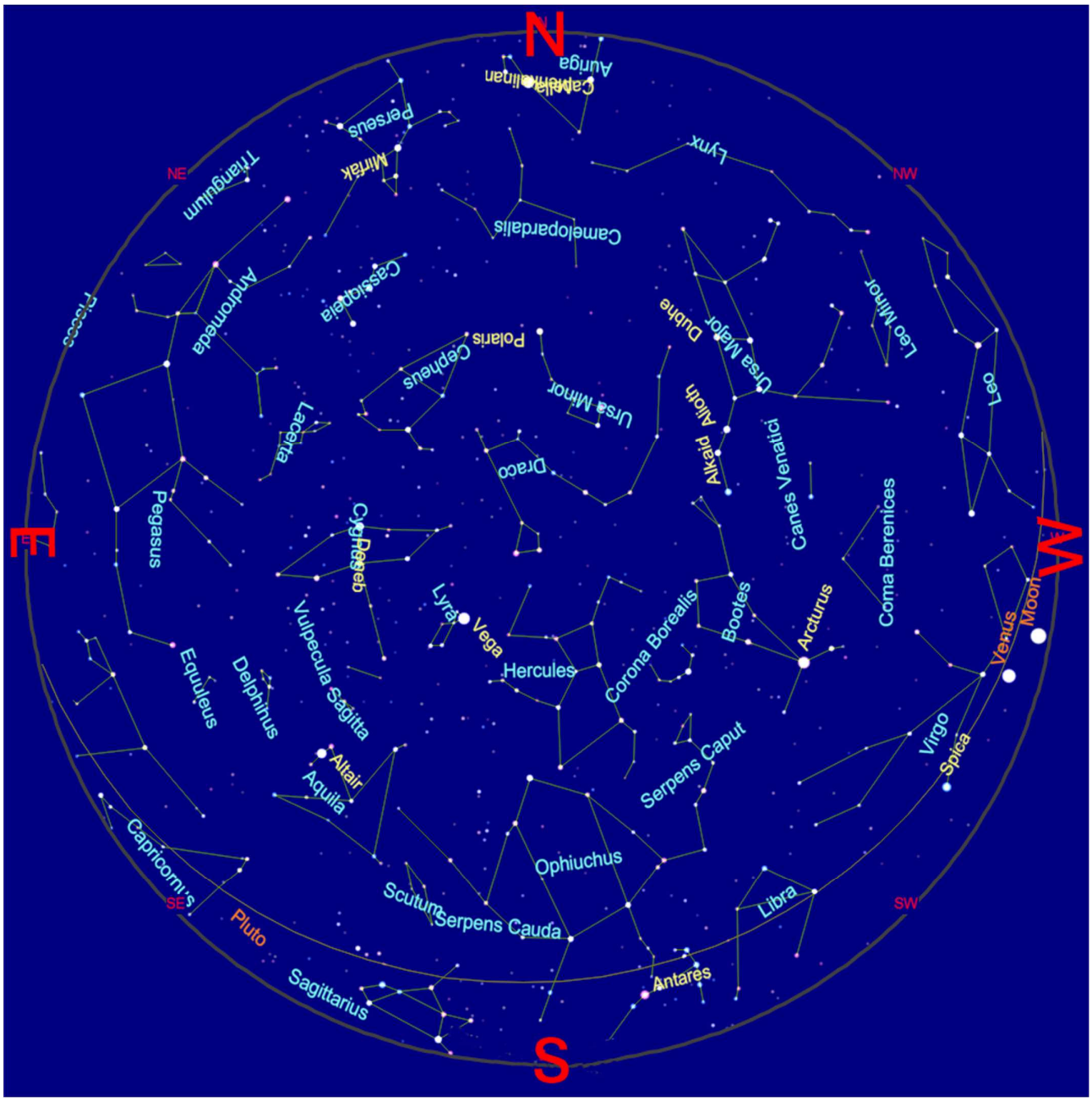
# The Night Sky in August 2026

## Monthly Guide

compiled by Doug Bickley




*The chart is based on location 52.6° N, 2.2° W (Perton, Wolverhampton) @ 21:00 on 15/08/2026.*
*The orange line is the ecliptic.*
*We are looking SOUTH (as shown at the bottom of the chart) at the constellations Capricornus, Scutum, Serpens and Libra, with the constellations Pegasus, Cygnus, Lyra, Hercules, Corona Borealis, Bootes and Coma Berenices overhead.*

