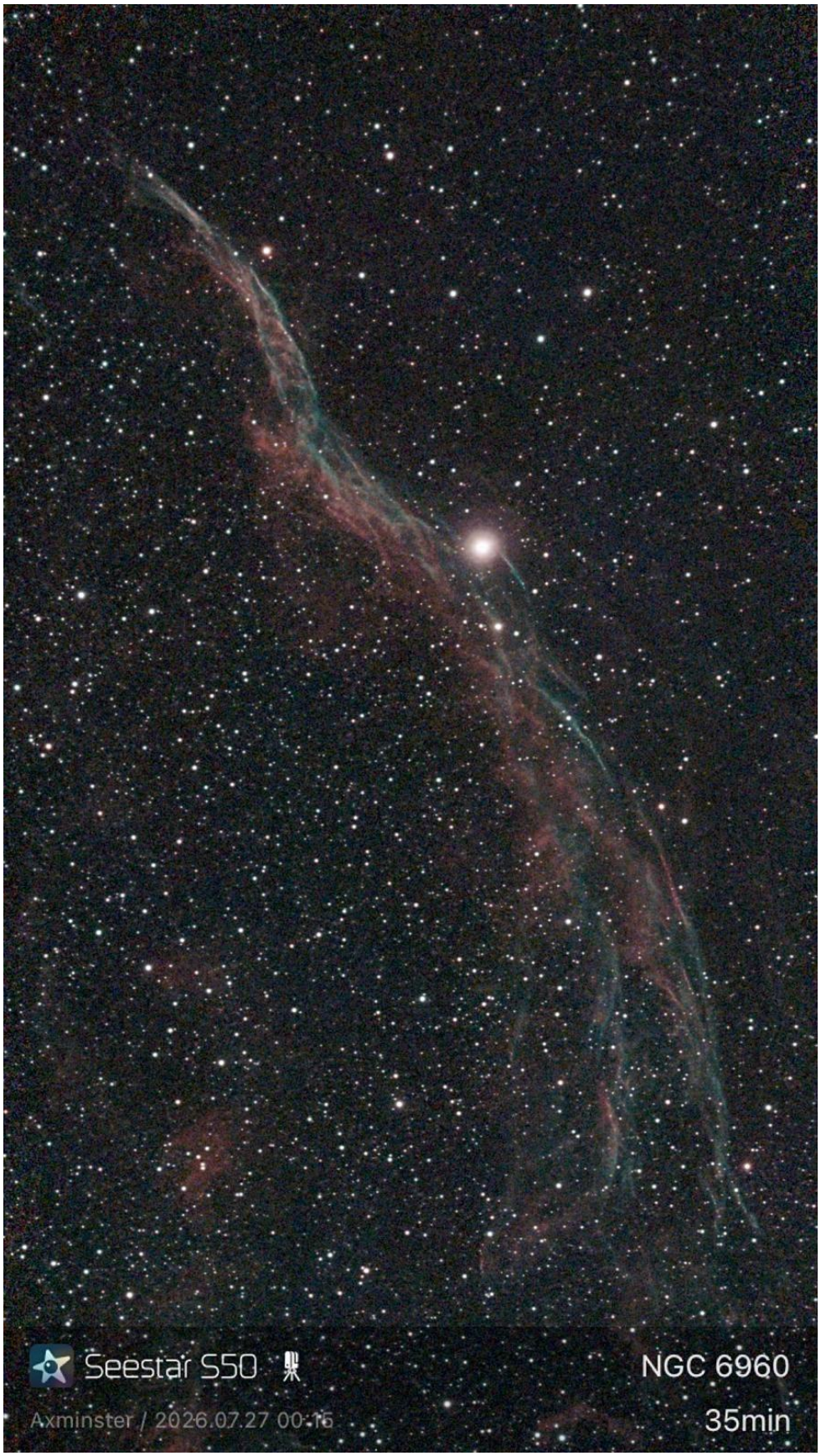
9 - Western Veil Nebula - David Kyte

10 - Lobster Claw Nebula - Peter Biddell

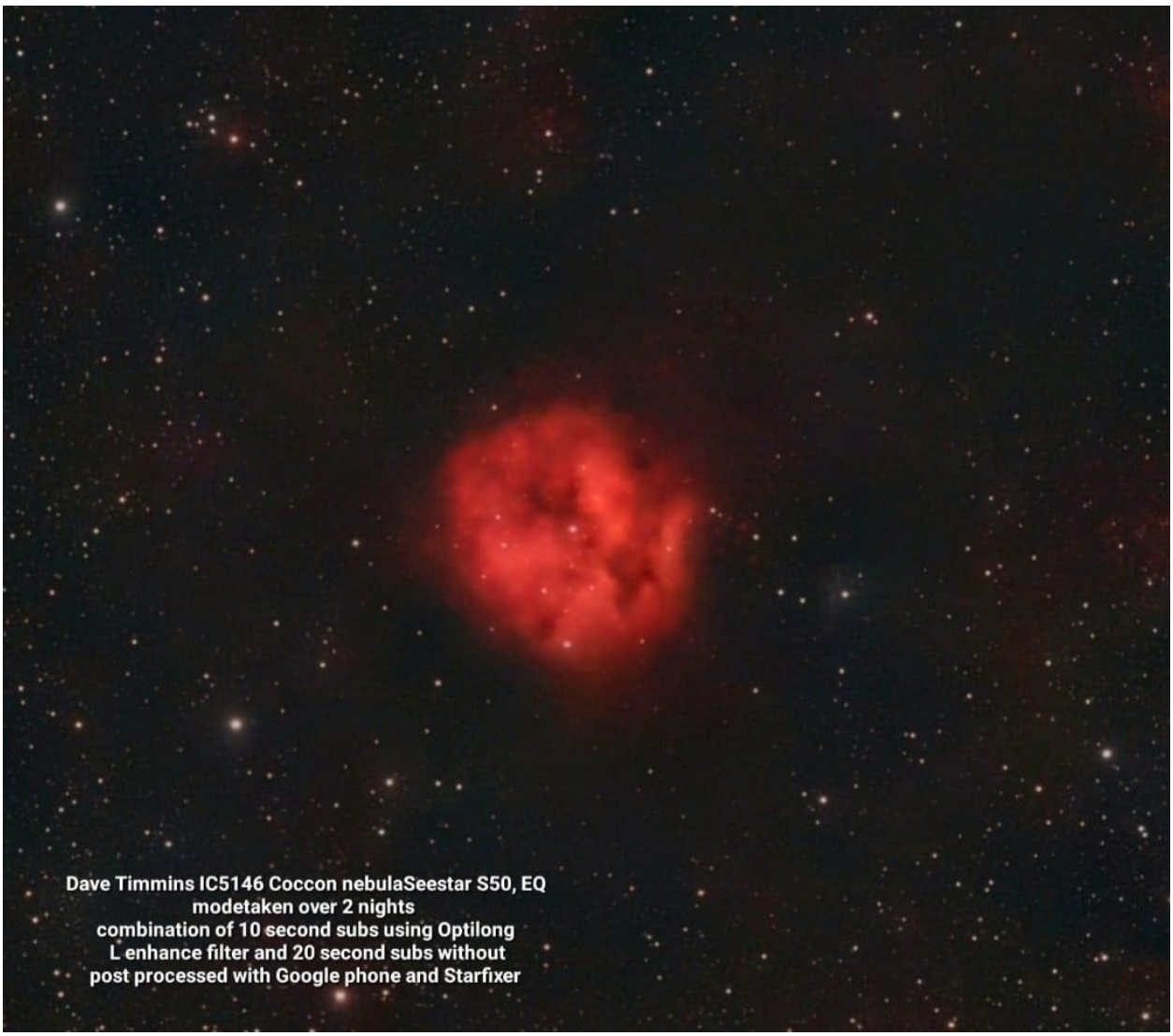
