

## CAS Sky Notes for April 2024

***The change in the clocks and lighter nights become an increasing problem for observing.***

### Planets:

**Mercury:** Mercury will still be visible in the evening sky at the very start of the month. This month, having reached greatest eastern elongation on the 24<sup>th</sup> March. It starts the month with an elongation of +17°, but rapidly drops to +11° by the 5<sup>th</sup> April. It will then rapidly be lost as it reaches inferior conjunction on 11<sup>th</sup> April; therefore, look for it early in the month.

**Venus:** Venus is still a morning object but is rather difficult to see. Its elongation drops to -10° by the end of the month. Its magnitude remains at -3.8 as the phase increases to 98% by the end of the month as it approaches superior conjunction in June. The diameter remains around 10 arcsec during this month.

**Mars:** It remains a difficult morning object throughout at magnitude +1.1 and diameter of 4.7 arcsec. Its declination increases this month to +1° putting it a bit higher in the sky.

**Jupiter:** Jupiter is becoming difficult this month, being low in the western sky after sunset. It is approaching conjunction in mid-May.

**Saturn** is not observable this month as it is still too close to the Sun in the morning sky.

**Uranus** is no longer visible this month as it sets not long after the Sun.

**Neptune.** Neptune is not observable this month.

### The Sun

Solar activity is still increasing, and solar observations are a good idea.

**Take great care to never look directly at the Sun, or directly through an optical instrument.**

**Aurora Borealis:** Increasing solar activity increases the chance of seeing an aurora. There are a number of Apps that can give you warnings and chances of seeing Aurorae. Mine is called *Aurora Pro*.

**Meteor Showers:** The Lyrid meteor shower occurs between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April. The peak is on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, so the full Moon makes this rather unfavourable.

### Moon

**2<sup>nd</sup> April:** Moon is at last quarter.

**8<sup>th</sup> April:** New Moon\*\*

**15<sup>th</sup> April:** Moon is at First Quarter

**23<sup>rd</sup> April:** Full Moon

\*\*There will be a total solar eclipse on the 8<sup>th</sup> April. This will not be visible at all in the UK.

### Comet 12P Pons-Brooks

This comet reaches perihelion on 21<sup>st</sup> April but may be visible low in the west after sunset. It could reach magnitude 4 and be visible to the naked eye, or at least in binoculars. Its brightness is unpredictable and prone to outbursts. I recommend you look online for the latest up to date information.