

Forthcoming CAWAS Meetings on Zoom at 7:00pm BST

Friday April 9th	Dr David Rosario	Big Bang - atoms - stars - planets - supernovae
Friday May 7th	Jonathan Shanklin	Astronomy from Antarctica
Friday June 11th	John Davies	Missions to near Earth Asteroids

April	Event	
Monday	12th Moon - new	●
Saturday	17th Moon near Mars	
Monday	19th Mercury superior conjunction	
Tuesday	20th Moon - first quarter	☾
Thursday	22nd Lyrids maximum	
Sunday	25th Mercury near Venus	
Monday	26th Mars near M35	
Tuesday	27th Moon - full	☉
Friday	30th Uranus conjunction	
May		
Monday	3rd Moon - last quarter	☾
Tuesday	4th Moon near Saturn	
Wednesday	5th Moon near Jupiter	
Thursday	6th Eta Aquarids maximum, Io shadow on Europa	
Tuesday	11th Moon - new	●
Thursday	13th Moon near Mercury	

Coventry and Warwickshire Astronomical Society

The society usually meets on the second Friday in the month, at Earlsdon Methodist Church Hall. The meetings begin at 19:15 and end at 21:30. **(Suspended until further notice)**

Web Site: <http://www.covastro.org.uk>

Mailing list - Note the change to groups.io

Join the CAWAS mailing list and receive irregular information of astronomical events and CAWAS news.

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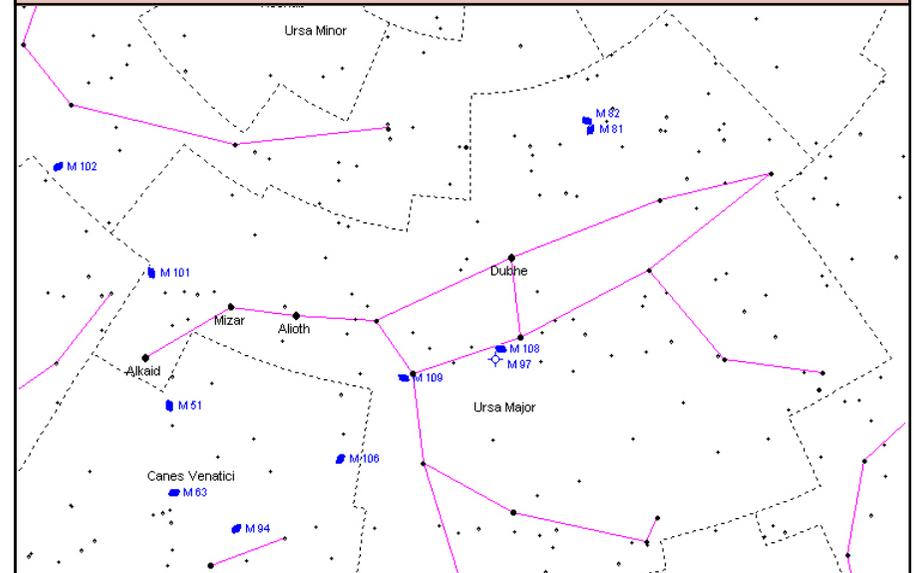
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Coventry and Warwickshire Astronomical Society

Sky Notes

April 9th to May 14th 2021 No. 283



The Plough

Ursa Major passes overhead at this time of year so this is an ideal time to observe the bright galaxies both contained within it and nearby. M81 and M82 form a fine contrasting pair with M81 (mag. 6.94) a spiral and M82 (+8.41) a star burst galaxy. On the constellation's eastern boarder, M101 (+7.86) is another spiral galaxy seen face-on and to its east, in the constellation of Draco, is an object that my Messier wall chart says does not exist! That object is M102. Discovered by Pierre Méchain (who worked with Charles Messier) in 1781, he later retracted it as a rediscovery of M101. However, his description of its location as between α Boötes and ι Draconis does not make sense as the two stars are 40° apart. It is thought more likely that the star in Boötes was in fact the much closer θ and the object that Méchain discovered was the Spindle Galaxy NGC 5866 (+10.74) seen edge-on. Another of his discoveries was the Owl Nebula M97 (+9.9), a planetary nebula with two dark patches looking like eyes and the nearby M108 (+10.7), a barred spiral galaxy.

Time given in these skynotes is Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) known as GMT here in the UK. Add one hour to get clock time in BST.

Sun moves north from Pisces, through Aries into Taurus this month.

