

Wiltshire Astronomical Society

WAS News

June 2026



This Month We Welcome..... Two Members

We have 2 short presentations by members to follow our AGM.

Jon Gale will give a presentation about 20 binocular objects for summer. Jon is one of our long standing members now living in Wales. He usually joins our hall meetings via Zoom and his presentation this evening will also be via Zoom into the hall. Thank you Jon.



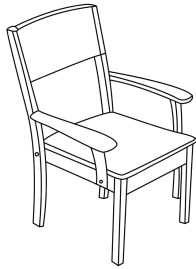
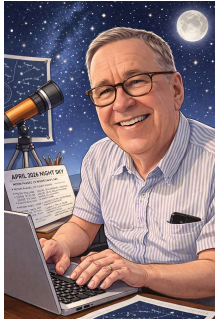
Our second presentation will be given by John Dartnell. John gave us a talk earlier in the season covering **Capturing Totality: Tips and Techniques**. On this occasion. The topic will be 'My Astro/Atmospherics Photo Album' Thanks to John also.



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Comments from the Chair



As mentioned at the last meeting, we have now set up a WhatsApp Community for WAS.

Sam sent an email on 19 May with full details and a link for members to join. Please note that this service is exclusively for paid-up members.

If you did not receive the email, please speak to Sam at the meeting or contact us via the Society's main email address.

We encourage you to make use of the Community: share your photos, ask questions, and arrange ad hoc observing sessions with other members.

A big thank you to Matthew Terrell for his help in setting up the Community.

Andy and I carried out another outreach at Southwick and Bradley Cub Scouts. It was outreach with a touch of Laurel and Hardy.



We were steered to where the projector screen was stored, we safely lifted it down from the cupboard top and prepared to carry down it some steps. Out slipped the screen from its box down the side of the steps, so we set about retrieving it and accidentally release the innards of the screen. We pulled on the jammed screen and the screen further to only release the innards further. At this point the pair of started giggling which did not help matters at all! After some wriggling and further giggling we extracted the screen from the steps and set about setting up with out more slap stick. Suffice to say we opted not to pack the screen away at the end of our successful presentation. The Cubs were most excited with Andy's collection of meteorites, proving hands-on is often the best way to learn.



As we wrap up our 2025/2026 season, I hope you've enjoyed the meetings and learned something new from the fan-

tastic range of speakers we've welcomed. Plans for the 2026/2027 season are already taking shape, and you'll find an early skeleton outline for 2026 on Page 8. Chris will release the observing schedule once it's ready.

This month is also our AGM. The most important item will be the annual accounts, presented by our Treasurer, Sam, who continues to do a brilliant job keeping everything in order.

The AGM is also your chance to get involved. We're always looking for members willing to take on roles, help with observing sessions, support events, or even just run the tea and coffee. I'd personally appreciate help arranging speakers. And if you've ever thought about being Chair or Vice-Chair, now is the perfect moment to put your name forward. Anyone with IT skills — Sam would love to hear from you too.

WAS relies on members stepping up, even if only to provide backup when committee members are unavailable. Please give it some thought.

A huge thank you to the committee for their hard work and commitment, and to everyone who has volunteered throughout the season.

As we look ahead to next year, please share your ideas — we want to shape the programme around what interests you.

Have a wonderful summer, and safe travels if you're heading away.

Clear Skies! *Simon*

The Night Sky — Summer 2026

June • July • August

Summer 2026 brings a sky rich with planetary activity, a strong Perseid season, and the return of deep darkness by late July. Saturn and Jupiter dominate the late-night sky, while Mars remains a morning object as it heads toward its excellent 2027 opposition. Noctilucent clouds, the Milky Way, and classic summer deep-sky targets round out a rewarding season.

June 2026 — Twilight, NLCs & Dawn Planets

Seasonal Conditions

Astronomical darkness is absent across much of the UK, especially north of Birmingham. The sky never fully darkens, but the deep twilight is ideal for wide-field observing and noctilucent cloud watching.

Planetary Highlights (June 2026)

- **Saturn** — rising around **01:00 BST** in Aquarius, brightening steadily as it approaches its September opposition.
- **Jupiter** — emerging in the **pre-dawn east**, rising around **03:00 BST** by mid-month.
- **Mars** — faint and low in the dawn sky, still months away from becoming prominent.
- **Venus** — **morning star**, rising shortly before the Sun; low but brilliant.
- **Mercury** — poor visibility this month.

