

If you're interested in stargazing,
come join us. Everyone is welcome. We have talks,
learning workshops, visits and group observing sessions

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March Morning Sky

Daylight information for the month is:



Sunrise: 06:54 (1st) 06:47 (31st)
Sunset: 17:49 (1st) 19:40 (31st)

The Sun is at its 11-year solar minimum and so both sunspot activity and prominences are infrequent.



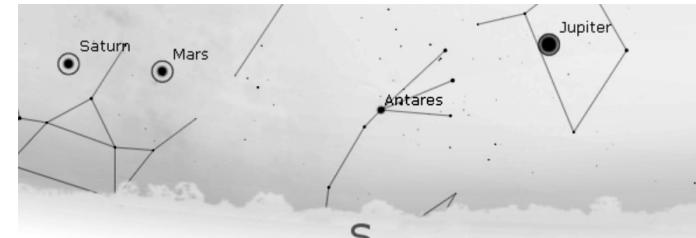
New Moon: 17th March
First Quarter: 24th March
Full Moon: 31st March
Last Quarter: 8th April



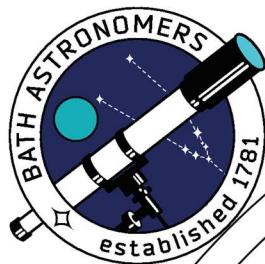
For early risers, the familiar Summer constellations are becoming visible. Days are lengthening and so twilight starts by 05:04 at the beginning of the month and 04:50 by the end. There are no big meteor showers visible this month, but after midnight you might see the Virginid shower with 5 meteors per hour (though this is very similar to the background rate in our night sky). Look towards the constellation Virgo in the southwest.



Three planets are visible in the morning to the naked eye and show some definition in binoculars: Jupiter, Mars and Saturn. They appear in a line, low in the morning sky around 05:00. Jupiter is the brightest at magnitude -2.2, followed by Saturn at magnitude 0.5 and finally Mars at magnitude 0.6. Have a look at Jupiter's moons.



