

Wiltshire Astronomical Society

Newsletter October 2026

This month we welcome

Matthew Terrell (Member).....

Telescope Clinic

If you want to ask about telescopes, imaging, software processing, this will be the chance. If you are struggling with your telescope/set up get your questions ready.

Speaker biography:

Matthew Terrell, Amateur Astronomer.

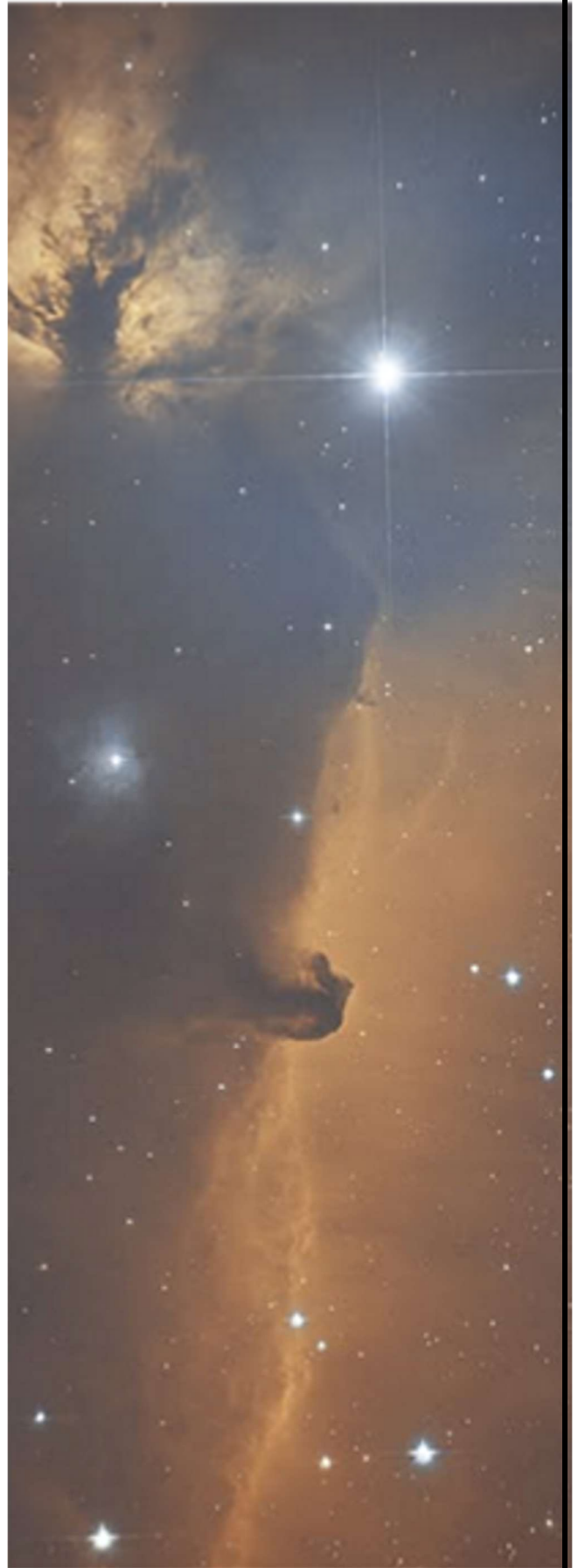
43 Years old, married, father of 2, living in Calne, Wilts.
Working in Data Communications for 22 years.

Starting as a visual observer around 18 years ago, I've been imaging the night sky for around the last 12 years. Starting with a webcam, and an all manual 130mm Newtonian on an EQ2.

My current telescope is my 200mm RC in the garden observatory.

I love trying to get good pictures with cheaper telescopes, experimenting with new hardware, and getting my favourite objects (galaxies) to give up their secrets.

Running the local astronomy FB page Calne Amateur Astronomy Group (CAAG) and helping people out with their telescopes give me a great deal of satisfaction when not imaging.





Comments from the Chair

Facebook group closure

If you're on Facebook, you may already have seen that our members' Facebook page will close on 15 November 2026.