***TO USE THE CHART - hold it so that the direction you are facing is at the bottom** – the lower part of the chart shows the sky ahead of you and the centre of the chart shows the sky directly over your head.*

# August is a busy month:
# a Solar Eclipse, a Lunar Eclipse and the Perseid Meteor Shower

## Events summary to look out for this month:

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 | Mercury at greatest western elongation |
| 3 | Saturn rising with Moon |
| 7 | Moon above M45 Pleiades (morning) |
| 9 | Moon near Mars (morning) |
| 11 | Mercury between Moon and Jupiter (morning twilight) |
| 12 | Partial Solar Eclipse (see later in guide) |
| 12 | New Moon |
| 13 | Perseid meteor shower |
| 14 | Venus at greatest eastern elongation |
| 15 | Conjunction of Jupiter and Mercury (morning twilight) |
| 16 | Crescent Moon rises near Venus |
| 20 | Perton Library Astronomy Group meeting 7pm |
| 28 | Partial Lunar Eclipse (see later in guide) |
| 28 | Full Moon |

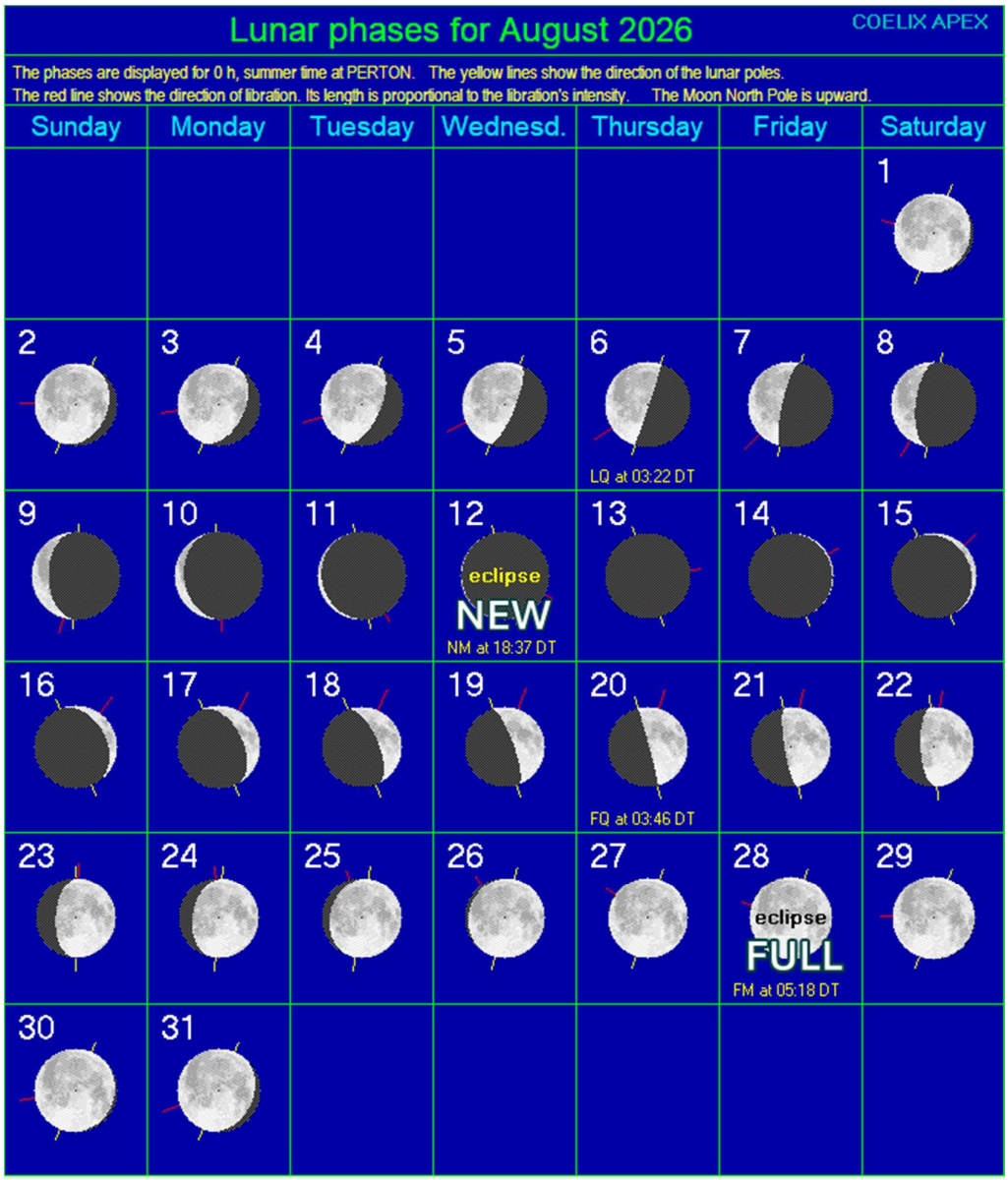
## Detailed phenomena of the month : August 2026

