



JERSEY ASTRONOMY CLUB

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NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2016

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Next Meeting – Bring Your Telescope

January 11 2016, 8 pm

We will be looking at telescopes, and assisting anyone who brings a telescope with help with its use.

There will also be a brief look at the history of telescopes, and the night sky in January.

As usual, if clear skies, we will open the dome.

Dates for your Diary

Saturday February 6 at 7.30 – outside our normal club night, Jonathan Renouf will be giving an illustrated presentation “Behind the Scenes at The Sky at Night”

Jonathan is an award winning Executive Producer for BBC’s Sky at Night and has also been Executive Producer on other Cosmology and Science programmes, so this should be a very interesting evening.

Monday, February 8 at 8.00 – Tony will give a brief presentation on astronomy in the news, and Neil will give a presentation on what to see in the Spring Night Sky.

Dome News

Neil will be having regular Monday night viewings if the night is clear.

Wi-Fi Available

We are now getting our a 4G Wi-Fi router so we can access online astronomy sites and remote telescope feeds when the sky is cloudy. It will also enable us to join in with BBC Stargazing events. It can also be used for devices that need a wifi connection for GPS Apps on the night sky stars, and will also enable us to give a live webstream from the International Space Station.

Cubs / Brownies /Schools

We have a visit being arranged for the St Ouen’s Cub Group in February to the club house.

Image of the Month



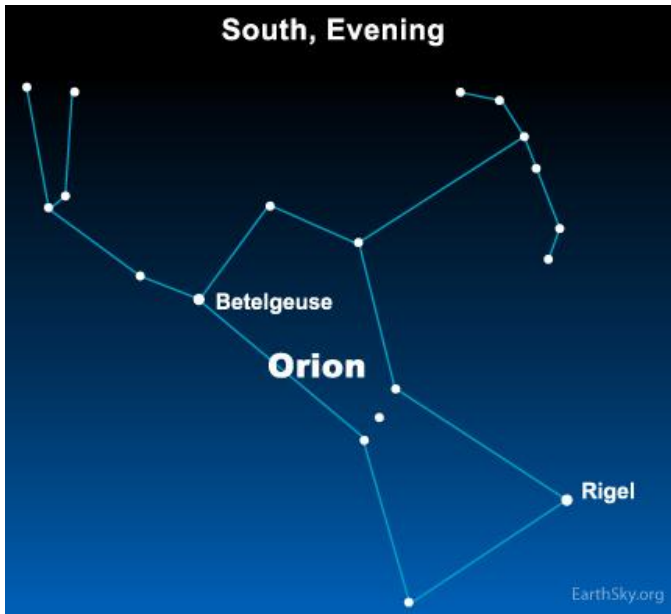
This Hubble image shows two galaxies in a dance to one of their deaths. As they co-rotate around each other and gravity brings them inexorably closer together they will eventually merge into one. The pair of peculiar galaxies are known together as Arp 87 and lie at a distance of ~300 million light years away in the direction of the constellation Leo.

A bridge of stars, gas and dust between them, stretching over 75,000 light years in length, is evidence of a previous close encounter. The prominent edge-on spiral in the lower left of the image is more distant and not part of the on-going merger.