April 9th	Rise 05:21	Set 18:54	Dec +7° 39'
May 14th	Rise 04:11	Set 19:53	Dec +18° 41'

Mercury (−1.0 5.1" 94% to +0.2 7.6" 42.9%) moves from Cetus, through Pisces and Aries into Taurus. On April 19 it passes through superior conjunction into the evening sky and gradually draws away from the Sun to become visible low in the WNW just after sunset, by the end of the month it sets two hours after the Sun. On April 25 it passes 1° to the north of Venus and on May 13 the two-day-old Moon lies 3° to the south.

Venus (−3.9 9.7" 99.8% to −3.9 10.0" 97.5%) moves from Pisces through Aries into Taurus and after passing through conjunction last month starts to become visible towards the end of the month low down in the WNW just after sunset. At the end of the month it sets one hour after the Sun.

Mars (+1.4 5.1" to +1.6 4.4") moves from Taurus into Gemini and is visible in the west for the first half of the night, setting around midnight. On April 17 the crescent Moon lies 3° to the east and later on April 26 Mars passes just half a degree north of the open cluster M35.

Jupiter (−2.1 35.3" to −2.4 38.9") moves from Capricornus into Aquarius and is visible low down in the SE in the early hours of the morning rising at 04:00 at the beginning of the month and 01:50 at the end. On May 5 the Moon lies 6° to the east. The Sun passes through the plane of Jupiter's satellites on May 2 causing mutual eclipses. One of these events is visible on May 6 from 03:26:34 to 03:32:05 when the shadow of Io falls on Europa, although Jupiter will only be 10° above the horizon at the time.

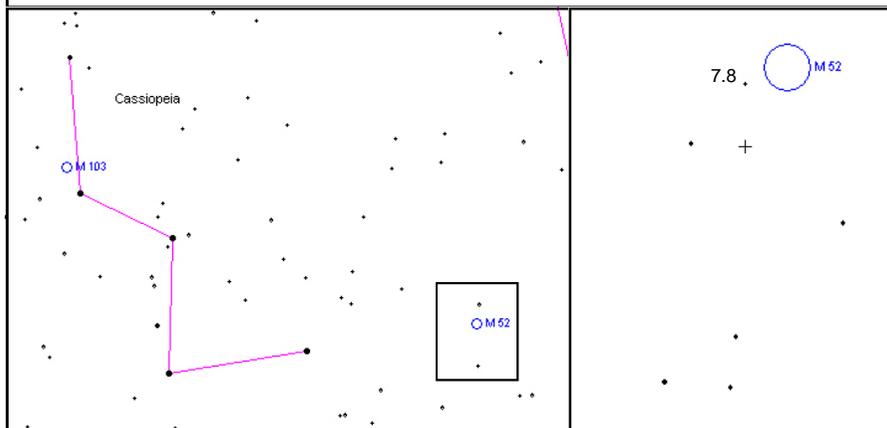
Saturn (+0.7 16.0" to +0.7 17.0") lies in Capricornus 15° to the west of Jupiter and rises 30 mins before it, making Saturn visible in the early hours of the morning low in the SE. On May 4 the Moon lies 7° to the east.

Uranus (+5.9 3.4") lies in Aries and as it passes through conjunction on April 30 is not visible this month, which is a pity as on April 24 it lies midway between Venus and Mercury, a degree away from each.

Neptune (+8.0 2.2" to +7.9 2.2") lies in Aquarius (5° to the east of ϕ Aquarii) and gradually draws away from the Sun throughout the month, such that it might become visible at the end of the month low in the east just before dawn.

Meteors Lyrids are active from April 19 to 25. The meteors come from the debris of comet C/1861 G1 (Thatcher) and the ZHR is typically low at around 10 to 15, although occasional outbursts do occur. This year their peak is predicted to be in the early hours of April 22. However, a gibbous Moon that sets at 03:50 will interfere with observations.

Eta Aquarids are active from April 24 to May 20 and come from the debris of comet 1P/Halley, these high speed (67 km/s) meteors are predicted to peak on the morning of May 6 and have a ZHR of 20 to 60. As the radiant is below the horizon until the early hours of the morning, the hours just before dawn give the best rates, but with a crescent Moon not far from the radiant conditions are not ideal.



Nova V1405 Cas was discovered by Yuji Nakamura on March 18 when it was mag. +9.6, it then brightened to mag. +7.6, before fading slightly. Currently at around mag. +8.0 it is at RA 23h 24m 48s Dec +61° 11' 15" N near the open cluster M52 in Cassiopeia. Its position is shown as the + in the chart above, with a convenient comparison star of mag. +7.8 nearby.

Comet C/2020 R4 (ATLAS) approaches to within 0.46 AU in April when it is predicted to reach mag. +8.7. Its track is shown in the chart below.

