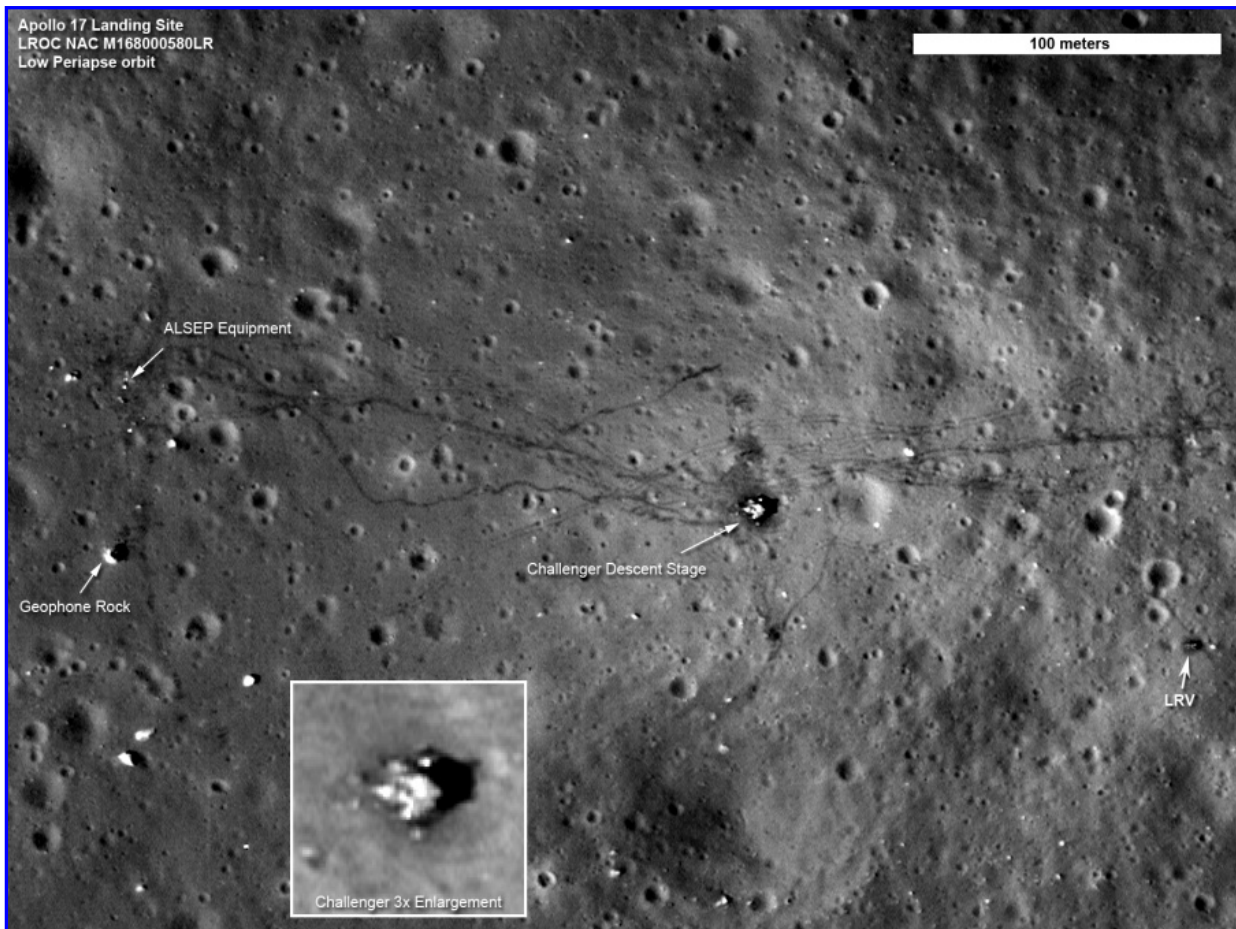


# 2002



**NEXT MEETING**  
**THURSDAY, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011**  
**THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF HARINGEY**  
**VOLUME 39 : ISSUE 11 : SEPTEMBER 2011**

# SOCIETY NEWS

## MEETING VENUE : Ashmole School, Southgate, London N14 5RJ.

The day for all meetings is usually the third Thursday of each month. The exceptions are August, when currently we do not hold a meeting, and December, when the Christmas Meet has always traditionally been held during the second week. However, in case of changes – and there have been a few over the last year or so – it is always advisable to double-check the dates below.