11 - Heart nebula - David Kyte



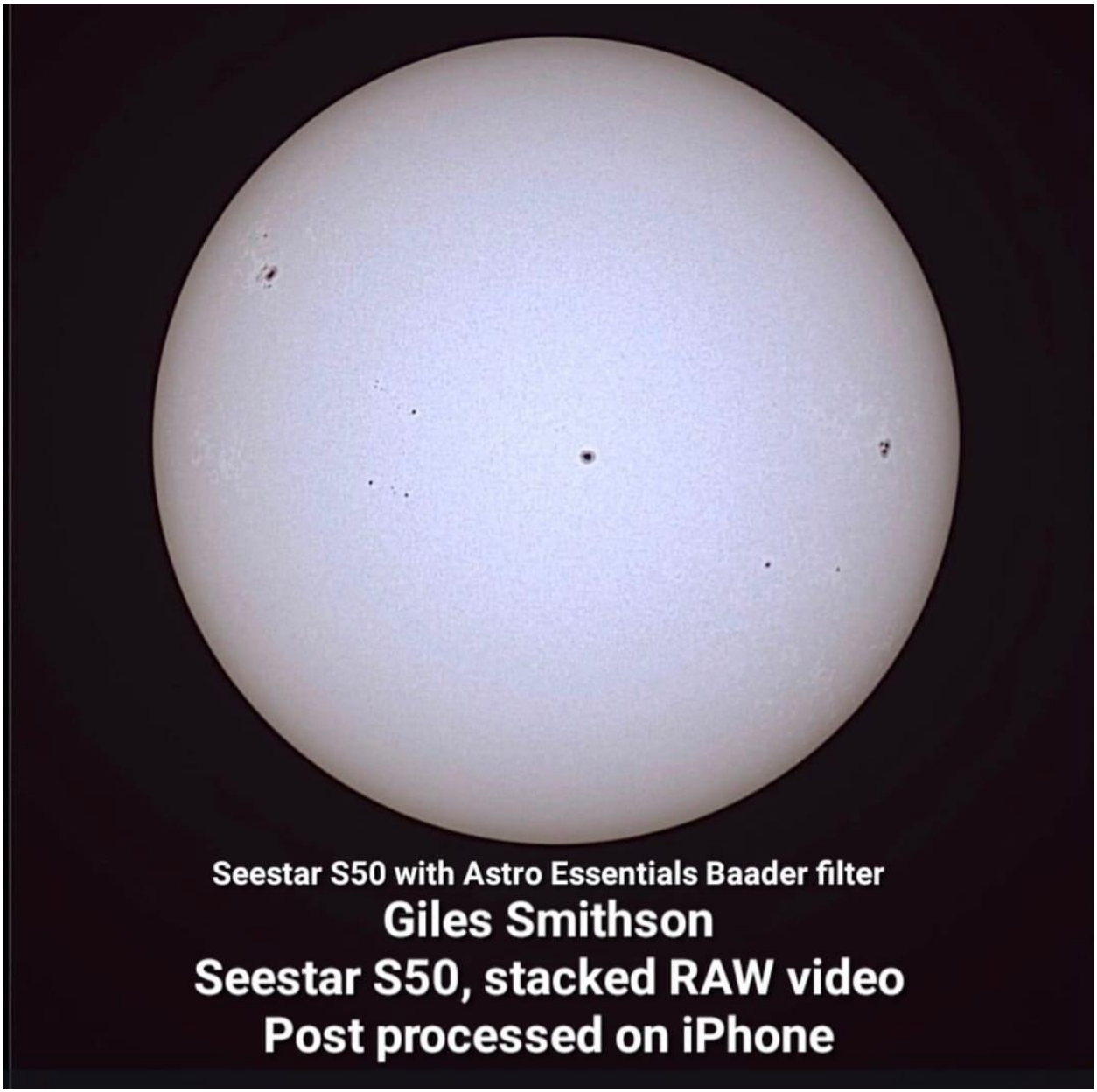
12 - Surface of the Sun - Mike Lewis


Seestar S50
NGC 6960
Axminster / 2026.07.27 00:16
35min

