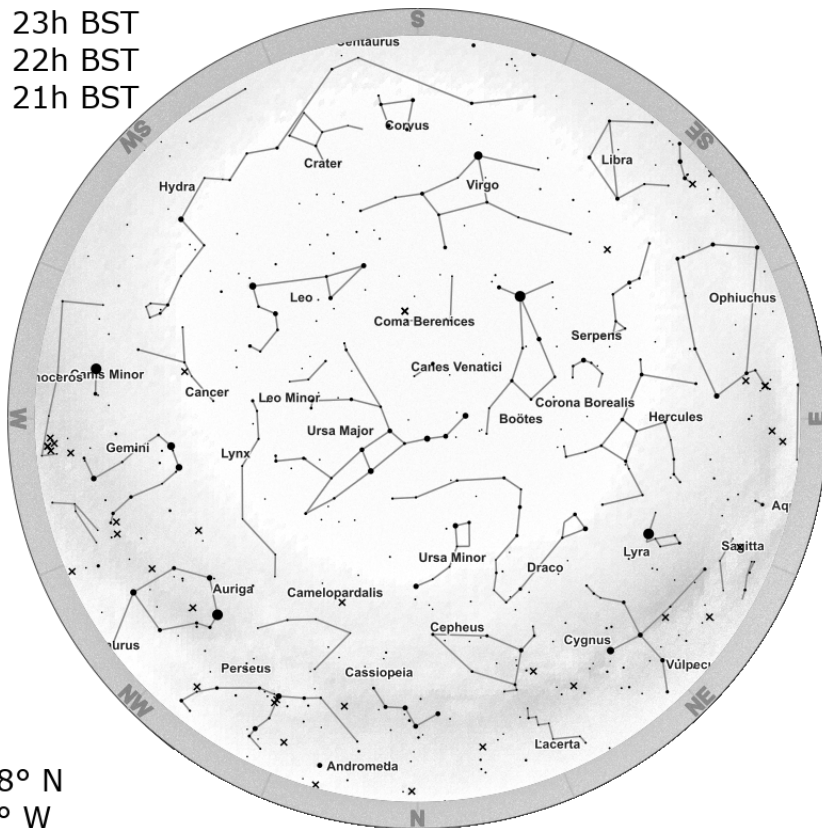


May Sky Notes 2021

01 May 23h BST

15 May 22h BST

30 May 21h BST



Woking

51.3168° N

0.5600° W

<https://in-the-sky.org>

Constellations

These constellations are well placed in the evening this month, but many more can be seen. Check the star map for more.

Boötes appears high in the eastern sky after sunset, and is visible all night. Moving across the southern sky towards the west, it stays high so is a good spot if your horizons are blocked.

Hydra, the largest constellation, is visible snaking across the southern horizon at the beginning of the month. Appearing after sunset, it moves west and begins to set around midnight, so be sure to catch it quick! It sets earlier as the month goes on, and by the end of the month half of it is shrouded below the horizon at sunset.

Aquila can be seen in the south eastern sky this month. It rises earlier as the month goes on, so is best seen at the end of the month when it rises due east at sunset. At the beginning of the month, you will have to wait until after midnight to get a glimpse of it.

Planets

Mercury sticks close to the Sun this month, rising immediately before it. Keen-eyed observers may be able to spot it at the beginning to middle of the month with a clear eastern horizon just before sunrise. **Never point binoculars or a telescope directly at the Sun!** It reaches its highest point in the sky on the 16th. Mercury is at dichotomy (half-phase) on the 12th and greatest elongation east on the 17th. It will be in conjunction with the Moon on the 13th.

Venus stays too close to the Sun to be seen this month. Its highest point on the 13th occurs very low on the horizon at sunrise.

Mars moves through the constellation of Gemini throughout this month. You will be able to see it in the western sky, getting lower and setting earlier as the month goes on. Mars is in conjunction with the Moon on the 16th.

Jupiter rises in the south east in the early hours of the morning. It rises earlier as the month goes on, therefore being visible for longer and reaching a higher point before sunrise. Jupiter will be in conjunction with the Moon on the 4th.

Saturn appears a little higher than Jupiter in the sky, rising in the south east. Look for it in the early hours of the morning and it rises earlier as the month goes on. On the 23rd, it enters retrograde motion where its direction of motion reverses across the sky. Saturn will be in conjunction with the Moon on the 3rd and the 31st.

Uranus is too faint to be seen with the naked eye and is in fact located on the other side of the Sun at present, therefore is hidden by it completely.

Neptune is too faint to be seen with the naked eye. It rises an hour or 2 before the Sun, staying low in the south eastern sky before sunrise. Neptune will be in conjunction with the Moon on the 6th.

Meteor Showers

The **η -Aquariids** reach their peak on the night of the 6th, but will be visible from 19th April through to 28th May. The radiant (origin point) of the meteors is in the constellation of Aquarius, which remains below the horizon until 02:39 BST. Therefore meteors will only be visible after this point. Best displays are likely to be just before dawn. You will be able to see about 12 meteors per hour.

The **η -Lyrids** reach their peak on the night of the 8th, but will be visible from 3rd to 14th May. The radiant (origin point) of the meteors is in the constellation of Lyra, which is circumpolar and thus meteors will be visible all night. Best displays are likely to be just before dawn. You will be able to see about 2 meteors per hour.

Moon

Full Moon: 26th

Last Quarter: 3rd

New Moon: 11th

First Quarter: 19th

The Moon is at **perigee**, its closest point to the Earth, on the 26th, and **apogee**, its furthest point from the Earth on the 11th. This effect is not visually apparent.

The Moon is at **perihelion**, its closest point to the Sun, on the 9th, and **aphelion**, its furthest point from the Sun on the 27th. This effect is not visually apparent.

Points of Interest

The **Moon** will be in conjunction with dwarf planet **134340 Pluto** on the 2nd. Pluto is too faint to be seen with the naked eye.

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