Seasonal Highlights

- **Noctilucent Clouds** — peak season begins; look low in the **north-northwest after sunset** and **north-northeast before dawn**.
- **Summer Triangle** — Vega, Deneb and Altair dominate the eastern sky by late evening.
- **Deep-Sky** — M13, M57, Albireo all well placed despite twilight.

July 2026 — Milky Way Returns & Saturn Takes the Stage

Seasonal Conditions

By mid-July, true darkness returns for a few hours each night in southern UK locations. The Milky Way becomes visible after midnight, arching through Cygnus and Aquila.

Planetary Highlights (July 2026)

- **Saturn** — rising before midnight by late July; magnitude around **+0.6** and improving altitude.
- **Jupiter** — rising around **02:00 BST** early in the month, **01:00 BST** by the end; bright and unmistakable.
- **Mars** — still a morning object, slowly brightening but small in telescopes.
- **Venus** — remains a **morning star**, but sinking lower as the month progresses.
- **Mercury** — **good evening apparition** late July, low in the west after sunset.

Seasonal Highlights

- **Milky Way** — best seen after midnight; Cygnus star fields are superb in binoculars.
- **NLCs** — often strongest in July.
- **Deep-Sky** — Veil Nebula, North America Nebula, M11, and Scutum star clouds.

August 2026 — Perseids, Darker Nights & Jupiter Rising

Seasonal Conditions

August brings genuinely dark nights again, especially after mid-month. Warm, stable air often gives excellent planetary seeing.