Moving to WhatsApp

From then on, we'll only use the WhatsApp Community to share photos, chat and ask questions in the various sub-groups. Many members have already made the switch, and WhatsApp is proving to be a much more effective forum for the Society than Facebook.

I appreciate that some members prefer Facebook. However, there are IT-related reservations about the platform, and maintaining it places an additional responsibility on a committee whose time is already very limited.

You may also notice a change to the newsletter's layout. Microsoft is retiring Publisher, which I normally use, so I am now producing it in Word. I find Word less user-friendly for this purpose, so I will refine the layout each month before eventually moving from a PDF to an email newsletter.

It was encouraging that the first observing session went ahead despite the uncertain forecast. Chris made an inspired decision to proceed when the chances were only 50–50. Let's hope this marks the start of a run of clear observing sessions.

I remain frustrated with the Astrospeakers webpage, as its contact details may be out of date. Of the four speakers I recently invited, only one replied, although positively. I would prefer not to rely on well used previous speakers, but I may have little choice. Three slots remain to be filled for next year, Talks from members would of course be very welcome. In the meantime, I will continue approaching potential speakers.

That's all for now!

Clear Skies

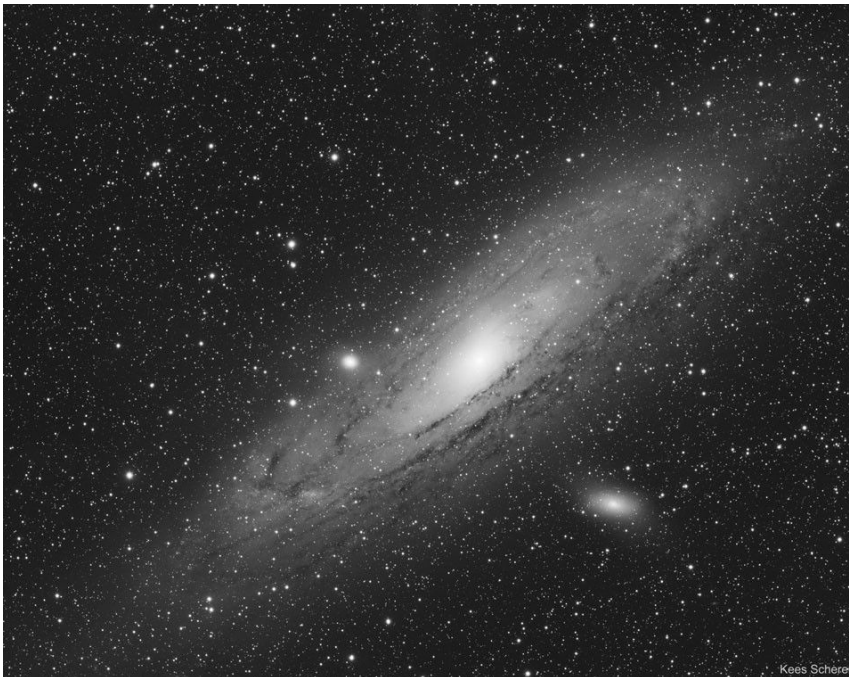
Simon

I saw this recently, this really shows the problem astrophotographers have to deal with

Before



After



Explanation: What does the Andromeda galaxy really look like? The featured before image shows how our Milky Way Galaxy's closest major galactic neighbor really appears in a long exposure through Earth's busy skies and with a digital camera that introduces normal imperfections. The picture is a stack of 223 images, each a 300 second exposure, taken from a garden observatory in Portugal during 2019. Obvious image deficiencies include bright parallel airplane trails, long and continuous satellite trails, short cosmic ray streaks, and bad pixels. In the after image, these imperfections were actually not removed with Photoshop specifically, but rather greatly reduced with a series of computer software packages that included Astro Pixel Processor, DeepSkyStacker, and PixInsight. All of this work was done not to deceive you with a digital fantasy that has little to do with the real likeness of the Andromeda galaxy (M31), but to minimize Earthly artifacts that have nothing to do with the distant galaxy and so better recreate what M31 really does look like.



Above is taken from Astronomy Picture of the Day 27 September 2026.

