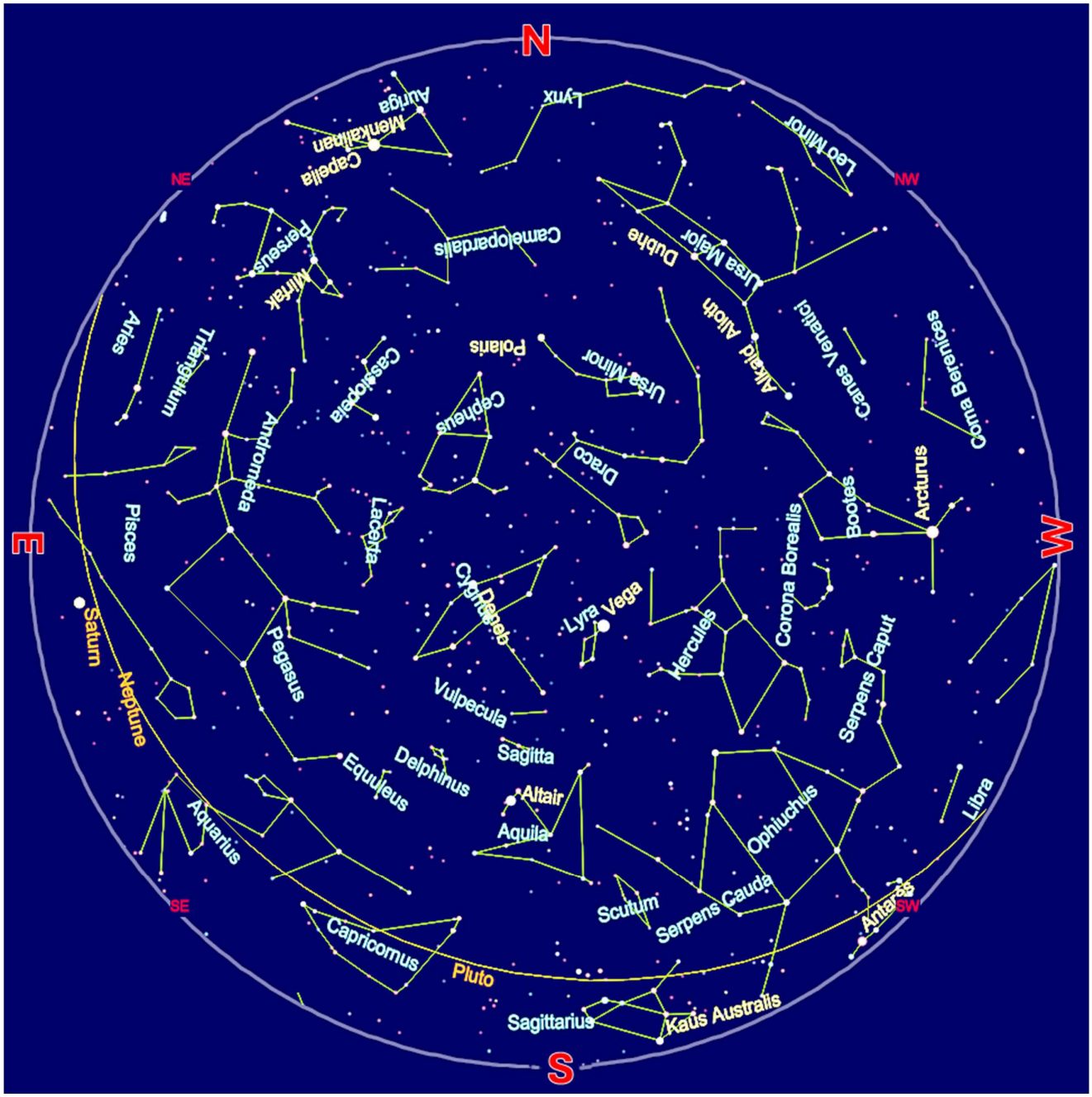
# The Night Sky in September 2026

## Monthly Guide

compiled by Doug Bickley




*The chart is based on location 52.6° N, 2.2° W (Perton, Wolverhampton) @ 21:00 on 15/09/2026.*
*The orange line is the ecliptic.*
*We are looking SOUTH (as shown at the bottom of the chart) at the constellations Aquarius, Aquila, Ophiucus and Libra, with the constellations Pisces, Pegasus, Cygnus, Lyra, Hercules and Corona Borealis 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.*