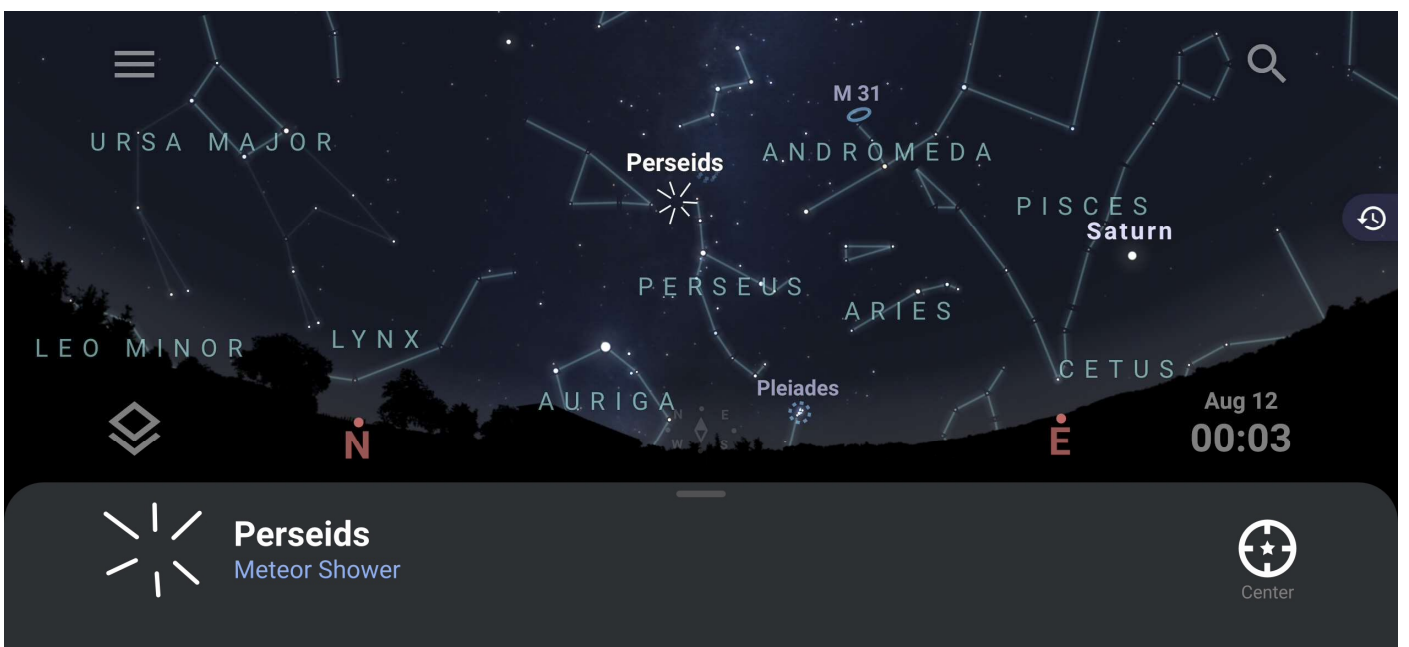
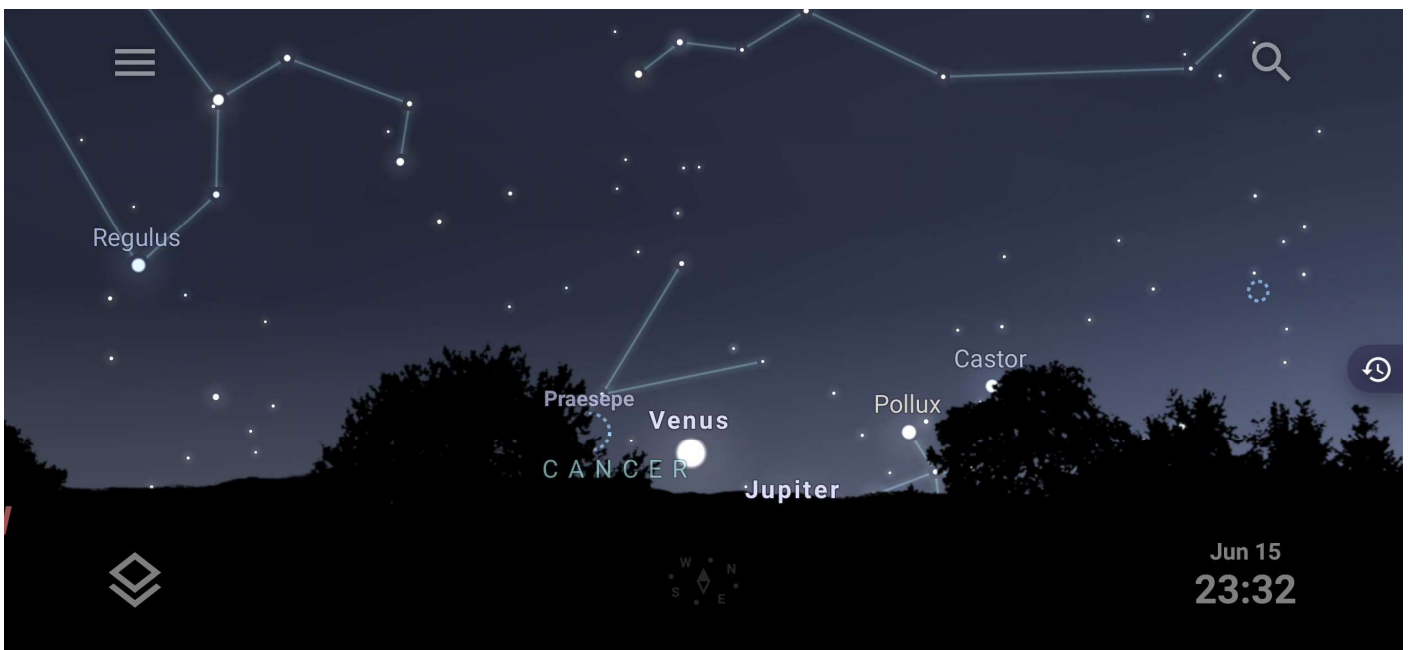
Planetary Highlights (August 2026)

