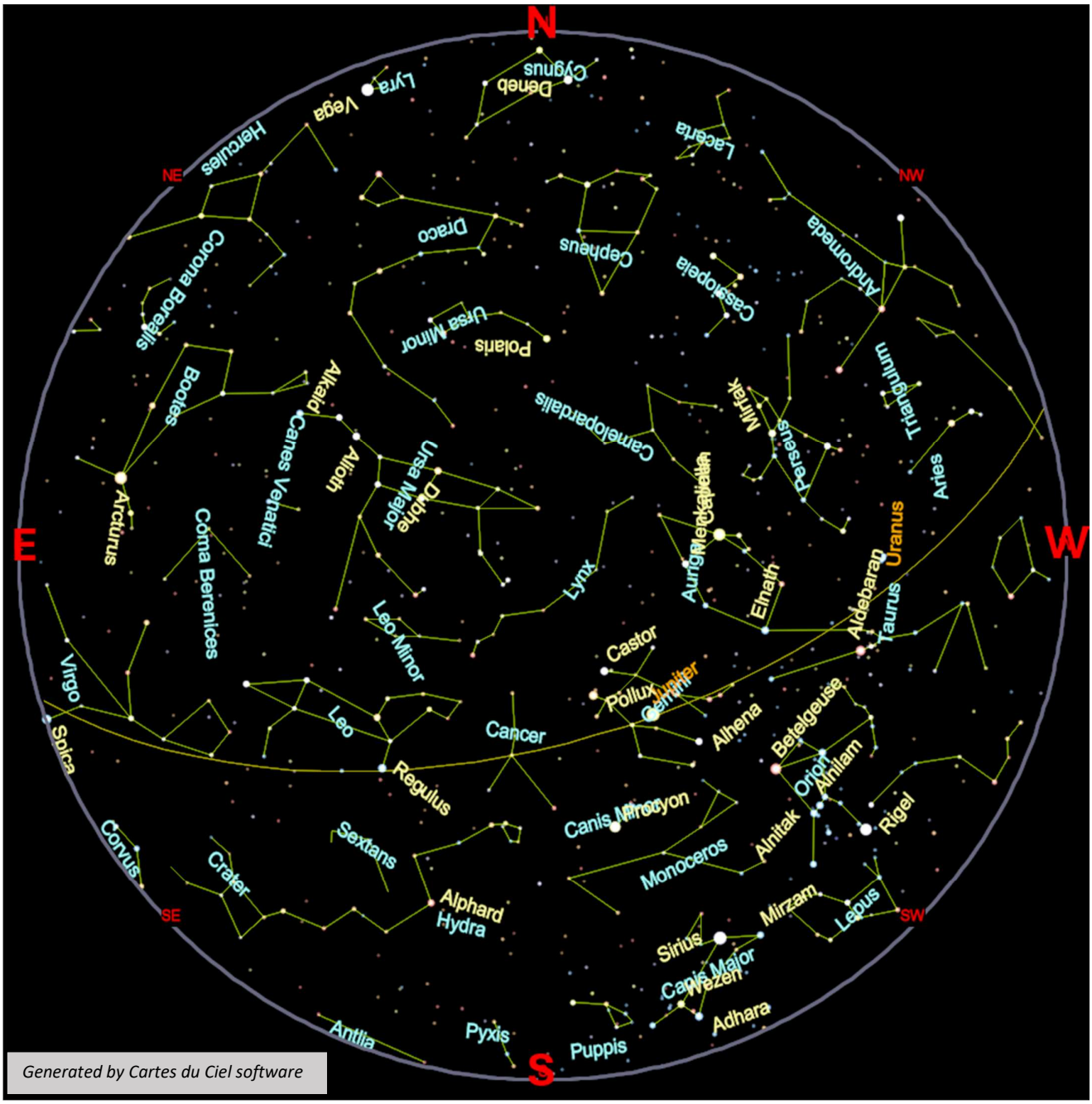
The Night Sky in March 2026

Monthly Guide

compiled by Doug Bickley



The chart is based on location 52.6° N, 2.2° W (Perton, Wolverhampton) @ 21:00 on 15/02/2026.
The orange line is the ecliptic.
We are looking SOUTH (as shown at the bottom of the chart) at the constellations Virgo, Leo, Cancer, Gemini and Orion, with the constellations Coma Berenices, Lynx and Taurus overhead.
***TO USE THE CHART - hold it so that the direction you are facing is at the bottom** – the lower part of the chart shows the sky ahead of you and the centre of the chart shows the sky directly over your head.*