Doors open - 7.30pm : Main speaker - 8.00pm. Finish - 10.00pm

## 2011

OK, the programme for most (all...) of this year has been a bit haphazard, and the remainder is still being worked on.

We aim to have a number of our regular speakers for 2012 and some new ones are being explored.

**September 15<sup>th</sup> : Dave Lally :**  
***"An Astronomical Miscellany - Some Odd Solar System Items"***

October 20<sup>th</sup> AGM

November 17<sup>th</sup>

December 8<sup>th</sup> Christmas Party and Guiz VII

### COVER

#### THE APOLLO 17 SITE: A SHARPER VIEW

Just to puzzle and confuse any conspiracy theorists who would still maintain we never landed on the Moon, NASA has released the latest views from the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO). This view of the Apollo 17 landing site in the Taurus-Littrow valley was captured last month by the LRO, and is the sharpest ever recorded from space. The high resolution image data was taken during a period when the LRO's orbit was modified to create a close approach of about 14 miles / 22 kilometres altitude as it passed over some of the Apollo landing sites. That altitude corresponds to only about twice the height of a commercial airline flight over planet Earth. Labelled in this image are Apollo 17 Lunar Lander, 'Challenger', descent stage (inset), the Lunar Roving Vehicle (LRV) at its final parking spot, and the Apollo Lunar Surface Experiments Package (ALSEP) left behind to monitor the Moon's environment and interior. The dual Lunar Rover tracks are clear, and the foot trails left by astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt, the last Apollo astronauts to walk on the Lunar surface, are also easily visible at the Apollo 17 site.

**Image:** NASA / GAFF / Arizona State University / Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

We meet in what is now the Music Room at Ashmole School. (This was the Curriculum Support Building - and still noted as such in the map.) This is the low building, (in the centre of the photo), just past the Performing Arts Centre and opposite the main entrance to the technology block.



### **MEETING PREVIEW : September 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Dave Lally :**

#### **"An Astronomical Miscellany - Some Odd Solar System Items"**



To anyone in the science fiction field, our September speaker Dave Lally's name will likely be familiar.

Dave has been associated with the subject on and off for most of his life, and he currently holds the position of Chairman of the European Science Fiction Society. But he also an FRAS, and as such he has, for the last 20 or so years, co-organised the annual RAS Summer Picnic in Greenwich. As to exactly what form his talk will take, you can maybe slightly infer from

the title, but I suspect there might be a bit of the old Irish blarney in there somewhere as well.

Dave has actually spoken to the Society before, but that goes back many years and initially no-one could remember exactly when - not even Dave. But it was August 1992!

### **MEETING REVIEW : July 21<sup>st</sup>**

#### **Mat Irvine : "Picture This : Photographing the Skies"**



I covered the July meeting myself, though not many turned up, (must be me!). However I trust those who did come along were happy with my presentation of photographing the skies using standard camera equipment, or to put another way, not necessarily using a telescope.

I was prompted by the images I included in the last 2002 of the Lunar Eclipse that I shot while in Mallorca, with not ideal conditions - or to be more precise, excellent viewing conditions, but a lack of ideal photographic equipment, so I had to improvise.

Other examples I used maybe were slightly more organised, such as the time I - and several other ASH members - went to Turkey for the Solar eclipse of 2006, when I took two video cameras and four stills cameras. Or the annular eclipse off the Scottish northern coast in 2003 where, because I drove up, could take as much gear as I wanted, (including a TV monitor for the video camera!).

Eclipses, however, tend to be known about in advance, other phenomena happen 'by chance' so it's really a case of being in the right place at the right time, and having a camera handy. These days with most cell phones also including cameras - and much else besides (so much so that the 'phone' facility seems almost an afterthought) you should be able to grab an image at any time. I will though hold judgement if a cell phone is the best piece of equipment on which to photograph anything anyway - but at least they are usually always with you.

One example of this actually happened since, and while as I was down in Selsey, with Patrick Moore, working on the recent *The Sky at Night*. Being with Patrick is an 'astronomical event' in its own right, but anyone that knows where Patrick lives, will know it's very close to the English Channel, and some shots were being filmed down on the beach. I wasn't involved in this, but wandered down anyway - and caught a fairly impressive sundog to the right of the Sun. Having my Nikon digital SLR in my hand obviously helped here! (And in case you are wondering why I had to go to the beach, Patrick's house is set amongst others in the street, not to mention a few tall trees, and there isn't a clear view of the western horizon from his garden.)