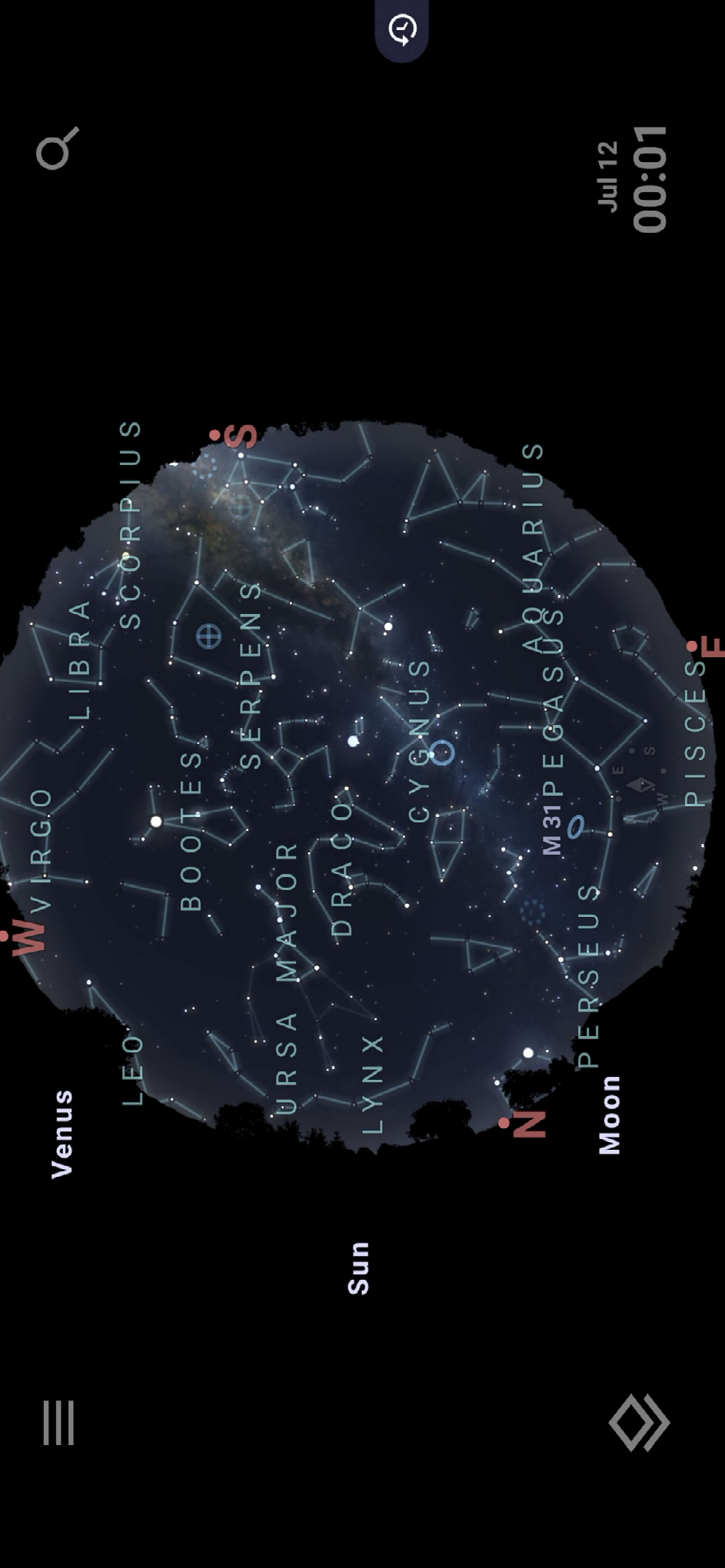
- **Saturn** — approaching **opposition on 7 September 2026**; bright, large, and visible all night.
- Rings still tilted but gradually narrowing.
- Moons well placed for small-scope observation.
- **Jupiter** — rising around **23:30 BST** by late August; a superb late-evening target.

- **Mars** — still a morning object, rising around **03:00 BST**; brightening slowly toward its 2027 opposition.
- **Venus** — lost in solar glare for most of the month.
- **Mercury** — **excellent morning apparition** mid-August, visible low in the east before sunrise.

Seasonal Highlights

- **Perseid Meteor Shower** — peak **11–13 August 2026** with favourable conditions (Moon at last quarter).
- **Milky Way** — at its best; the Cygnus Rift is striking from dark sites.
- **Deep-Sky** — M27, M31 rising earlier, Double Cluster visible by late evening.





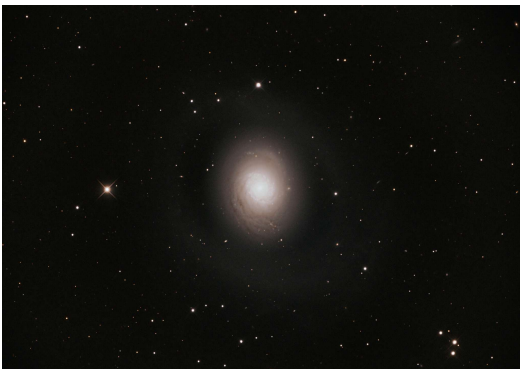
Members Gallery



Observing session 14 May at Lacock....Chris in the picture, taken by Andy Burns



Around 50 million years ago, in NGC5907, a star went supernova and the light from that massive explosion has just reached us. Known as SN2026KIT, I managed an hour of data last night to photograph the event. Steve Allen (8th May).



