

Dundee Astronomical Society

Sky Notes for September 2017

Sky Map for 15th Sept 22:00

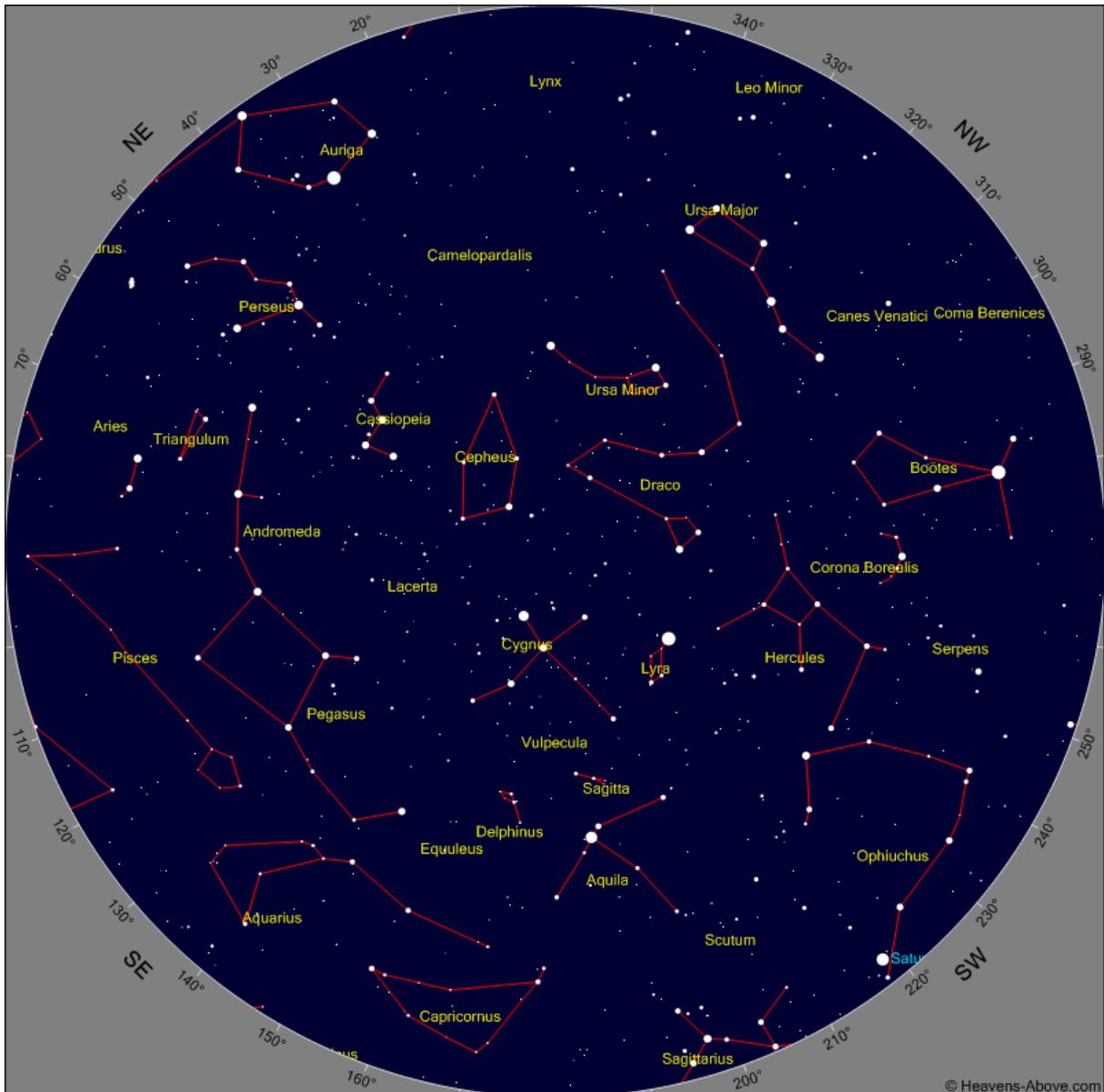


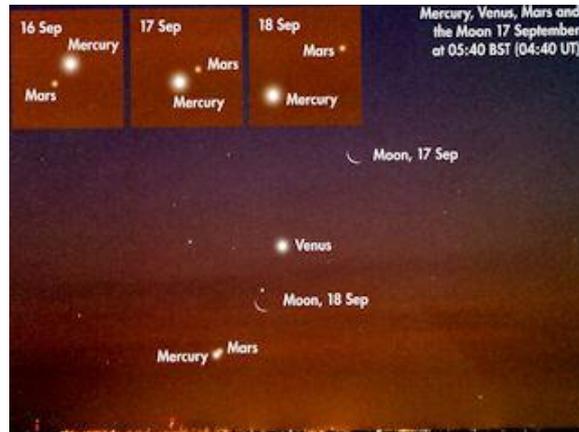
Illustration Courtesy of www.heavensabove.com

As we move into autumn, let's hope that the nights are a lot clearer with many objects visible to our eyes, cameras and telescopes. Remember that the autumn equinox occurs on the 22nd of the month, this is when the longer nights start closing in fast.