13 - Western Veil Nebula - Bill Law



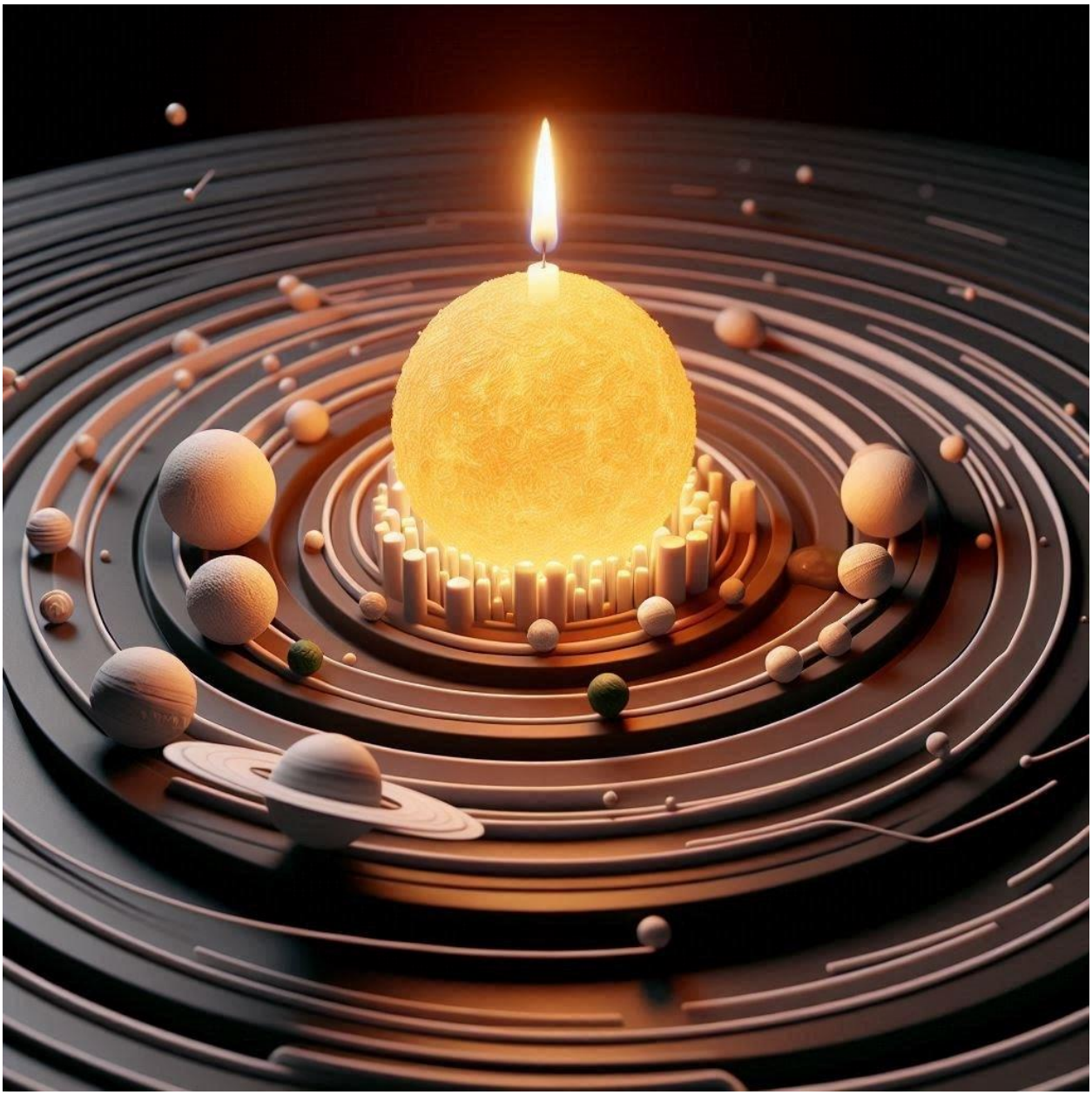
14 - Cocoon Nebula - Dave Timmins



15 - Sunspots - Giles Smithson

16 - ISS Solar Transit - Tony Jakeman