Times are given in daylight time for PERTON (2° 11' 53" W, 52° 35' 26" N, zone Z).

| Date | Hour | Description of the phenomenon |
|---|---|---|
| yyyy mm dd | hh:mm | |
| 2026 08 02 | 04:02 | Comet 10P Tempel at its perihelion (dist. to the Sun = 1.418 AU; magn. = 6.9) |
| 2026 08 02 | 12:00 | GREATEST WESTERN ELONGATION of Mercury (19.4°) |
| 2026 08 03 | 23:01 | Close encounter between the Moon and Saturn (topocentric dist. center to center = 5.3°) |
| 2026 08 06 | 03:22 | LAST QUARTER OF THE MOON |
| 2026 08 09 | 04:56 | Close encounter between the Moon and Mars (topocentric dist. center to center = 3.8°) |
| 2026 08 10 | 12:18 | Moon at perigee (geocentric dist. = 363284 km) |
| 2026 08 11 | 12:59 | Opposition of the asteroid 306 Unitas with the Sun (dist. to the Sun = 2.002 AU; magn. = 10.3) |
| 2026 08 12 | 18:37 | NEW MOON (total eclipse of the Sun visible in PERTON) |
| 2026 08 12 | 18:45 | Opposition of the asteroid 349 Dembowska with the Sun (dist. to the Sun = 2.770 AU; magn. = 9.8) |
| 2026 08 13 | 02:59 | Meteor shower : Perseids (100 meteors/hour at zenith; duration = 38.0 days) |
| 2026 08 14 | 03:49 | Close encounter between Mercury and M 44 (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.7°) |
| 2026 08 14 | 10:00 | Mercury at its perihelion (distance to the Sun = 0.30750 AU) |
| 2026 08 14 | 23:59 | Close encounter between Mars and M 35 (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.6°) |
| 2026 08 15 | 00:00 | GREATEST EASTERN ELONGATION of Venus (45.9°) |
| 2026 08 15 | 11:46 | Close encounter between Mercury and Jupiter (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.6°) |
| 2026 08 15 | 12:59 | Opposition of the asteroid 354 Eleonora with the Sun (dist. to the Sun = 3.112 AU; magn. = 10.3) |
| 2026 08 16 | 06:54 | Close encounter between the Moon and Venus (topocentric dist. center to center = 2.3°) |
| 2026 08 17 | 01:00 | Meteor shower : Kappa Cygnids (3 meteors/hour at zenith; duration = 22.0 days) |
| 2026 08 20 | 03:46 | FIRST QUARTER OF THE MOON |
| 2026 08 22 | 09:20 | Moon at apogee (geocentric dist. = 404642 km) |
| 2026 08 27 | 18:03 | SUPERIOR CONJUNCTION of Mercury with the Sun (geoc. dist. center to center = 1.7°) |
| 2026 08 28 | 05:18 | FULL MOON (partial eclipse of the Moon partly visible in PERTON) |
| 2026 08 28 | 15:18 | Opposition of the asteroid 9 Metis with the Sun (dist. to the Sun = 2.401 AU; magn. = 9.3) |
| 2026 08 31 | 02:12 | Close encounter between the Moon and Saturn (topocentric dist. center to center = 5.7°) |

# THE MOON

**Lunar Phases this month**




The Full Moon in August is generally called the Sturgeon Moon.



No, it isn't full of fish, but here are some sturgeon facts: Sturgeon is a native freshwater fish of the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain and was an important food staple for Native Americans who lived in the region. At one time, the lake sturgeon was quite abundant in late summer, though they are rarer today. These prehistoric-looking fish have been traced back to around 136 million years ago. Size? – About 8ft long weighing over 100kg. Males have a life span of 55 years, while females can live up to 150 years!

