

CAS Sky Notes for August 2024

The summer evenings are getting shorter now and the skies get dark noticeably earlier throughout the month

Noctilucent Clouds

Do continue to watch out for them and try to photograph them if possible.

Aurora

The Sun is around its maximum activity and may produce more aurorae. I suggest you download an aurora alert App, such as *Aurora Pro*. The darker nights mean that there is a much better chance of seeing them.

Planets

Mercury.

It is still visible for the first week of August, having reached greatest eastern elongation on the 22nd July. Its northerly declination means it should be easier to find after sunset. This is a good opportunity to view this planet throughout the month. The diameter is around 10 arcsec for the first week and the phase drops from 35% to 15%.

This is an elongation worth observing!

Venus

Venus is now an evening object with a magnitude of -3.8 . However, it has an elongation of only about 18° , a phase of 95%, and a small diameter of 10.5". It isn't an easy object yet.

Mars and Jupiter

These are still both morning objects and can be viewed an hour or two before sunrise. However, on the **14th August** they are at conjunction and only 20 arc minutes (0.33°) apart. They should be visible in the same field of view of a small telescope and this could make a nice photo opportunity!

Saturn

This is now moving into the evening sky as it approaches opposition on September 8th. The rings have a tilt of less than 3° and so are getting near to edge on.

Uranus and Neptune

These are still morning objects,

Anyone wishing to observe them and who would like more details should contact me at coord@cotswoldas.org.uk

Moon

4th August: New Moon

19th August: Full Moon

12th August: Moon is at First Quarter

26th August: Moon is at last quarter

Sun

The Sun remains active currently, so watch out for large Sunspot groups. Remember to **never look at the Sun directly without a proper solar filter**.

Meteors

This month sees the peak of the Perseid meteor shower which reaches its maximum on the 12th August. The Zenithal Hourly Rate (ZHR) can exceed 80. Perseus is in the northeast in the late evening. The radiant is around RA 3h 11m and Dec +58°, but the meteors can be seen across the sky, appearing to come from that point.

The Moon is at first quarter and therefore sets around midnight. That is the best time to start looking for the meteors. Be sure to let your eyes get dark adapted for at least 15 minutes and **don't** look at your phone, as that will destroy your night vision for another 15 minutes!