7.5 Hours on M94. The Halo around the edge is actually 2 of the galaxies spiral arms stretched out away from the core. Taken with a 250mm RC Telescope from Calne. Matthew Terrell.



The Sun in H-Alpha from the of afternoon 12 May
Matthew Terrell

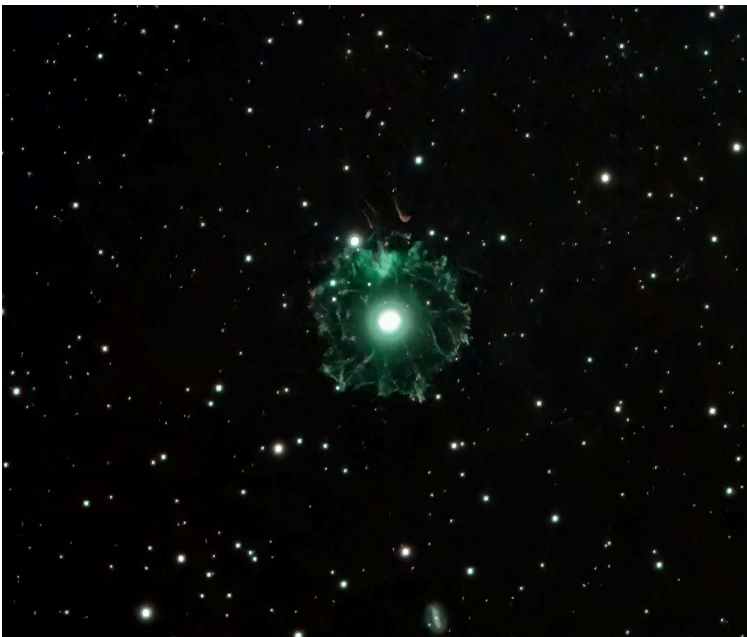


The Friends Large Amateur Telescope image of the Cheshire Cat Gravitational Lens.
4 Telescopes have been used a 12" Skywatcher Dobsonian, a 6" Classical Cassegrain, a 8" SCT Edge HD, and a 10" Stellyra RC.
Various cameras, and mounts have been employed in the capture.
We are all volunteers to the FLAT project and members of the Friends of the Marlborough Telescope.
This image is over 110 Hrs worth of data from sites in Wiltshire, UK.
The full version is here: <https://app.astrobin.com/u/darksky001?i=jde31z#fullscreen>

Matthew Terrell



Some great Sun Dogs 21 May from Andy Burns.



NGC6543, the Cat's eye nebula
Steve Allen

Wiltshire AS Meeting overview 2026/27

All meetings convene from 19.15 for a 19.30 start

MONTH	TITLE	Speaker	ACTUAL DATE
Sep-26			1st September 2026
Oct-26	Telescope Clinic	Matthew Terrell	6th October 2026
Nov-26	<i>"New things in Cosmology"</i> <i>*tentative title</i>	Martin Griffiths	3rd November 2026
Dec-26			1st December 2025
Jan-27			5th January 2027
Feb-27			2nd February 2027
Mar-27	Visit to Blackett Observatory**	Host: Gavin James	2nd March 2027
Apr-27			6th April 2027
May-27			4th May 2027
Jun-27	Members Talks & AGM	Various	1st June 2027

** Attendance at the observatory is 20. Please register your name to secure a place.

Wiltshire Astronomical Society Contact Info:

Chair: Simon Barnes
Newsletter: Simon Barnes
Treasurer and Membership: Sam Franklin
Speaker secretary: **Position Vacant**
Observing Sessions coordinators: Chris Brooks, Jon Gale,
Web & IT coordinator: Sam Franklin
PR and Design: Tracey Kelly

Contact the Society here:

Email: contact@wasnet.org.uk
Website url: <https://wasnet.org.uk/>
Public Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/Wiltshire-Astronomical-Society-154077261327030/>
Members only Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wiltshire.astro.society/>
Committee Page: <https://wasnet.org.uk/committee/>

Observing Sessions Location: The observing area is located in the Picnic area to the side of the Red Lion Pub (Lacock) car park
Postcode: SN15 2LQ

what3words = airbag.shudders.losing



Hall Meeting Location: Pewsham Community Centre, Lodge Road, Pewsham
Chippenham, SN15 3SY

What3words = boat.perky.ticket