Because of the start of the harvesting season in the Northern Hemisphere, an English name for the August Full Moon is Corn Moon (or Green Corn Moon). The Anglo-Saxons also called it the Grain Moon. The Celts called it Lynx Moon and Dispute Moon, and another English name is Lightning Moon, after Northern Europe's more frequent thunder and lightning storms in late summer.

## PARTIAL LUNAR ECLIPSE

From Wolverhampton this partial eclipse will occur on 28 August, starting at 3:33 BST with the maximum being at 5:12 BST when about 93% of the Moon will be in the Earth's shadow. The Moon sets at 6:15 BST and the end of the eclipse isn't visible. You'll get the best view from a high point with a clear view to the southwest.

In a total lunar eclipse the Sun, the Earth and the Moon all lie in a straight line. This means that the Moon passes through the darkest part of the Earth's shadow - the umbra – but the eclipse this month will be partial where the Moon passes through the Earth's penumbra (the outer region of the Earth's shadow), and only a section of it passes through the umbra (the darkest part of the Earth's shadow).

Eclipses of the Moon aren't rare, they happen a few times a year, but not every month because the moon's orbit is inclined by 5˚ relative to the Earth's orbit so as it travels around the Earth it also moves up and down in its orbit.



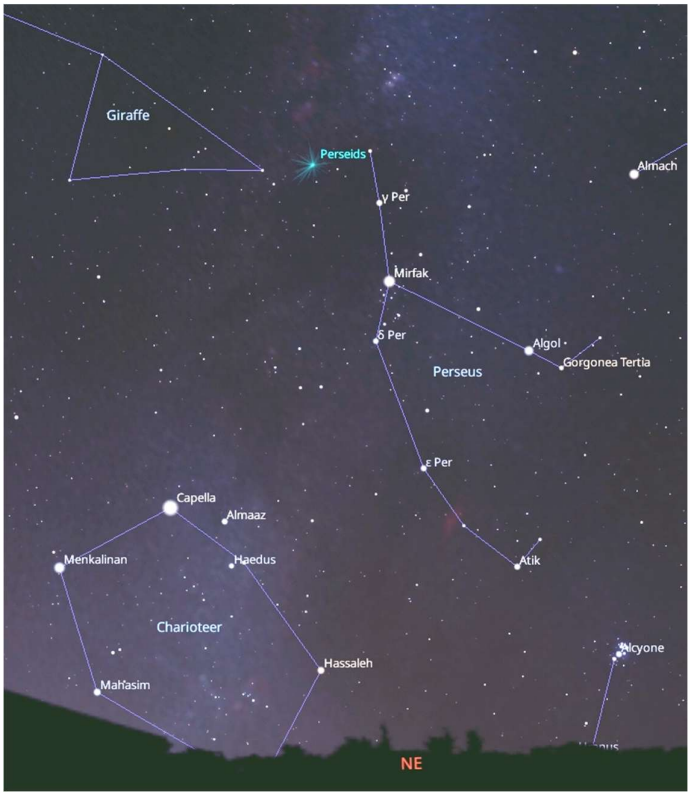
During a lunar eclipse, the Moon usually turns a reddish colour because it is illuminated by light that has passed through the Earth's atmosphere and has been bent back towards the Moon by refraction. *[picture by the author of a partial lunar eclipse in October 2023]*

## METEOR SHOWERS

**Perseid meteor shower**

The Perseids are one of the brighter meteor showers of the year, occurring each year between July 17 and August 24 with the peak this year being 13 August. So it's a long shower but very much peaking around that day.

They are named after the constellation Perseus where the direction, or radiant, from which the shower seems to come in the sky lies. As the Earth moves through the debris left behind by Comet 109P/Swift-Tuttle, and friction with molecules in our atmosphere heats these particles. The shower is usually quite reliable, it may be possible to see 60 to 100 meteors in an hour from a dark place.