## Events summary to look out for this month:

5 M35 open cluster close to Moon (morning)
8 Moon passes across M44 Beehive Cluster
11 New Moon
14 Venus emerging from crescent Moon (morning)
17 Perton Library Astronomy Group meeting 7pm
22 Venus at greatest brightness
23 Autumn Equinox 1:05am
26 Mars forms a line with Castor and Pollux (morning)
26 Full Moon
26 75th Anniversary Event Wolverhampton Astronomical Society (W'ton Science Park)
27 Moon close to Saturn
30 Moon rises close to M45 Pleiades

## The phenomena of the month : September 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 09 01 | 01:00 | Meteor shower : Alpha Aurigids (6 meteors/hour at zenith; duration = 8.0 days) |
| 2026 09 02 | 05:46 | Close encounter between Venus and Spica (topocentric dist. center to center = 1.5°) |
| 2026 09 04 | 08:51 | LAST QUARTER OF THE MOON |
| 2026 09 04 | 13:00 | Venus at its aphelion (distance to the Sun = 0.72823 AU) |
| 2026 09 06 | 21:26 | Moon at perigee (geocentric dist. = 368259 km) |
| 2026 09 07 | 05:58 | Close encounter between the Moon and Pollux (topocentric dist. center to center = 4.0°) |
| 2026 09 08 | 02:46 | End of occultation of 33-eta Cnc (magn. = 5.33) |
| 2026 09 08 | 05:15 | Close encounter between the Moon and M 44 (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.0°) |
| 2026 09 09 | 19:00 | Meteor shower : Sept. Perseids (8 meteors/hour at zenith; duration = 16.0 days) |
| 2026 09 11 | 04:27 | NEW MOON |
| 2026 09 12 | 20:57 | Opposition of the asteroid 198 Ampella with the Sun (dist. to the Sun = 1.903 AU; magn. = 10.4) |
| 2026 09 13 | 17:57 | Opposition of the asteroid 236 Honoria with the Sun (dist. to the Sun = 2.274 AU; magn. = 10.0) |
| 2026 09 14 | 11:03 | Close encounter between the Moon and Venus (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.0°) |
| 2026 09 14 | 11:36 | End of occultation of Vénus (magn. = -4.57) |
| 2026 09 17 | 11:59 | Close encounter between Mars and Pollux (topocentric dist. center to center = 5.9°) |
| 2026 09 18 | 21:43 | FIRST QUARTER OF THE MOON |
| 2026 09 19 | 04:00 | Moon at apogee (geocentric dist. = 404221 km) |
| 2026 09 21 | 12:00 | VENUS at maximum brightness (magn. -4.60) |
| 2026 09 22 | 01:12 | Close encounter between the Moon and Pluto (topocentric dist. center to center = 1.4°) |
| 2026 09 23 | 01:05 | AUTUMN EQUINOX |
| 2026 09 26 | 02:36 | OPPOSITION of Neptune with the Sun |
| 2026 09 26 | 09:06 | Close encounter between Mercury and Spica (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.9°) |
| 2026 09 26 | 17:49 | FULL MOON |
| 2026 09 27 | 10:00 | Mercury at its aphelion (distance to the Sun = 0.46670 AU) |
| 2026 09 29 | 22:40 | Beginning of occultation of 48-epsilon Ari (magn. = 5.16) |
| 2026 09 29 | 23:30 | End of occultation of 48-epsilon Ari (magn. = 5.16) |
| 2026 09 30 | 23:41 | Opposition of the asteroid 192 Nausikaa with the Sun (dist. to the Sun = 1.816 AU; magn. = 8.4) |




Free public event, with trade stands, talks, lunar sketching workshop, “Ask and Astronomer” drop in and much more. Different types of telescopes on display, come and talk to our team about all things astronomical. 10am to 5pm at the Wolverhampton Science Park – free parking and on nearby buses.