Rise early for this one at around 04:40 UT on the 17th, Mars will be 20 arcminutes east of Mercury with a 4% lit waning moon evident – should be good for imaging if the skies are clear.

Venus will be passing close to the Beehive Cluster M44. 03:30 UT, again, lookout for this. As you probably see from the sky map above, the night sky is quite bereft of planets to view – also see the table below. However, our nearest satellite the Moon is still there and should provide some good opportunities before and after the full moon on 13th for observations and imaging.

Mercury, Venus and Mars on the 16th of this month will be 0.5 deg apart, however you need to be up early around 04:40 UT to see this conjunction. Below is a graphic, courtesy of BBC Sky at Night Magazine, hinting at what you should see. I just hope that viewing conditions are favourable given the history.



The Planets

Mercury	This month a morning planet, reaches greatest western elongation on the 12 th .
Venus	Another morning planet, passing the Beehive Cluster (M44) at the beginning of the month.
Mars	Not visible to us during the night, another morning planet.
Jupiter	An evening planet, unfortunately too low in our sky to seriously observe.
Saturn	Worth looking at of an evening, especially to view its wide-open rings.
Uranus	another morning planet this month.
Neptune	Visible all month during the night, reaches opposition on the 5 th .

The Moon

Full Moon	6 th September
Third Quarter	13 th September
New Moon	20 th September
First Quarter	28 th September

Monthly Challenge

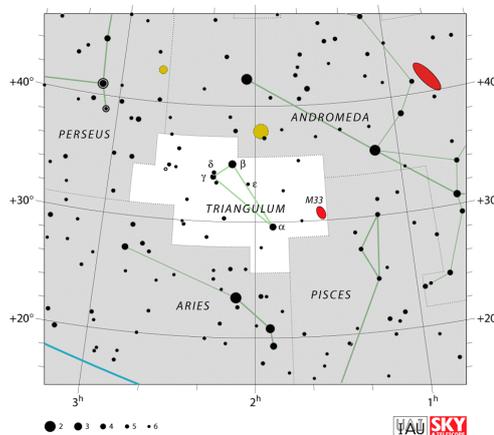
This month let us have look at M11, (Wild Duck Cluster). This is a famous open cluster located in the constellation of Scutum. It's just beyond naked eye visibility but easily visible with binoculars and is an outstanding telescope object. See if you can locate and observe this star cluster.



Here is a three-part challenge, observe Al-Sufi's Cluster. The challenges here are to identify which cluster this is, where it is and observe it. You can then let me know, giving me its common name. Good hunting as it is a well-known cluster and very easy to find.

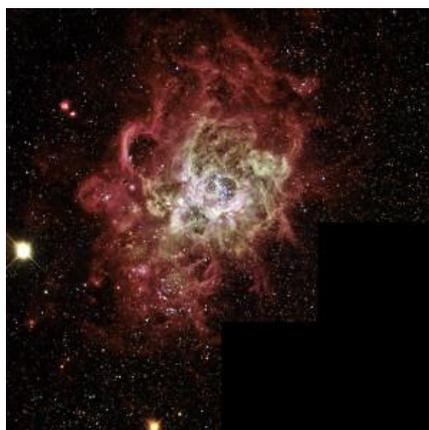
Jim's Focus of the Month

Triangulum - Whose name means "the triangle" in Latin. It is home to the Triangulum Galaxy (Messier 33), one of the nearest and best known galaxies in the night sky. It is one of the most distant deep sky objects that can be seen without binoculars. The neighbouring constellations are Andromeda, Aries, Perseus and Pisces.





NGC 604 is an emission nebula located to the northeast of the central core of the Triangulum Galaxy. It is about 1,500 light years in diameter, which makes it one of the largest H II regions known and the brightest H II region in the Triangulum Galaxy.



NGC 634 is a spiral galaxy in Triangulum with an apparent visual magnitude of 14 and is approximately 250 million light years distant from Earth. In 2008, a Type Ia supernova, SN 2008a, was observed in the galaxy.



Interestingly, the Babylonians saw Triangulum and the star Gamma Andromedae in Andromeda constellation as a constellation called MUL Apin, or the Plough.

There are many other interesting deep sky objects in Triangulum, NGC 925 (a spiral galaxy), NGC 672 and IC 1727, and others. Why not have a look around you might well be surprised.

Did You Know?

- 1st Sept 1979 Pioneer II makes first spacecraft flyby of Saturn
- 3rd Sept 1976 Viking 2 lands on mars
- 9th Sept 1975 Funnily enough Viking 2 launched on its way to Mars
- 24th Sept 1970 USSR's Luna 16 sample capsule brings back 3.6oz of lunar soil
- 29th Sept 1962 Alouette 1 is Canadas first satellite to be launched

Jim Barber

Director of Observations

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