October Night Sky –

Overview

Autumn's constellations take centre stage. The Milky Way is still visible early in the evening, while later hours bring excellent views of Andromeda, Pegasus, and the rich star fields of Cassiopeia and Perseus. Planetary observing improves too, with Jupiter and Saturn well placed.

The Sky After Dusk

Pegasus and Andromeda

The **Great Square of Pegasus** stands high in the south during October evenings, forming a gateway to autumn's deep-sky treasures. Extending eastward from the Square is **Andromeda**, home to the **Andromeda Galaxy (M31)** – easily visible in binoculars and a rewarding target for small telescopes and a favourite for astrophotographers.

Cassiopeia and Perseus

To the northeast, the distinctive “W” of **Cassiopeia** is prominent. Beneath it lies **Perseus**, rising higher each night. Between the two sits the **Double Cluster**, a superb binocular object.

Cygnus and the Fading Milky Way

Cygnus is still well placed early in the evening, carrying the Milky Way through its centre. As the month progresses, the Milky Way drifts westward, but remains a lovely sight on moonless nights.

Planets

Jupiter

Located in Leo, South-southeast before dawn. Its cloud belts, moons, and frequent shadow transits make it a highlight for observers with any size telescope. On the evening of the October meeting it is close to the waning crescent moon.

Saturn

Saturn reasonably well placed in Cetus the south-west after dusk. Although past opposition, its rings are still beautifully displayed, and the planet's steady golden light makes it easy to locate. With an altitude of near to 40° it heads to more steady air for viewing.

Mars & Venus

Mars is generally faint and low this month, while Venus is an evening object but not well placed for this month. It rises 45 mins before the Sun on 31 October at mag -4.1.

The Moon

Hunter's Moon

October's full moon is traditionally known as the **Hunter's Moon**. Like the Harvest Moon, it rises close to sunset for several nights, creating bright evenings but washing out fainter deep-sky objects.

Lunar Observing

The Moon occults the northern part of the Pleiades on 27/28 of this month. Have a look around 23:45. The moon will be 95% waning gibbous.

Deep Sky Highlights

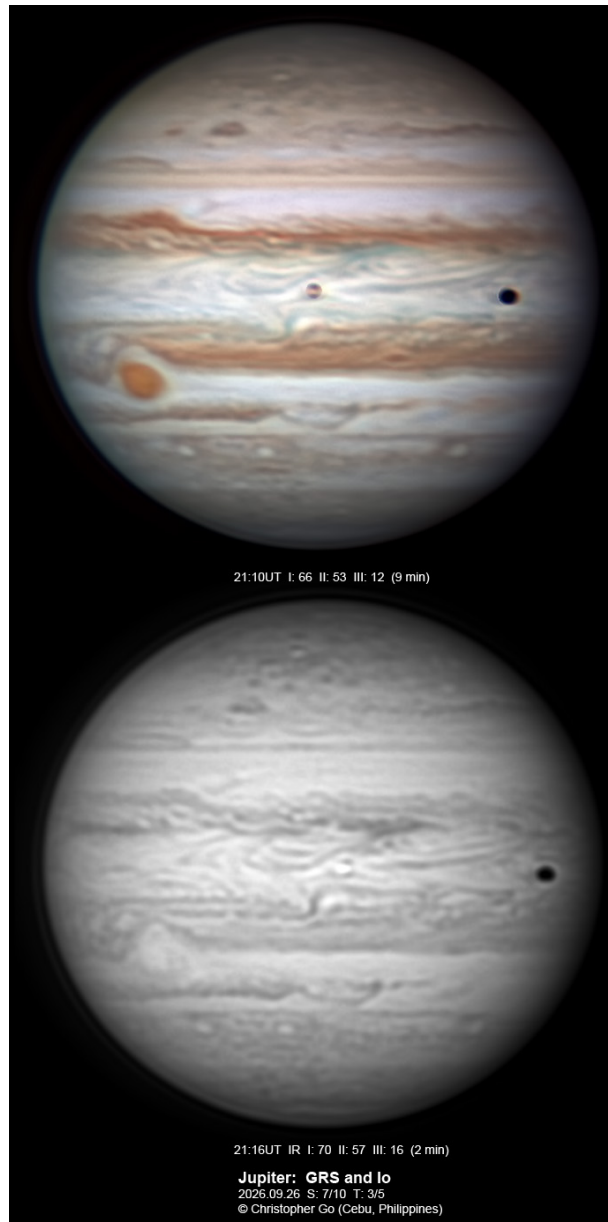
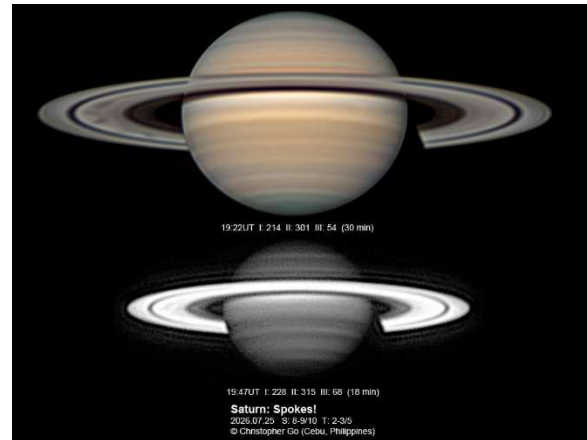
- **M31 – Andromeda Galaxy:** Superb throughout the month.
- **Double Cluster (NGC 869 & 884):** Rich, sparkling, and ideal for binoculars.
- **M33 – Triangulum Galaxy:** A challenge under light pollution but rewarding under dark skies.
- **M15 (Pegasus):** A compact, bright globular cluster west of the Great Square.
- **NGC 457 – The Owl/ET Cluster:** A fun, distinctive open cluster in Cassiopeia.