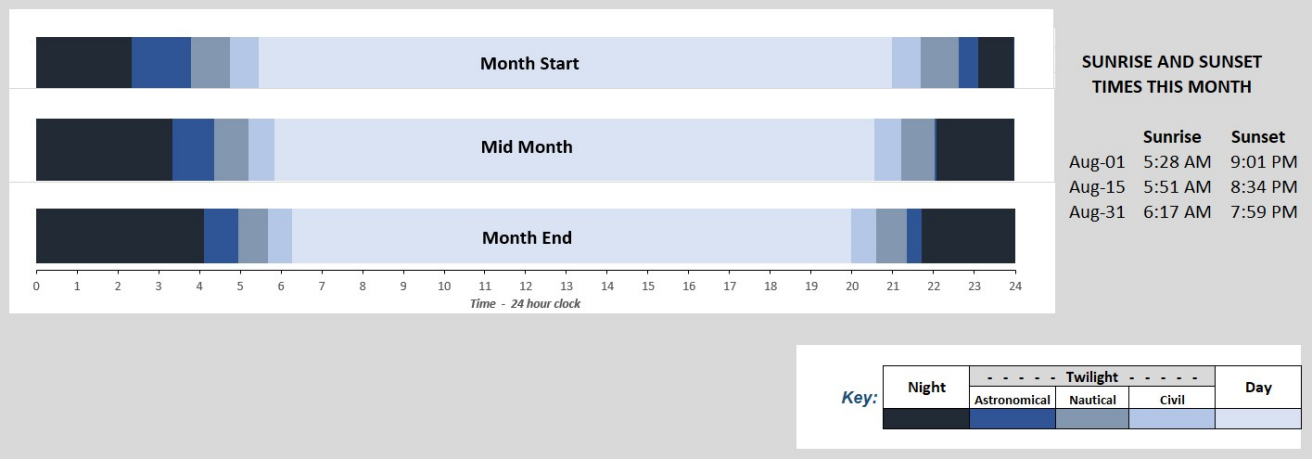



**Tips for meteor watchers to maximize your enjoyment and success rate:**

- Find a place where artificial lights do not spoil your viewing.
- You won't need any special equipment, you should be ok with just your naked eyes.
- A comfy chair is useful, viewing meteors is a waiting game.
- Meteor showers have radiant points, but meteors can appear in all parts of the sky. The best views come when you look at least 45° from the radiant and at least 30° above the horizon.
- Use a camera on a tripod if you wish to take images, take a series of long exposures and look carefully at the results the next day – you may be surprised to see some faint meteor trails.

## THE SUN

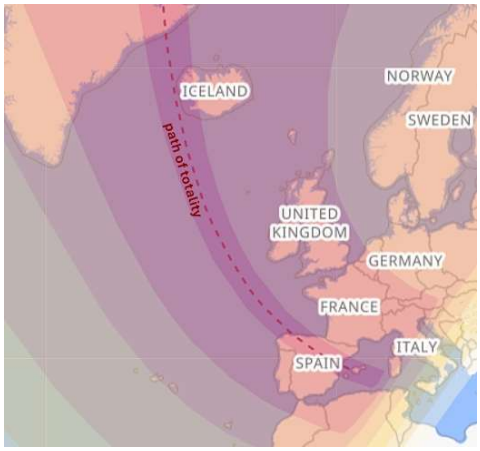
*Graphical format showing sun rising, setting and twilight linked to an online data source (time-ok.com) to show twilight zones more clearly. Location is set at Wolverhampton UK.*

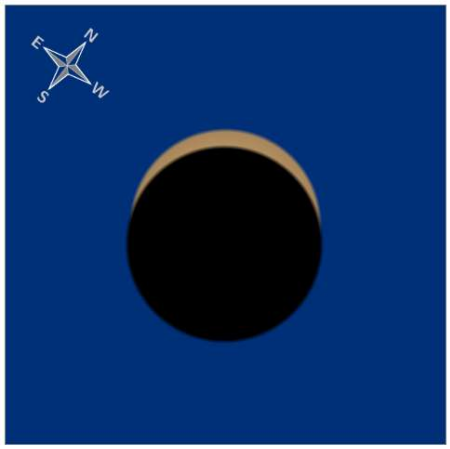



## PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

The best solar eclipse visible from the UK and Ireland so far this century will occur on Wednesday 12 August. A particularly large portion (90%) of the Sun's disc will be obscured, as close to a total eclipse as we've seen in almost 27 years from the British Isles, so this will be a spectacular sight. The Sun will be beginning to set so make sure you have free sight to the WNW.