While gazing out over the rail at the sea, a couple of kids came along, ('kids' = they were younger than me...), and the younger said to the older indicating the sundog, "What's that?" The older replied authoritatively, "That's a comet".

We will see if there are any other photo ops at the next meeting, as after our main speaker, as the aim is that we go outside - and this will be comet hunting!  
See SKY VIEWS.



# CHAIRMAN'S QUARTERS



Another comet in the sky. Portents of calamity abound – *"We're doomed, we're doomed, the end is nigh"*! Well, considering how many ends have been nigh, we haven't too badly so far. We seem to revel in predictions, particularly nasty ones, and it does not appear to be limited to religious zealots, conspiracists or just the plain misinformed, (or misinterpreters). Science and highly regarded individuals have their own moments of misprediction, (and not necessarily doom-mongering). Trawling through a mass of these, I found some which have appealed to me.

Sextus Julius Frontinus (governor of Britania, ca 84 BC) said: *"I also lay aside all ideas of any new works or engines of ware, the invention of which long-ago reached its limit, and in which I see no hope for further improvement..."*

Scipio Chiaramonti (Professor of philosophy and mathematics at University of Pisa, arguing against the heliocentric system in 1633): *"Animals, which move, have limbs and muscles. The Earth does not have limbs and muscles; therefore it does not move."*

Dr. Dionysus Lardner (Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy at University College, London in the mid 1800's): *"Men might as well project a voyage to the Moon as attempt to employ steam navigation against the stormy North Atlantic Ocean."*

Sir Walter Scott (on a proposal to light cities with gaslight in the early 1800's): *"There is a young madman proposing to light the streets of London—with what do you suppose—with smoke?"*

Erasmus Wilson (Professor at Oxford University) said in 1878: *"When the Paris Exhibition closes, electric light will close with it and no more be heard of."*

Simon Newcomb (astronomer, head of the U.S. Naval Observatory, late 1800's): *"No possible combination of known substances, known forms of machinery, and known forms of force, can be united in a practical machine by which man shall fly long distances through the air..."*

Thomas Edison said: *"They will never try to steal the phonograph because it has no 'commercial value'."* (He later revised that opinion.)

Lord Kelvin (ca. 1897): *"Radio has no future." ...and... "Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible."*

Albert Einstein in 1932: *"There is not the slightest indication that nuclear energy will ever be obtainable. It would mean that the atom would have to be shattered at will."* (This was achieved six years later!)

Admiral William Leahy (advice to President Truman, when asked his opinion of the atomic bomb project): *"That is the biggest fool thing we have ever done. The bomb will never go off, and I speak as an expert in explosives."*

Forest Ray Moulton (astronomer in 1935): *"There is not in sight any source of energy that would be a fair start toward that which would be necessary to get us beyond the gravitative control of the Earth."*

Darryl F. Zanuck (head of 20th Century Fox in 1946): *"Television won't be able to hold on to any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."*

Popular Mechanics in 1949: *"Computers in the future may... perhaps only weigh 1.5 tons."* (Help, my laptop's just fallen and crushed my foot...)

Dr. Richard van der Reit Wooley (Astronomer Royal, space advisor to the British government in 1956): *"Space travel is utter bilge."* Sputnik 1 almost certainly disagreed!