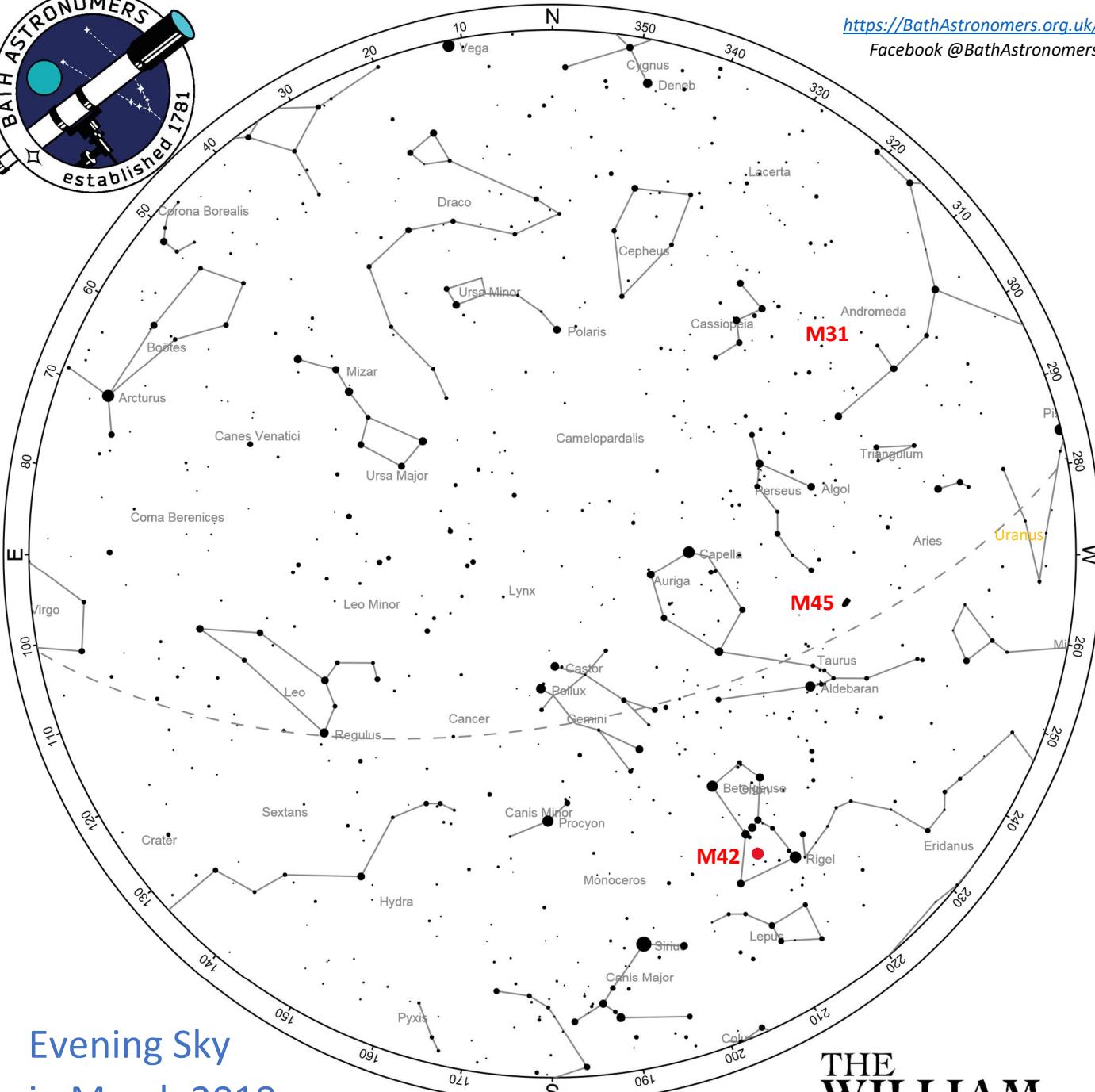
All three planets will show extra detail in small to medium sized telescopes despite being low in the sky. Jupiter and Saturn's moons are visible as well as the Rings. They improve throughout the month.



Evening Sky in March 2018

Location: Bath, UK, 51.2000°N, 2.2000°W

Time: 18 March 2018 20:00 (UTC +00:00)



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**WILLIAM
HERSCHEL**
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March Evening Sky

The end of astronomical twilight varies this month from 19:40 to 21:38; the time after sunset it is considered to be dark. The Winter constellations are visible for a time after sunset but losing emphasis whilst Cancer and Leo are coming to the fore. Try to see the Zodiacal light, a cone of diffuse light sitting on the Western horizon an hour or so after sunset.



Two planets are visible at sunset in the West, Mercury and Venus. Due to their shorter orbital periods, their positions vary throughout the month but Mercury reaches its further separation from the Sun on 15th March and so is at its brightest. In binoculars (10x50), no surface detail is visible on these planets, but you should see Venus is gibbous. To determine which is which, simply look for the brightest of the two 'stars' visible low in the West after the Sun is safely below the horizon. Never look at the Sun directly or with an optical device unless, with the latter, you know how to do it safely.

The Orion Nebula M42, Pleiades M45 and Andromeda Galaxy M31 are always worth a view.



After Sunset, an observer may be able to view Uranus but at magnitude 5.9, it will be hard to spot in the glare of the sunset. It is worth having a look at Mercury and Venus in a telescope to see their phasing more clearly.

The month of March is well known for the opportunity to see lots of galaxies, nebulae and star clusters. The 'traditional' Messier Marathons of many astronomy clubs in March, take advantage of the groups of some of the 110 deep sky objects listed by Charles Messier being favourable at this time of year around Leo, Coma Berenices and Virgo. With a computerised telescope, you could view 60+ objects without staying up all night.



Clocks move forward one hour at 01:00 on 25th March 2018 from UTC to BST.
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