*[From Iceland, Spain, Greenland and the Arctic the eclipse will be total but due to the relatively small size of the shadow we will only see a partial eclipse in Europe]*




**Time:** 19:12 BST **Altitude:** 11° **Azimuth:** 279°

**Timings (in BST from Wolverhampton)**

**18:15:07**
Partial eclipse begins - the moment the edge of the Moon touches the edge of the Sun is called first contact

**19:11:44**
Maximum eclipse - the deepest point of the eclipse, with the Sun at its most hidden

**20:05:20**
Partial eclipse ends - the edge of the Moon leaves the edge of the Sun

**KEEP YOURSELF SAFE !**

**Never look directly at the Sun.** You can seriously hurt your eyes, and even go blind. Proper eye protection, like eclipse glasses or a special solar filter, is the only safe option. Sunglasses, welding glass etc don't work.

# PLANETS THIS MONTH

Here's my usual summary table showing times for planetary rising and setting, with observation opportunities based on mid-month data. As always "good visibility" doesn't necessarily mean that views will be easy.

As we move through the year planets will become easier to see, but at the moment if you observe in the early hours you may have more success.

| | Planetrise/Planetset, Sat, 15 Aug 2026 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Planet | Rise | Set | Meridian | Comment |
| Mercury | Sat 04:30 | Sat 20:13 | Sat 12:23 | Slightly difficult to see |
| Venus | Sat 10:22 | Sat 21:39 | Sat 16:02 | Great visibility |
| Mars | Sat 01:20 | Sat 18:09 | Sat 09:44 | Average visibility |
| Jupiter | Sat 04:38 | Sat 20:08 | Sat 12:23 | Slightly difficult to see |
| Saturn | Sat 22:07 | Sun 10:47 | Sun 04:27 | Perfect visibility |
| Uranus | Fri 23:43 | Sat 15:51 | Sat 07:47 | Difficult to see |
| Neptune | Sat 21:43 | Sun 09:51 | Sun 03:47 | Difficult to see |

*Data from timeanddate.com*

**Mercury** is still in Gemini very low in the ENE at an altitude of 4° and shining at mag -0.4. Greatest eastern elongation occurs on 2 August and it then heads back towards the Sun reaching superior conjunction on 27 August. On 15 August it will be close to mag -1.6 Jupiter.

**Venus** is in the W in Virgo, shining brightly at mag -4.1 at a reduced maximum altitude of only 7° but unmissable at sunset. Greatest eastern elongation is on 15 August. On 16 August a 19%-lit waxing Moon will be close by.

**Jupiter** is in Cancer in the E at a maximum altitude of 12° but best seen at the end of the month. On 15 August it will be very close to Mercury. By the end of the month it will be rising a couple of hours before sunrise.

**Mars** is in the E in Gemini at an improved maximum altitude of 27°, shining at mag +1.3 and still a morning planet slowly moving away from the sun so that observations should improve over the next few months. On 9 August a 17%-lit waning crescent Moon will be very close by in the early twilight.

**Saturn** is in the S in Pisces shining at mag +0.5 at an improved maximum altitude of 40°, still a morning planet and difficult to spot, but this will improve over the month. On 4 August a 70%-lit waning gibbous Moon will be close by, and on 31 August a 90%-lit waning gibbous Moon will be close by.

**Uranus** is still in the E in Taurus at a much better maximum altitude of 40° by month end and will be shining at mag +5.7 and between the Pleiades and Hyades.

**Neptune** is in the S in Pisces at a maximum altitude of 37° shining at mag +7.8 in the morning sky, and observation opportunities continue to improve.

# International Space Station (ISS)

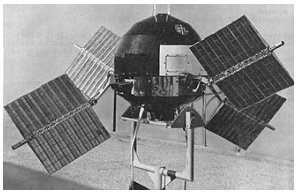
**Forecast times for visible passes this month**
*You can use these apps to check for ISS passes:*