Point to Ponder

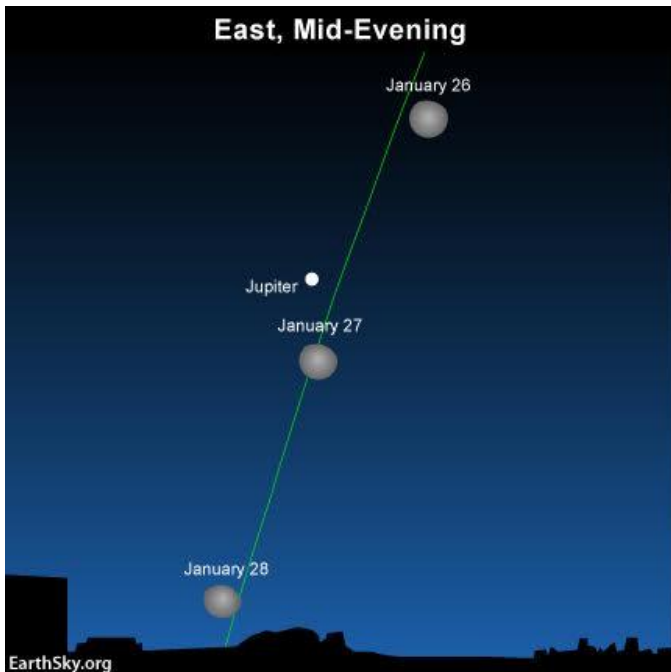
If Star Wars REALLY happened a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, we might be able to watch it through a telescope right now or at some point in the future.

Sky gazing in January



At this time of year one of the best constellations (star patterns) of all is in the sky – Orion. Look just to the left of your south point and you should spot three stars in a line, with four other stars forming a sort of box around them, as shown on the map above.

The three stars in a line are known as Orion's Belt. Orion is meant to represent a hunter, usually facing westwards towards Taurus, the Bull. Dangling from his belt is a sword, which is the line of fainter stars just below the belt where the map is marked M42.



Jupiter, second-brightest planet, high before sunrise

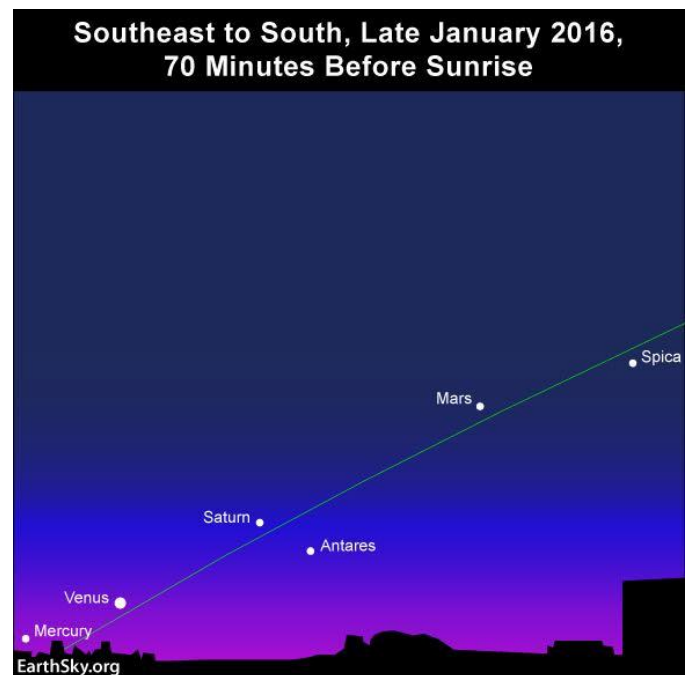
Jupiter is the first planet to appear in the sky, rising in the east before midnight local time at the beginning of the month. By the month's end, Jupiter will actually rise around mid-evening (roughly 9 p.m. local time) from both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.



Comet Catalina

Comet Catalina (C/2013 US10) is now brightening and climbing in the morning sky about one degree a day. Good time to try and catch a glimpse of the comet will be between January 8 and January 10, as there will be no moon in the early morning sky and it will be passing very close to the Earth.

Its closest approach will be on January 17, when it will pass 110 million km (68 million miles) from the Earth. It will appear to be a fuzzy, slightly green blob in the sky. Its tails may or may not be visible to the naked eye.



Mercury will become visible in the morning sky, starting around January 20. The line-up of planets should help you to locate Mercury.

The four morning planets from east to west: Mercury, Venus, Saturn and Mars. The fifth morning planet, Jupiter, lies outside the sky chart, in the southwest sky.

Mercury can be seen with relative ease by around January 25. Mercury will be at its best in the morning sky for several weeks, centered around February 7, 2016.