## THE MOON

### Lunar Phases this month

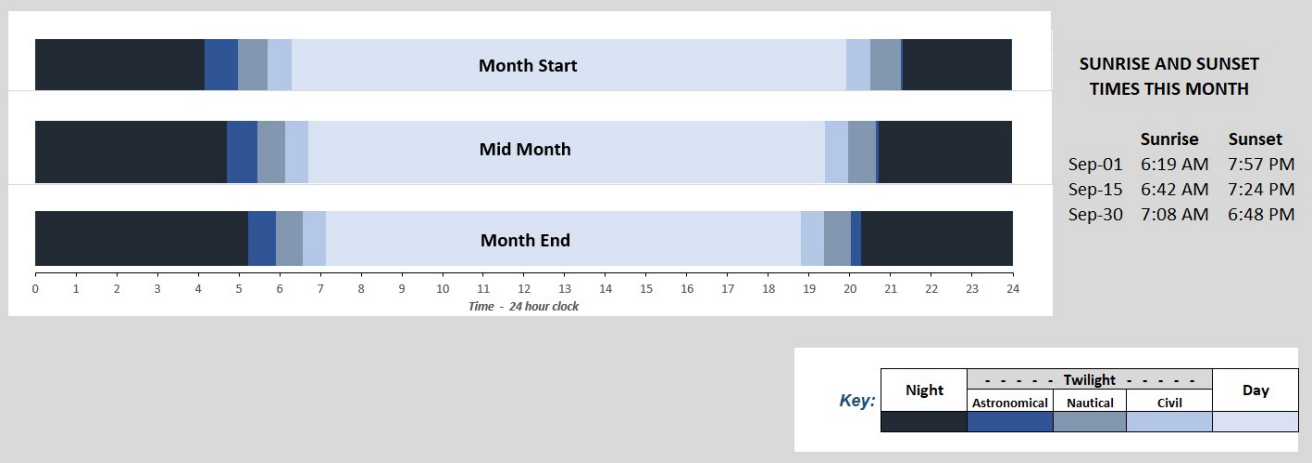



The Full Moon in September is generally called the Harvest Moon.
Technically, the Harvest Moon is the Full Moon closest to the September equinox around September 23 and is the only Full Moon name determined by the equinox rather than a month. Most years, it’s in September, but around every three years, it falls in October.

Historically the light of the Harvest Moon was said to enable farmers to work late into the night, helping them to bring in the crops from the fields, because it rises early and stays bright for several nights in a row. It can also appear larger and lower in the sky. This full moon is also called the full corn moon or the barley moon.

## THE SUN

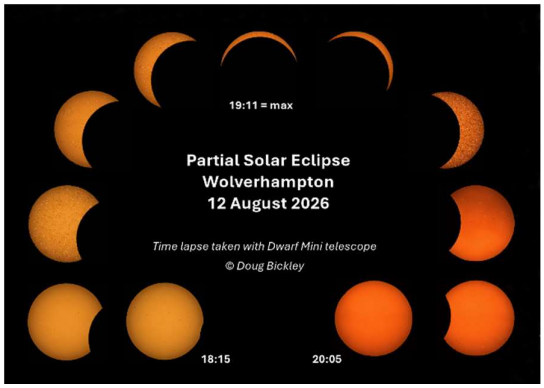
*Graphical format showing sun rising, setting and twilight linked to an online data source (time-ok.com) to show twilight zones more clearly. Location is set at Wolverhampton UK.*




The Autumnal Equinox occurs on 23 September when the Sun moves south of the equator in Virgo and marks the end of summer and beginning of autumn. The Earth rotates tilted on its axis by 23½ degrees but at equinox the Sun illuminates the northern and southern hemispheres equally (well not exactly because the light is refracted by the atmosphere.

## PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

As mentioned last month the partial solar eclipse visible from the UK and Ireland was on the evening of Wednesday 12 August. Wolverhampton Astronomical Society met at Bantock Park, Wolverhampton and we were lucky to have no cloud cover.




## METEOR SHOWERS

**No major meteor showers this month**

The Perseid meteor shower in August was visibly good and Wolverhampton Astronomical Society had a members only meeting near Pattingham which was very successful.



*Perseids in Ursa Major*
*Imaged by the author*

# 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.

Again not a great month for observations.

| | Planetrise/Planetset, Tue, 15 Sep 2026 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Planet | Rise | Set | Meridian | Comment |
| Mercury | Wed 08:16 | Wed 19:45 | Wed 14:01 | Slightly difficult to see |
| Venus | Wed 10:59 | Wed 19:48 | Wed 15:24 | Average visibility |
| Mars | Wed 00:53 | Wed 17:20 | Wed 09:06 | Average visibility |
| Jupiter | Wed 03:11 | Wed 18:18 | Wed 10:44 | Fairly good visibility |
| Saturn | Wed 19:59 | Thu 08:30 | Thu 02:15 | Perfect visibility |
| Uranus | Wed 21:34 | Thu 13:43 | Thu 05:39 | Average visibility |
| Neptune | Wed 19:36 | Thu 07:41 | Thu 01:38 | Slightly difficult to see |

*Data from timeanddate.com*

**Mercury** is in the ESE in Virgo at a very low altitude close to the Sun so is unlikely to be seen this month.

**Venus** is still in the WSW in Virgo, shining brightly at mag -4.1 but at a very low altitude of 1.7°, and is an evening planet poorly placed for observation.

**Jupiter** is in Leo in the E at an improved maximum altitude of 21° shining at mag -1.9 and observing is improving. On the mornings of 8/9 September a thin waning crescent Moon is close to the W.

**Mars** is in the ESE in Cancer at an improved maximum altitude of 38°, shining at mag +1.2 and still a morning planet. On the mornings of 6/7 September a waning crescent Moon will be close by. On the morning of 26 September the planet forms a line with Castor and Pollux.