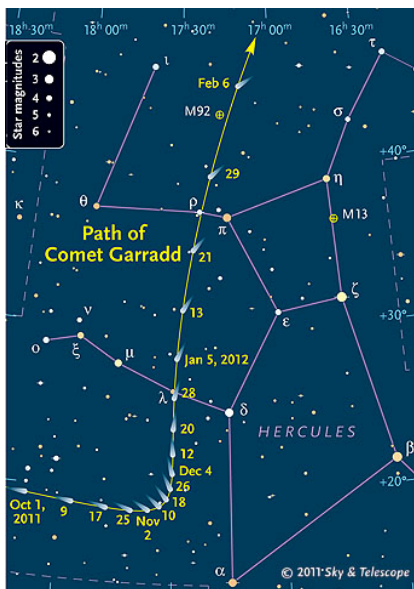
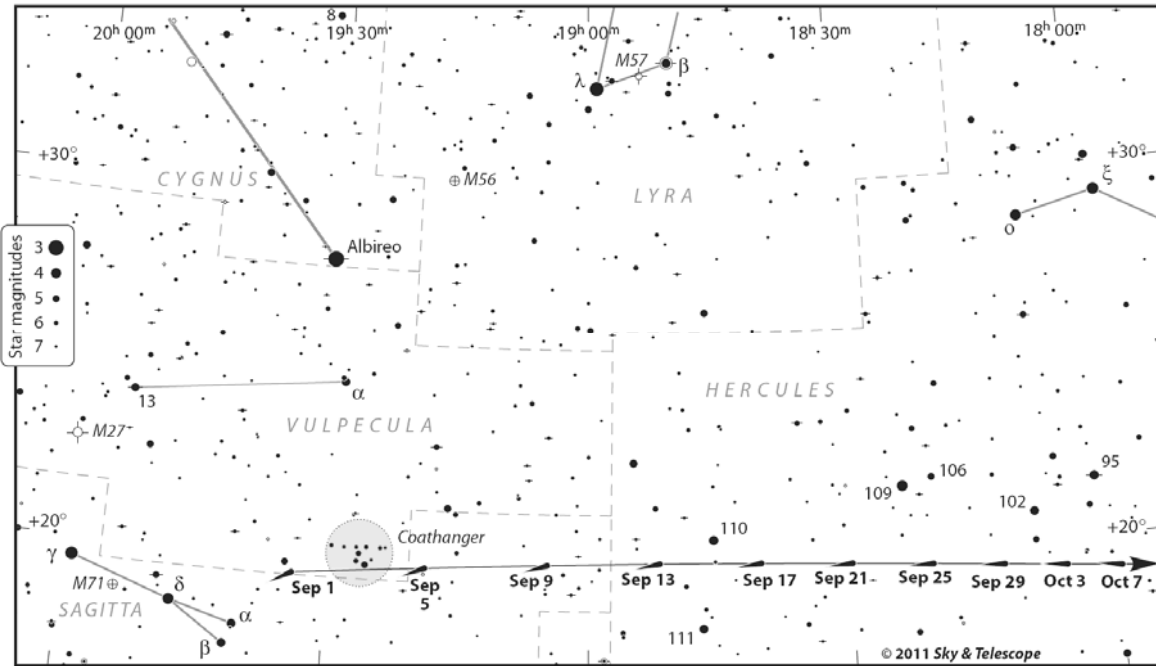
See you in September.

JIM

# SKY VIEWS

Mat Irvine & Jim Webb

There is potential sighting of a new comet in the skies! Comet Garrard, otherwise known as C/2009 P1 has been known about since 2009. It is a non-periodic comet, and currently it is at its brightest at about 7 magnitude, which is just about naked-eye visible.