Anniversaries - August

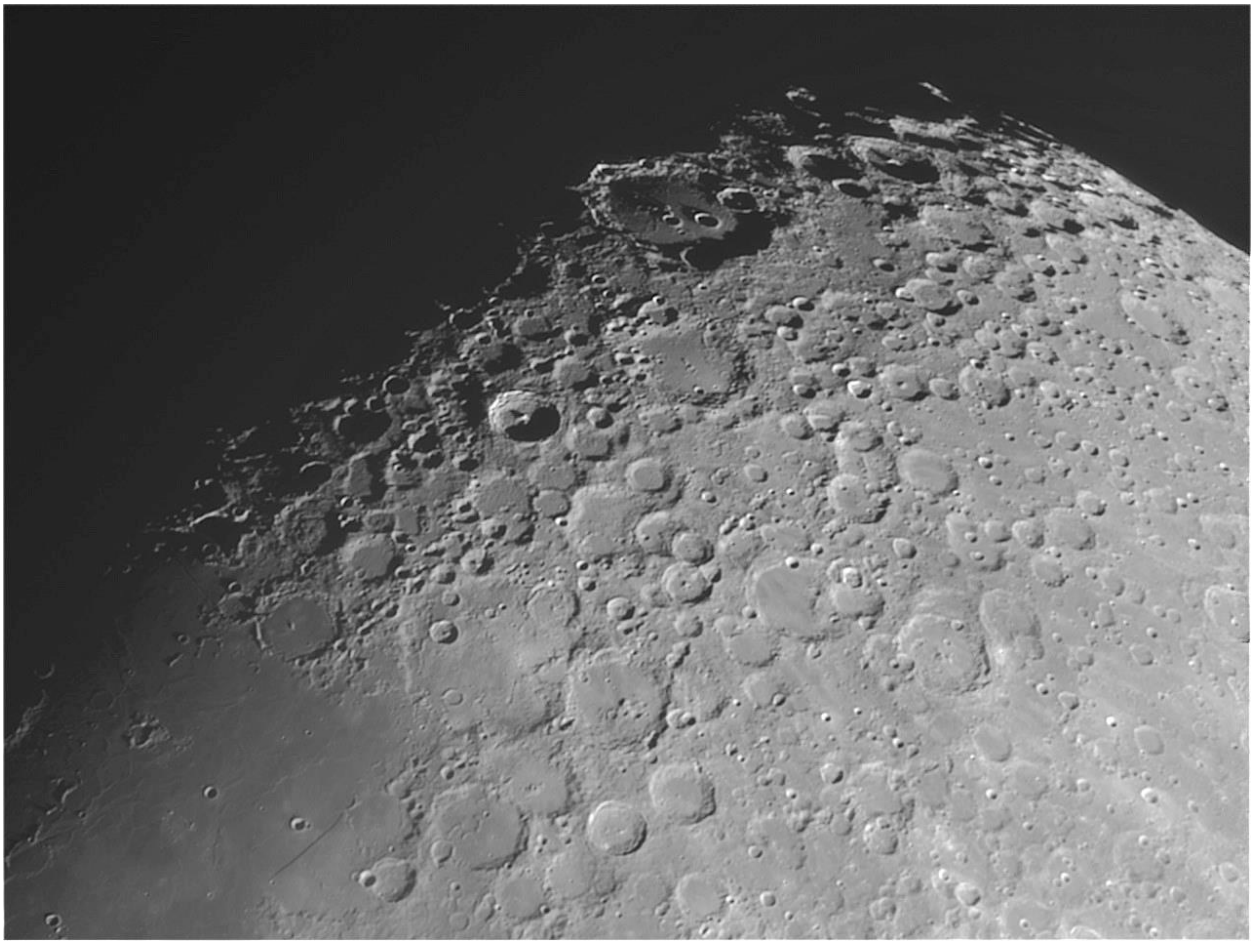


Here are some significant astronomy anniversaries that occurred in June throughout history:

- **August 4, 1997** – **Mars Pathfinder lands on Mars:** Delivering the Sojourner rover to the Martian surface
- **August 5, 2011** – **Launch of NASA's Juno Spacecraft:** Launched from an Atlas V rocket towards Jupiter, where it has provided unprecedented data about the planet.
- **August 6, 2012** – **Curiosity rover lands on Mars:** Delivering Curiosity rover to the surface of Mars in the Gale Crater. Fundamentally transforming our understanding of Mars through its discoveries.
- **August 12, 1877** – **Discovery of Mars' Moons:** Asaph Hall discovered Deimos, and six days later, Phobos, using rhe U.S Naval Observatory's 26-inch refractor.
- **August 20, 1977** – **Voyager 2 Launch:** NASA launches the Voyager 2 probe to tour the outer planets. It remains one of the farthest human-made objects.
- **August 24, 2006** – **Pluto reclassified as a Dwarf Planet:** The International Astronomical Union (IAU) voted to redefine the definition of a planet, officially demoting Pluto to 'dwarf planet' status.
- **August 27, 1962** – **Mariner 2 probe is launched:** NASA launches the Mariner 2 probe, which becomes the first successful planetary probe, flying by Venus in December 1962.

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

The Moon



Last Quarter - 6th August

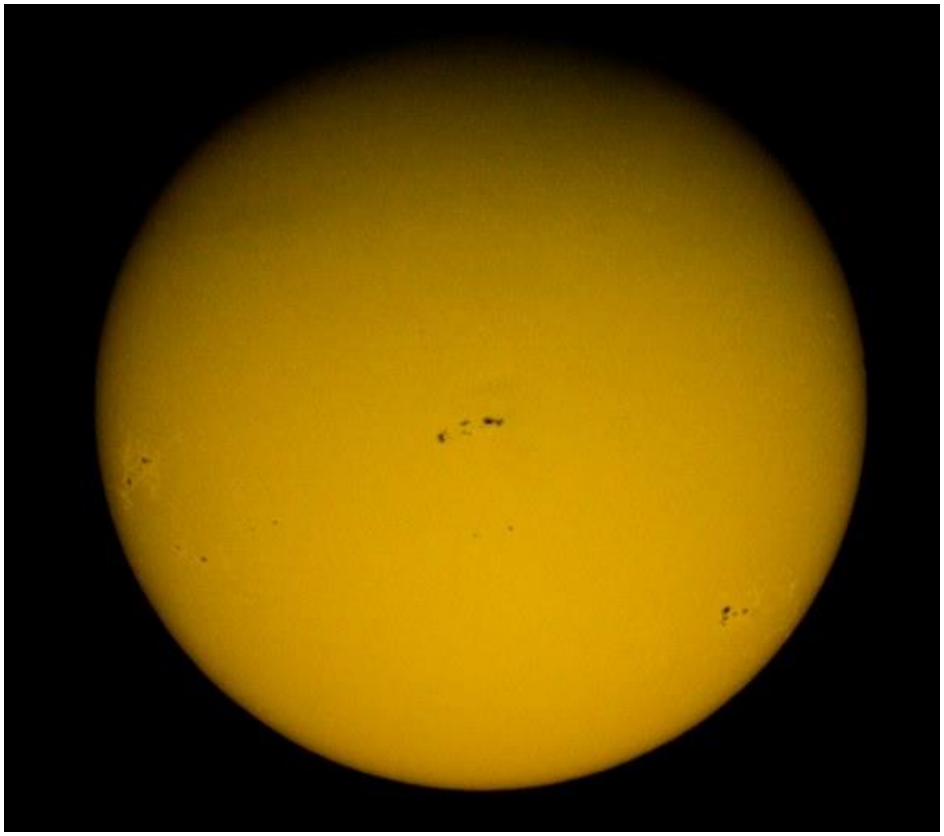
New Moon - 12th August

1st Quarter - 20th August

Full Moon - 28th August

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 commitee 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.