**Saturn** is in the S in Cetus after the first week of the month, shining at mag +0.5 at a maximum altitude of 39° and still a morning planet. On 27 September the full Moon will be close. Opposition will be on 4 October.

**Uranus** is still in the S in Taurus at an improved maximum altitude of 58° shining at mag +5.7 at its peak.

**Neptune** is in the S in Pisces at a maximum altitude of 37° shining at mag +7.8 and should be visible using binoculars or a small telescope. It reaches opposition on 26 September but this won't make much difference to observations due to its great distance of nearly 29 AU from us.

# 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 | | | High point | End | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Time | Alt.degs. | Az. | | Time | Alt.degs. | Az. |
| 08-Sep | -1.3 | 00:22 | 21:36 | 10° | SSW | 12° | 21:37 | 12° | SSW |
| 09-Sep | -2.1 | 02:23 | 20:49 | 10° | S | 17° | 20:51 | 17° | SE |
| 09-Sep | -0.9 | 00:08 | 22:24 | 10° | WSW | 11° | 22:24 | 11° | WSW |
| 10-Sep | -2.8 | 02:23 | 21:36 | 10° | SW | 34° | 21:39 | 34° | SSW |
| 11-Sep | -2.9 | 04:19 | 20:49 | 10° | SW | 30° | 20:53 | 22° | ESE |
| 11-Sep | -1.5 | 01:06 | 22:25 | 10° | WSW | 19° | 22:26 | 19° | WSW |
| 12-Sep | -3.7 | 03:06 | 21:37 | 10° | WSW | 60° | 21:40 | 60° | S |
| 13-Sep | -3.5 | 04:58 | 20:49 | 10° | WSW | 51° | 20:54 | 24° | E |
| 13-Sep | -1.6 | 01:19 | 22:25 | 10° | W | 22° | 22:27 | 22° | W |
| 14-Sep | -3.1 | 06:20 | 20:01 | 10° | SW | 39° | 20:07 | 10° | E |
| 14-Sep | -3.8 | 03:11 | 21:37 | 10° | W | 73° | 21:41 | 73° | SW |
| 15-Sep | -3.8 | 05:00 | 20:49 | 10° | WSW | 71° | 20:54 | 27° | E |
| 15-Sep | -1.4 | 01:12 | 22:26 | 10° | W | 20° | 22:27 | 20° | W |
| 16-Sep | -3.6 | 06:40 | 20:01 | 10° | WSW | 61° | 20:08 | 10° | E |
| 16-Sep | -3.5 | 02:59 | 21:38 | 10° | W | 63° | 21:41 | 63° | WSW |
| 17-Sep | -3.8 | 04:44 | 20:50 | 10° | W | 77° | 20:55 | 33° | E |
| 17-Sep | -1.1 | 00:52 | 22:27 | 10° | W | 16° | 22:27 | 16° | W |
| 18-Sep | -3.7 | 06:29 | 20:02 | 10° | W | 76° | 20:08 | 12° | E |
| 18-Sep | -3.0 | 02:40 | 21:38 | 10° | W | 45° | 21:41 | 45° | WSW |
| 19-Sep | -3.7 | 04:26 | 20:50 | 10° | W | 66° | 20:55 | 38° | ESE |
| 19-Sep | -0.7 | 00:23 | 22:27 | 10° | W | 12° | 22:28 | 12° | W |
| 20-Sep | -3.7 | 06:11 | 20:02 | 10° | W | 74° | 20:08 | 14° | ESE |
| 20-Sep | -2.2 | 02:18 | 21:39 | 10° | W | 29° | 21:41 | 29° | WSW |
| 21-Sep | -3.1 | 04:08 | 20:51 | 10° | W | 45° | 20:55 | 35° | SSE |
| 22-Sep | -3.4 | 05:59 | 20:03 | 10° | W | 56° | 20:09 | 15° | ESE |
| 22-Sep | -1.5 | 01:45 | 21:40 | 10° | W | 18° | 21:42 | 18° | SW |
| 23-Sep | -2.2 | 03:51 | 20:52 | 10° | W | 26° | 20:55 | 23° | S |
| 24-Sep | -2.5 | 05:53 | 20:03 | 10° | W | 35° | 20:09 | 12° | SE |
| 25-Sep | -1.2 | 03:17 | 20:53 | 10° | WSW | 14° | 20:56 | 11° | SSW |
| 26-Sep | -1.5 | 05:04 | 20:04 | 10° | W | 20° | 20:09 | 10° | SSE |

There are a lot of visible passes this month and the evening passes are shown above.

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/]*

## 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 £15 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.