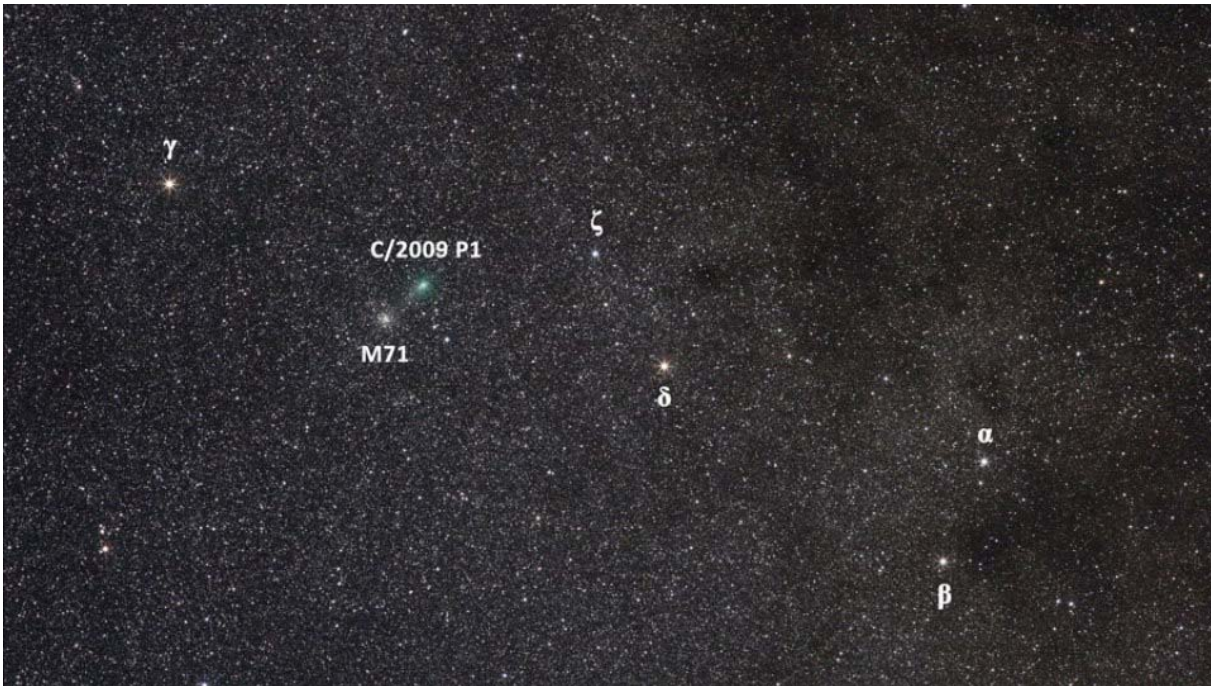


These maps, from *Sky & Telescope*, show - above - its path from where it has just passed Sagitta, through to the beginning of October.

The map to the left shows the path into next February.

The plan is that after the September meeting, ie next Thursday - and providing the weather allows! - we will depart to the outside of the meeting room, and have a search for it. Jim will bring one of the telescopes along, and if anyone else wants to bring a 'scope, or even binoculars along, we can have a mini star party (hmm, 'comet party'...)

A scientist at NASA explained the image - next page - taken at the end of August, where Comet Garrard passed near the globular cluster, M71. This was a 10 minute exposure, though taken - with our eye on using standard photographic equipment - a standard digital SLR. Also visible, and numbered, in the image are the brightest stars in *Sagitta* (the Arrow).



NASA image from Richard Tresch Fienberg (AAS)

One of the guests for the last The Sky at Night was astronaut Piers Sellers, (right) who also MC'd the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programme in 2007. He's pictured next to a model of his favourite Orbiter - Discovery. "It's because it is the oldest, and most worn!" he admitted.



Patrick Moore (above) was of course present at the recording, and your Editor also had the chance to visit ASH founder, Fred Clarke a few weeks ago. Fred is in fine spirits and sends his best to everyone in the ASH.





# The Night Sky : September - October 2011

## THE PLANETS

**MERCURY** : Now back in the morning skies and the best viewing for this year for the innermost planet. The planet was at the greatest western elongation on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Around magnitude -0.8, but will be rising closer and closer to the Sun as the month progresses. Mercury reaches conjunction on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**VENUS** : Was at superior conjunction on 16<sup>th</sup> August, but currently low down in the evening skies until later in the year.

**EARTH** : Autumn Equinox - 23<sup>rd</sup> September

**MARS** : Now rising around 02.00hrs throughout the month. Still fairly faint, but the red colour will make it stand out from surrounding stars. Although this is now the first of the year's best viewing opportunity the planet will only be five arc-seconds in apparent diameter. It will be last week of 2011 before Mars will present any significant viewing opportunities, but the best opportunities will still have to wait until March 2012. Moon close on 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

**JUPITER** : Now rising before midnight, and getting better placed for observation as the months progress. At maximum altitude it will be at 52°, at magnitude -2.7, which makes the seeing far better than if it was close to the horizon. This is the highest for observers in the UK since 2003. Moon is close 16<sup>th</sup> September and 13<sup>th</sup> October.

**SATURN** : Approaching conjunction with the Sun 13<sup>th</sup> October. Then the ringed planet will re-appear in the morning skies. The rings have been well placed for viewing this year, even in a small telescope, and as we pass into the latter half of the year, the shadow of the planet, will move south, leaving a better view of the Cassini Division.

**URANUS** : Moon close on 13<sup>th</sup> September, and 10<sup>th</sup> October. Reaches opposition on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

**NEPTUNE** : In Aquarius, around magnitude 7.8. The Moon is close on 8<sup>th</sup> October. Worth repeating that as Neptune was discovered 165 years ago and the planet takes about 164.8 Earth years to make an orbit; this year the planet has made one orbit since its discovery!