AUGUST 12th (Part 1) Planet Parade

Wow what a day:

Planet Parade:

Pre-Dawn Alignment Positions (60–90 Minutes Before Sunrise)

- **Jupiter**: Blazes brightly in gold, positioned lower toward the eastern horizon.
- **Mercury**: Flickers low near the eastern horizon close to twilight.
- **Mars**: Glows with an amber-red hue higher in the sky (near Gemini/Betelgeuse region).
- **Saturn**: Shines steadily with a pale yellow light toward the southern/southwestern sky.
- **Uranus & Neptune**: Faint blue-green ice giants positioned along the arc between the brighter planets, requiring binoculars or a telescope to spot.
- **Venus**: Absent from the morning lineup as it transitions to an evening appearance post-sunset

AUGUST 12th (Part 2) Partial Solar Eclipse

Partial Solar Eclipse

Visible from the UK and Ireland on 12 August 2026

- You can see a partial eclipse.
- A portion of the Sun is covered by the Moon.
- It is a LARGE portion at 90%
- Making this as close to a total eclipse as we've seen in almost 27 years from the British Isles

STARTS: 18:15 approx

MAX COVER: 19:11

ENDS: 20:00

(Keep your eyes open for an email for a club event - more closer to the time)

Caution:

- Never look directly at the Sun without proper eye protection designed for solar viewing.
- Careful of fakes, only use certified eclipse glasses.
- Do not use sunglasses, cameras, binoculars, or telescopes without a certified solar filter attached.

- Supervise children to ensure they keep their eclipse glasses on while viewing.
- If using a telescope or binoculars, ensure the solar filter is mounted on the front of the device, not the eyepiece. Tape on if high wind levels.

AUGUST 12th (Part 3) Meteor Shower Peaks

Perseids Meter Shower:

- The shower is active between 17 July and 24 August 2026
- It peaks overnight on 12–13 August 2026
- Ti will be Near-perfect viewing conditions.
  - Because the peak perfectly coincides with a new Moon on 12 August, the night sky will be exceptionally dark.
  - .....and hopefully not exceptionally cloudy.....

The Planets

Here's a summary of the positions and visibility of the planets in August 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

The innermost planet is poorly placed for UK observers throughout August, remaining lost in the bright glare of the Sun during the daytime and dropping below the horizon before darkness falls.

Venus

The brilliant evening star begins to emerge very low in the western sky shortly after sunset. Due to its shallow angle relative to the horizon, observers will need an unobstructed western view to spot it during early twilight.

Mars

The red planet is an increasingly bright naked-eye object visible in the eastern sky during the early pre-dawn hours, climbing well clear of the horizon before the onset of morning twilight.

Jupiter

Climbing out of its recent solar conjunction, the king of planets returns to visibility as a bright beacon low in the east-northeast sky during the early morning hours, providing sharp views for early risers.

Saturn

The ringed planet stands out as the premier planetary target for August, rising in the east during early evening and remaining visible throughout the entire night. It offers excellent altitude for detailed telescopic study of its current shallow ring plane angle and bright system of moons.

Uranus

Visible late at night through binoculars or a dedicated telescope, Uranus rests stably among the stars of Taurus, appearing as a tiny, distinct blue-green dot.

Neptune

Available for late-night telescope tracking, the solar system's outermost planet resides in Pisces, requiring optical aid to resolve its faint, deep-blue magnitude +7.8 signature.

August

Comets, Meteors & Asteroids

Meteor Showers

August offers excellent opportunities for **meteor shower observing**, including:

- **The Perseid Meteor Shower:** August offers an absolutely spectacular, world-class window for the annual Perseids, which remain active all month and reach their maximum peak on the night of August 12–13. Most importantly, the peak coincides perfectly with a New Moon, guaranteeing completely dark, pitch-black skies. Observers

under rural skies can expect to see up to 100 fast, bright meteors per hour, with a high probability of vivid fireballs leaving long-lasting ionizing trains.