Meteors

October brings the **Orionids**, active from around 2–3 October to early November, peaking around the 21st with a low radiant. Although not as prolific as the Perseids, they produce fast, bright meteors originating from Halley's Comet.

The Draconids peak around the 6th October so will be becoming less after tonight's meeting.

Jupiter and Saturn Images - Credit: Christopher Go, Banilad, Cebu, Philippines



Equipment

One topic I saw that was requested for the Telescope Clinic is polar alignment 'back to basics'. Steve Allen remarked that he uses the App PS Align Pro. I too use that and can recommend it. Maybe Matthew will talk about this or perhaps will say a few words about it but for now here are some screen shots from the App:



I recently purchased a power pack for use with my telescopes, of course there are many available and these type of purchase can be a minefield thus making a decision difficult. I always like to see what others are using and their experiences. In the situation of the power pack I noticed the device that Matthew was using at the Lacock Eclipse event and he told me that it worked well for him. So I therefore looked it up and decided to purchase. The Device in question is a Bluetti Elite 30 V2 as seen below. So far I have been very happy with it and with the additional bonus of a 5% discount because I am of pension age. It is great for Star Parties and has USB-A and USB-C as well as cigar lighter type socket, together with AC and DC.

LiFePO4 Battery 600W

Power Lifting 1500W, 10ms UPS, Emergency Backup

Power for Home Blackout/Winter Storm, Solar

Generator for Camping/Road Trip

1 sustainability feature ▼

iO+ bought in past month



Wiltshire AS Meeting overview 2026/27

All meetings convene from 19.15 for a 19.30 start

MONTH	TITLE	Speaker	ACTUAL DATE
Sep-26	Saturn	Mike Foulkes	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	Christmas Quiz	N/A	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	Atmospheric Optics	Mary McIntyre	6th April 2027
May-27			4th May 2027
Jun-27	Members Talks & AGM	Various	1st June 2027