**Android:** *ISS Detector Satellite Tracker* **IOS:** *ISS Spotter*

| Date | Mag | Transit time | Start Time | Start Alt.degs. | Start Az. | High point | End Time | End Alt.degs. | End Az. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21-Aug | -1.7 | 04:43 | 04:42 | 10° | S | 18° | 04:47 | 10° | E |
| 22-Aug | -1.4 | 02:11 | 03:56 | 12° | SSE | 13° | 03:59 | 10° | ESE |
| 23-Aug | -2.7 | 05:05 | 04:43 | 17° | SSW | 33° | 04:48 | 10° | E |
| 24-Aug | -2.3 | 03:05 | 03:57 | 24° | SSE | 24° | 04:00 | 10° | E |
| 25-Aug | -1.3 | 00:59 | 03:11 | 14° | ESE | 14° | 03:12 | 10° | E |
| 25-Aug | -3.5 | 05:17 | 04:44 | 21° | SW | 54° | 04:49 | 10° | E |
| 26-Aug | -3.3 | 03:26 | 03:57 | 41° | S | 42° | 04:01 | 10° | E |
| 26-Aug | -3.7 | 06:43 | 05:31 | 10° | W | 77° | 05:38 | 10° | E |
| 27-Aug | -1.8 | 01:33 | 03:11 | 21° | ESE | 21° | 03:13 | 10° | E |
| 27-Aug | -3.8 | 05:27 | 04:44 | 21° | WSW | 72° | 04:50 | 10° | E |
| 28-Aug | -3.8 | 03:36 | 03:58 | 60° | SSW | 64° | 04:01 | 10° | E |
| 28-Aug | -3.7 | 06:41 | 05:31 | 10° | W | 72° | 05:38 | 10° | ESE |
| 29-Aug | -2.0 | 01:42 | 03:12 | 26° | E | 26° | 03:13 | 10° | E |
| 29-Aug | -3.8 | 05:32 | 04:45 | 20° | W | 77° | 04:50 | 10° | E |
| 30-Aug | -3.9 | 03:37 | 03:58 | 70° | SW | 77° | 04:02 | 10° | E |
| 30-Aug | -3.5 | 06:32 | 05:32 | 10° | W | 52° | 05:38 | 10° | ESE |
| 31-Aug | -1.9 | 01:37 | 03:12 | 26° | E | 26° | 03:14 | 10° | E |
| 31-Aug | -3.8 | 05:22 | 04:45 | 21° | W | 63° | 04:50 | 10° | ESE |

There are a lot of visible passes this month in the early hours from 3am to 6am. I haven't listed all these only the evening passes and up to 2am.
Check the Heavens-Above website to see the passes that I haven't show and for the latest forecasts.
*[source: https://www.heavens-above.com/]*

# FUN FACT FOR AUGUST



Explorer 6 was a NASA satellite launched in August 1959, designed to study trapped radiation of various energies. It also tested a scanning device designed for photographing the Earth's cloud cover.



On 14 August 1959 it took the first photo of Earth from a satellite in orbit.
This is the first crude picture showing a sunlit area of the Central Pacific ocean and its cloud cover. The picture was made when the satellite was about 17,000 miles above the surface of the earth on 14 August 1959. At the time, the satellite was crossing Mexico and the signals were received at the South Point Hawaii tracking station.

How technology has changed!

## PERTON LIBRARY ASTRONOMY GROUP




The group meets on the third Thursday of every month of the year at Perton Library from 7pm to 9pm. No subscription, no need to book, all free, just drop in at any time during the evening.
*(Location WV6 7QU or on what3words ///saints.empty.stands)*
The group is a relaxed and friendly gathering with the occasional talk.

We are particularly suited to beginners who very often bring their telescopes along for advice on how to set up, and we have experienced members who can help with this. If the skies are clear we do try to do some observing with library and member equipment.

## WOLVERHAMPTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY LECTURE PROGRAMME

The Wolvas annual subscription is currently a bargain at £10 per annum and you can sign up now our website www.wolvas.org.uk and pay your subscription, preferably by bank transfer.

We put together a yearly 16 lecture programme and some of this year's programme is shown below.

The host location for our live talks remains the University of Wolverhampton in the city centre. Access and facilities are excellent - details are available on the Wolvas website. Lectures in person or online will only be available to paid-up members of the Society. Members will receive regular emails with invitations to the Zoom sessions and reminders of the in-person lectures.
Non-members may attend the talks live for £2 on the door.

We have completed this season of lectures and now have a summer break, but we have some excellent talks lined up for next year.

Next year's season 2026/27 begins with a short talk after our AGM on 5 October then our Presidents Lecture on 19 October.

**Save the date:**
On **Saturday 26 September** we invite you to join us from 10am to 5pm at the Wolverhampton Science Park Glaisher Drive, Wolverhampton WV10 9RU, where we will host a public event celebrating our 75th Anniversary.

A day of events, talks and exhibits to celebrate the Society and also providing information on astronomy and associated equipment. Further details to follow - add the date to your diary and check our website for updates.

As well as our website we will be posting details of events on social media, so keep an eye on our Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/wolvasuk) and X *[Twitter]* (https://twitter.com/wolvasuk) pages for the latest news.