Events to look out for this month:

3 Full Moon
2 Moon close to Regulus (morning)
7 Venus, Saturn and Neptune close together (evening)
8 Venus and Saturn in conjunction
19 New Moon
20 Crescent Moon and Venus in conjunction (daylight)
20 Vernal Equinox
19 Perton Library Astronomy Group meeting 7pm
19 Mercury greatest Eastern elongation (evening)
26 Moon and Jupiter in conjunction
29 BST begins 1am – put your clocks forward one hour

The phenomena of the month : March 2026

Times are given in UT for PERTON (2° 11' 53" W, 52° 35' 26" N, zone Z).

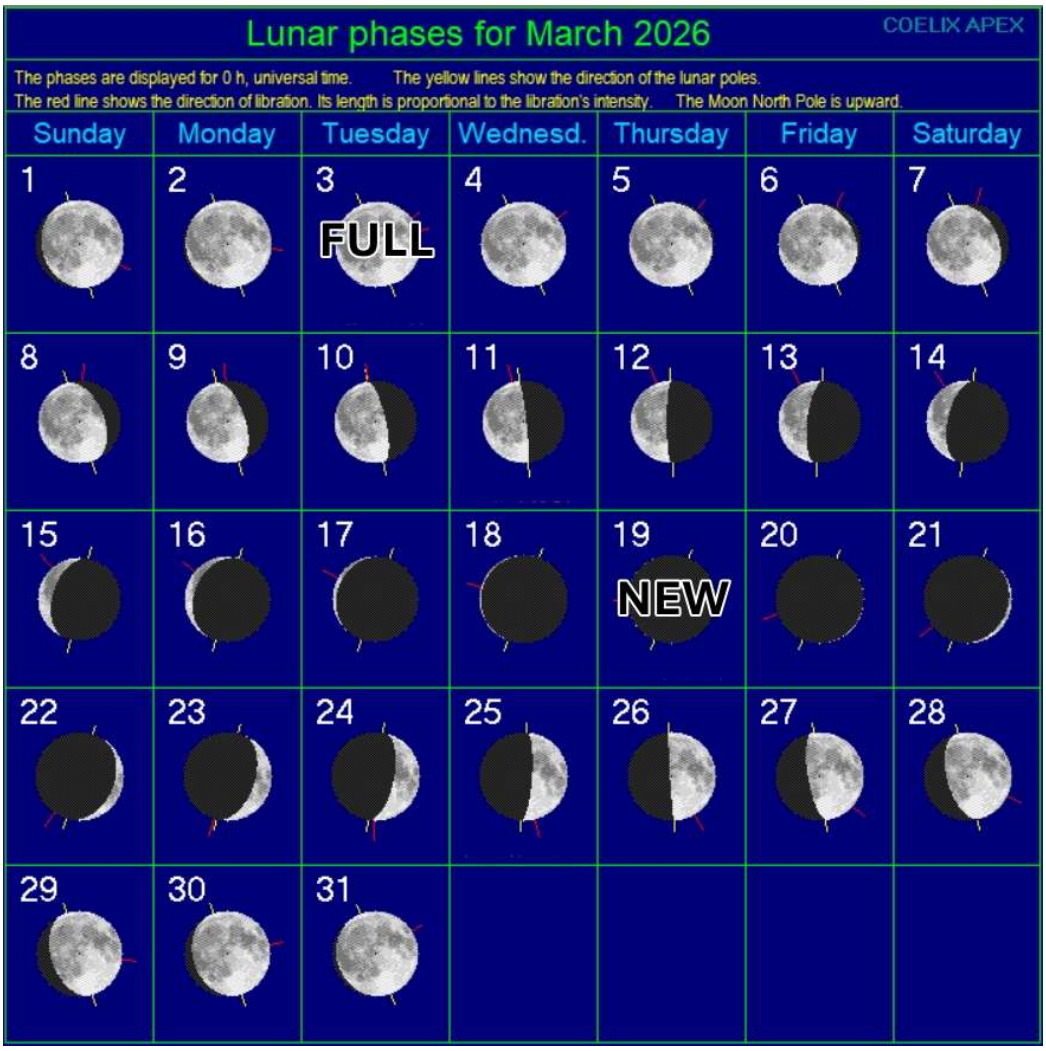
	Date	Hour	Description of the phenomenon
	yyyy mm dd	hh:mm	
1	2026 03 03	11:38	FULL MOON (total eclipse of the Moon not visible in PERTON)
2	2026 03 07	11:02	INFERIOR CONJUNCTION of Mercury with the Sun (geoc. dist. center to center = 3.6°)
3	2026 03 07	11:27	Close encounter between Venus and Neptune (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.1°)
4	2026 03 08	13:15	Close encounter between Venus and Saturn (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.9°)
5	2026 03 10	13:43	Moon at apogee (geocentric dist. = 404384 km)
6	2026 03 11	09:39	LAST QUARTER OF THE MOON
7	2026 03 15	11:59	Close encounter between Mercury and Mars (topocentric dist. center to center = 3.4°)
8	2026 03 19	01:23	NEW MOON
9	2026 03 20	08:05	Close encounter between the Moon and Venus (topocentric dist. center to center = 3.2°)
10	2026 03 20	14:46	SPRING EQUINOX
11	2026 03 22	11:20	CONJUNCTION between Neptune and the Sun (geoc. dist. center to center = 1.3°)
12	2026 03 22	11:40	Moon at perigee (geocentric dist. = 366857 km)
13	2026 03 25	08:56	CONJUNCTION between Saturn and the Sun (geoc. dist. center to center = 2.1°)
14	2026 03 25	19:17	FIRST QUARTER OF THE MOON
15	2026 03 26	07:00	Mars at its perihelion (distance to the Sun = 1.38126 AU)
16	2026 03 27	02:47	Close encounter between the Moon and Pollux (topocentric dist. center to center = 3.9°)
17	2026 03 28	04:02	Close encounter between the Moon and M 44 (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.2°)
18	2026 03 29	18:14	Beginning of occultation of 32-alpha Leo, Régulus, (magn. = 1.36)
19	2026 03 29	18:46	Close encounter between the Moon and Regulus (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.1°)
20	2026 03 29	19:18	End of occultation of 32-alpha Leo, Régulus, (magn. = 1.36)