Wiltshire Astronomical Society Planned Observing Evenings 2026-2027 Season								
Season	Day	Date	Month	Year		Event Attempt	Time	
Sep-26	Friday	4th	September	2026		1st Observing	20:30	
	What To See!	Saturn starts to rise in the East followed by Uranus a little later						
		Good time to see and photograph the centre of the Milky Way						
	Friday	11th	September	2026		2nd Observing	20:30	
	What To See!	Still a good time to catch the Milky Way with Saturn & Uranus later						
		Pleiades on the rise in the east.						
Oct-26	Friday	9th	October	2026		1st Observing	20:00	
	What To See!	Milky Way centre heading to the horizon. Saturn & Uranus improving						
		Draconid Metereor Shower						
	Friday	16th	October	2026		2nd Observing	20:00	
	What To See!	Early Orionid Meteor Shower						
		Cresent moon setting, Saturn & Uranus ideal.						
Nov-26	Friday	6th	November	2026		1st Observing	19:30	
	What To See!	Taurid Meteor Shower						
		Saturn and a short star hop to Neptune. Vesta is in Cetus						
	Friday	13th	November	2026		2nd Observing	19:00	
	What To See!	Saturns rings opening up after being almost edge on for a while						
		Uranus at Opposition just south of the Pleiades						
Dec-26	What To See!	Leonid Meteor Shower						
		Friday	4th	December	2026		1st Observing	19:00
	What To See!							
	Friday	11th	December	2026		2nd Observing	19:00	
	What To See!	Gemini & Ursid Meteor Shower						
	Jan-27	Friday	8th	January	2027		1st Observing	19:00
What To See!		Ursid & Quadrantid Meteor Shower						
		Comet 24P/Schaumasse observable after 01:30 (10th)						
Friday		15th	January	2027		2nd Observing	19:00	
What To See!		Back end of Quadrantids Meteor Showers						
		Jupiter and Saturn still on display.						
Feb-27	Friday	5th	February	2027		1st Observing	19:30	
	What To See!	All the outer planets are to be seen, Uranus and Neptune need a scope.						
		Friday	12th	February	2027			2nd Observing
	What To See!	A great display of the outer planets (Saturn, Mars, Jupiter and Uranus						
		The cresent Moon will also be visible along with M42						
	Mar-27	Friday	5th	March	2027		1st Observing	20:00
What To See!		Last chance at seeing Saturn; Mars, Jupiter and Uranus are to the South.						
		Orion & M42, Sirius and Mars and Jupiter (and Uranus) to the south						
Friday		12th	March	2027		2nd Observing	20:00	
What To See!		A Fine display this evening with the thinning crescent Moon, Pleiades,						
		Orion & M42, Sirius and Mars and Jupiter (and Uranus) to the south						
Apr-27	Friday	2nd	April	2027		1st Observing	20:00	
	What To See!	Mars & Jupiter are high up!						
		Lyrid Meteor Shower						
	Friday	9th	April	2027		2nd Observing	20:30	
		What To See!	Orion & M42 heading towards the horizon...be quick					
			Galaxy season is here as well as the Lyrid Meteor Shower					
May-27	Friday	30th	April	2027		1st Observing	21:00	
	What To See!	Mars & Jupiter in Cancer, M13 Globular Cluster in Hercules						
		Eta Aquariids Meteor Shower						
	Friday	7th	May	2027		2nd Observing	21:00	
		What To See!	Noctilucent Cloud season starts. Mars & Jupiter in Cancer					
			Eta Aquariids Meteor Shower					

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
Whats App: Sam Franklin

Contact the Society here:

Email: contact@wasnet.org.uk

Website url: <https://wasnet.org.uk/>

Public Facebook Page

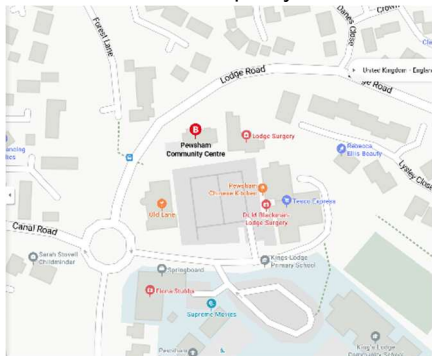
[https://www.facebook.com/Wiltshire-Astronomical-Society- 154077261327030/](https://www.facebook.com/Wiltshire-Astronomical-Society-154077261327030/)

Committee Page:

<https://wasnet.org.uk/committee/>

Hall Meeting Location:

Pewsham Community Centre,
Lodge Road,
Pewsham
Chippenham,
SN15 3SY
What3words = boat.perky.ticket



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