## METEORS

Dracoids peak 8<sup>th</sup> October; Orionids peak 20<sup>th</sup> October

## COMETS

Comet Garradd is the current one to find - see SKY VIEWS

## THE MOON



NEW 29<sup>th</sup> August  
NEW 27<sup>th</sup>

FIRST 4<sup>th</sup> Sept  
FIRST 4<sup>th</sup> October

FULL 12<sup>th</sup>  
FULL 12<sup>th</sup>

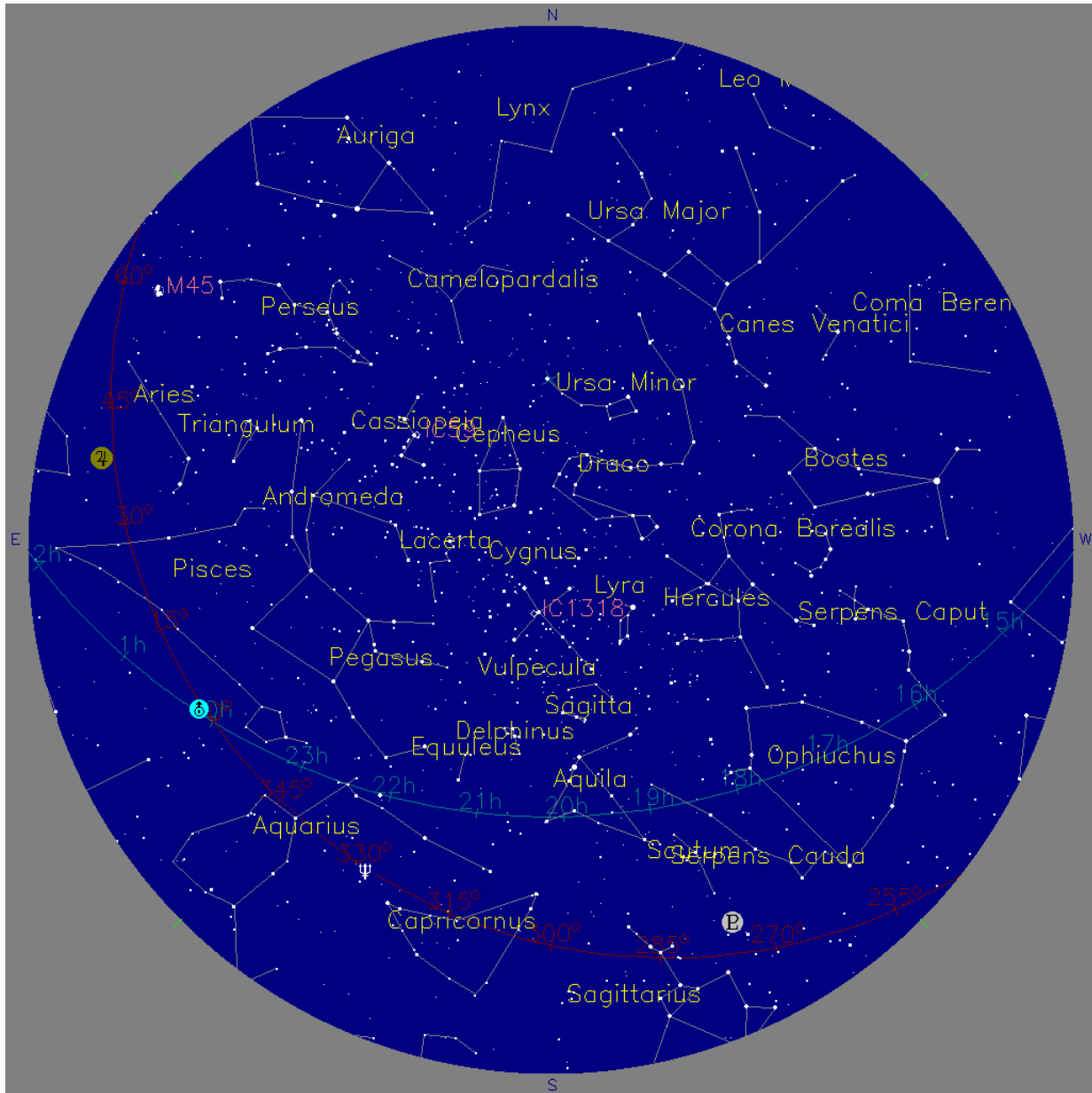
LAST 20<sup>th</sup>  
LAST 20<sup>th</sup>









NEW 27<sup>th</sup>  
NEW 26<sup>th</sup>



# THE NIGHT SKY : September - October 2011

As of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011, 19:00:00 UT



KEY	
 <b>MERCURY</b>	 <b>SATURN</b>
 <b>VENUS</b>	 <b>URANUS</b>
 <b>MARS</b>	 <b>NEPTUNE</b>
 <b>JUPITER</b>	 <b>PLUTO</b>



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### NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011

THE SOCIETY'S WEB SITE : [www.ashastro.org.uk](http://www.ashastro.org.uk)

**Yes, changes and updates are still planned for the website - including getting the magazine, with back issues, back on line. This is planned to take place in the reasonably near future - work commitments of those involved, permitting.**