THE MOON

Lunar Phases this month

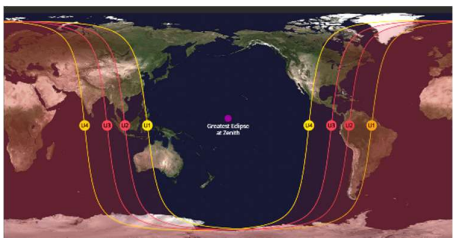
Full Moon is on 3 March

New Moon is on 19 March



Ancient cultures giving the Full Moons names like Flower Moon makes these names common in the media as the names are still in use today. Of course these vary by time zone, but all this guide is based on the local time in Wolverhampton.

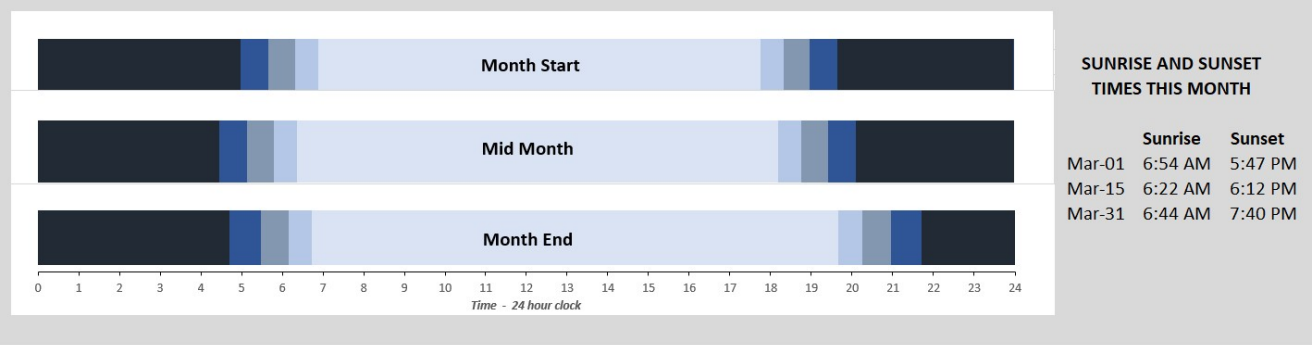
You will probably see in the media that the March Full Moon is called a Worm Moon. This is the last Full Moon of the winter when the earthworms that come out as the soil warms up. Native American tribes also called it the Crow Moon for the crows coming back, the Snow Crust Moon, and the Sap and Sugar Moon for when the maple sap runs.
The Anglo-Saxons called it Lenten Moon after the Germanic Lenten for spring. The Celts called it the Wind Moon and Plough Moon. In Old English, it was known as the Death Moon and the Chaste Moon referring to the purity of the spring season.