Asteroids

No bright asteroids visible with the naked eye this month

Binocular/Telescope level Asteroids

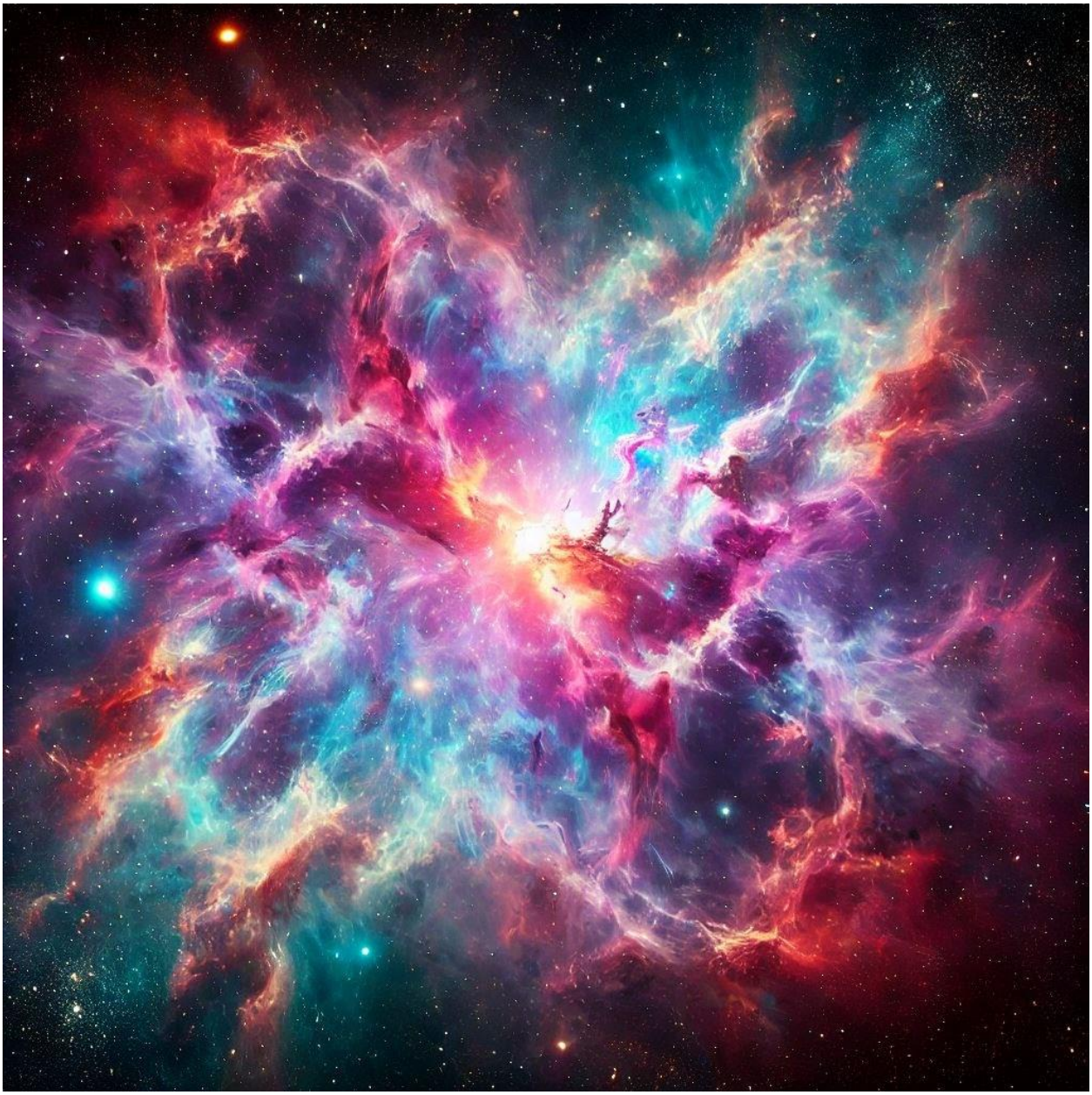
- **Asteroid 4 Vesta:** The brightest asteroid in the asteroid belt is well placed for UK tracking throughout August, drifting across background star fields at a relatively bright magnitude of +7.5, making it an easy target to isolate using binoculars or small telescopes under moderate skies.

Comets

In **August 2026**, **no comets bright enough for naked-eye visibility** are expected to be visible from the UK.

- **Comet 10P/Tempel 2:** This periodic comet represents the best available targets for UK observers using small telescopes or sensitive imaging rigs during August. It is expected to reach its peak seasonal brightness of roughly magnitude +9.0 to +10.0. It will sit relatively low along the southern horizon, requiring clean dark-sky transparency to resolve its diffuse green coma.

Deep Sky Targets



For Telescopes & Astrophotography

August 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

Constellations

- **Cygnus (The Swan):** Positioned high overhead near the zenith during August nights, this constellation outlines the backbone of the summer Milky Way and hosts excellent dark rifts.

- **Pegasus (The Winged Horse):** Rising prominently in the east, its massive "Great Square" asterism acts as a seasonal signpost for late-summer and autumn viewing.
- **Aquila (The Eagle):** Straddling the celestial equator, this striking constellation contains the bright anchor star Altair and points deep into rich galactic star clouds.

Galaxies

- **Andromeda Galaxy (M31):** The premier spiral galaxy visible from the Northern Hemisphere, easily located climbing high in the northeast, revealing its massive dust lanes to astrophotographers.
- **Triangulum Galaxy (M33):** A face-on spiral galaxy that serves as an excellent intermediate target for astrophotography, requiring dark skies to pull out its delicate HII star-forming regions.
- **Bode's Galaxy and the Cigar Galaxy (M81 & M82):** This classic galaxy pair remains a reliable target in the north, offering a stark structural contrast between a classic spiral and a volatile starburst galaxy.

Deep Sky Nebula

- **The North American Nebula (NGC 7000):** A massive emission nebula located in Cygnus that responds beautifully to wide-field setups and hydrogen-alpha filters, tracing the distinct shape of the continent.
- **The Veil Nebula (NGC 6960 / NGC 6992):** A colossal, delicate supernova remnant looping through Cygnus, presenting intricate, interwoven filament structures of ionized gas for high-resolution imagers.
- **The Elephant's Trunk Nebula (IC 1396):** An expansive, ionized gas concentration clustered in Cepheus, heavily favoured for narrowband imaging to highlight dark, dense interstellar dust columns.

Shapeless (SH) Catalogue Items

- **Sh2-101 (The Tulip Nebula):** A glowing emission nebula in Cygnus that maps out the distinctive shape of a blooming tulip flower, tightly locked near the powerful microquasar Cygnus X-1.

- **Sh2-155 (The Cave Nebula):** A complex, dim structural target in Cepheus presenting a striking interplay of bright emission features against deep, dark blocking nebulae.
- **Sh2-112:** A faint, circular emission nebula located in Cygnus, presenting an interesting challenge for astrophotographers utilizing narrow OIII and Ha filters to split its central dust lane.

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

M15

M2

C47

M14

NGC 6760

NGC 6366

NGC 6712

The Moon

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

Bills Bulletin

To send end July

Template

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

NASA eclipse coverage

NASA Sets Coverage for August Northern Hemisphere Total Solar Eclipse - NASA

Earth

Earths crust may not have formed as we think. The heating from within cannot explain the rock and crystal ages but add in heavy bombardment and you get a result

The missing 500 million: Cosmic bombardment melted Earth's first crust - Ars Technica

El Niño

ESA - SMOS salinity could offer early indicator of El Niño

Moon

Sending a Mars test rover to the moon

'PROMISE' me the moon? NASA wants to send spare nuclear-powered Mars rover to the lunar surface | Space

Mapping soils

Scientists Map Moon Regolith to Aid Lunar Bases - Universe Today

Planetary

New Mars robot

NASA tests advanced new Mars rover prototype in the California desert (video) | Space

Martian dust storms are electric

Electrically Charged Mars Storms Threaten Future Exploration - Universe Today

Heating Io

NASA's Juno Takes Temperature of Jupiter's Fiery Moon Io - NASA

Martian crispy surface

NASA's Curiosity Mars Rover Discovers Field of Honeycomb Textures - NASA

Asteroids

T minus 3 years for a naked eye asteroid close approach

'Once-in-a-millennium' asteroid flyby will be visible to much of the world in 2029 | Space

Multiple headed asteroid

1st three-headed asteroid found in our solar system — and it has a little moon | Space

Comets

Asteroids or comets

Astronomers Catch a "Dark Comet" Red-Handed - Universe Today

Exoplanet

There is a transition point between brown dwarf and star it's been found

https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/1538-3881/ae7370

Planets get eaten by white dwarfs

White Dwarfs Eat More Planetary Debris Than Thought, But Magnetic Fields Hide It - Universe Today

Astro biology

Earths history from beyond

Astrobiology Offers Crucial Window Onto Earth's Distant Past And Future - Universe Today

Milky Way

New Chandra images

Stunning new NASA space telescope images reveal the universe in red, white and blue for America 250 | Space

Flip flop disk

The Milky Way Flipped its Disk Billions of Years Ago - Universe Today

Galaxies

How do spiral arms form

Astronomers Are Still Trying to Understand How a Galaxy's Spiral Arms Form - Universe Today

Star formation slowing in m31

NASA's Hubble Shows Star Formation in Andromeda Galaxy Winding Down - NASA Science

Cosmology

Look at Altair and you will be close to the most massive partial accelerator in the Milky Way

The Milky Way's Most Powerful Particle Accelerator - Universe Today

This black hole is hot

X-ray spacecraft detects the 36-million-degree 'breath' of an ancient black hole | Space

Star shredding but not as you know it

NASA’s Swift Sees ‘Wandering’ Mega Black Hole Shredding Star - NASA Science

Telescopes

Jodrell no bank

Jodrell Bank telescope loses funding as STFC confirms cuts - Research Professional News

Radio scope tracking of space junk

'Crazy idea' succeeds: Scientists monitor space junk with radio telescopes | Space

Radio map

Radio Astronomy is Getting a Big Boost from the VLA's New Sky Survey - Universe Today

Observing

Citizen science

Lunar Melt - NASA Science

Redshift Wrangler - NASA Science

Space booster crash on the moon there maybe a plume of dust as on the limb

A SpaceX rocket will crash into the moon next week, and scientists aren't sure what to expect | Space

Meteors galore

Perseid meteor shower 2026 | BBC Sky at Night Magazine

Space flight

Swift saver could need saving

NASA launched this spacecraft to save a satellite. Now, it needs saving too | Space

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***