You may have heard about the total lunar eclipse due on 3 March 2026 – unfortunately this will not be visible in Europe or Africa, only in North America, South America, East Asia and Australia.

THE SUN

Graphical format showing sun rising, setting and twilight linked to an online data source (time-ok.com) to show twilight zones more clearly. Location is set at Wolverhampton UK.

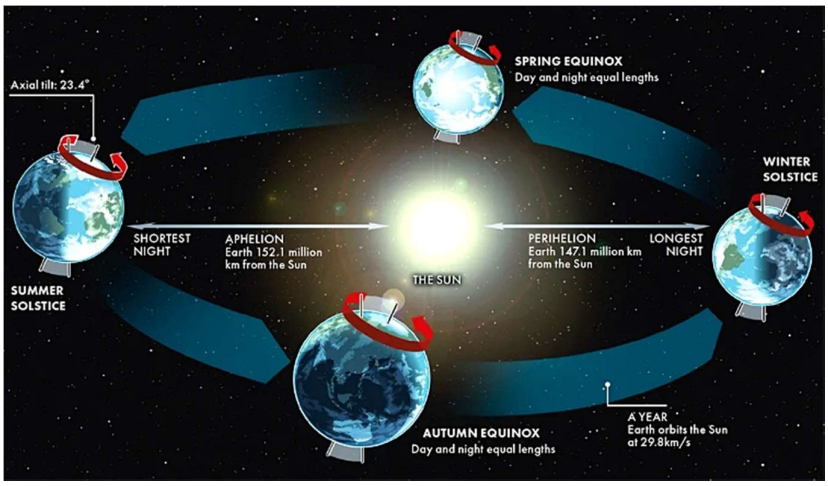


Two dates to remember this month:

1. Spring (Vernal Equinox) on Friday 20 March at 14:45:14.
2. Clocks 'spring' forward one hour at 1am on Sunday 29 March as we move from GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) to BST (British Summer Time). Astronomers usually stay with UT (Universal Time). This marks the official astronomical end to winter.

At the equinox, the sun crosses the celestial equator – a line directly above Earth's equator – and Earth's two hemispheres receive the sun's rays equally, so night and day are often said to be equal in length. In fact, the word equinox comes from the Latin 'aequus' (equal) and 'nox' (night).

Changes in the length of day and night are caused by the tilt of the Earth. As the Earth orbits the Sun, at certain times of the year the Northern Hemisphere is tilted towards the Sun and the Southern Hemisphere is tilted away from it. For the other half of the year, the reverse happens.
Earth's rotational axis is an imaginary straight line that runs through the North and South Pole, but it rotates at an angle to the ecliptic, or orbital, plane. At the moment this slant is about 23.4 degrees but it is decreasing v...e...r...y slowly.



And don't get astronomers talking about Spring!

Meteorological spring and Astronomical spring are different - the former is based on the annual temperature cycle and the calendar, so spring starts on 1 March and ends on 31 May (ridiculous). Astronomical spring changes every year based on the earth's position to the sun (much more sense).

PLANETS THIS MONTH

Here's my usual summary table showing planetary observation opportunities based on mid-month data:

	Planetrise/Planetset, Sun, 15 Mar 2026			
Planet	Rise	Set	Meridian	Comment
Mercury	Sun 05:45	Sun 16:49	Sun 11:17	Extremely difficult to see
Venus	Sun 06:57	Sun 19:42	Sun 13:19	Fairly good visibility
Mars	Sun 06:07	Sun 16:41	Sun 11:24	Extremely difficult to see
Jupiter	Sun 11:22	Mon 03:58	Sun 19:40	Perfect visibility
Saturn	Sun 06:52	Sun 18:52	Sun 12:52	Extremely difficult to see
Uranus	Sun 08:25	Mon 00:13	Sun 16:19	Difficult to see
Neptune	Sun 06:44	Sun 18:43	Sun 12:43	Extremely difficult to see

Data from timeanddate.com

Here is my usual run-down of planetary movements for the month of March:

Mercury is still Aquarius, a dim evening planet at the start of the month. Inferior conjunction occurs on 7 March when the planet passes directly between the Earth and the Sun, placing all three bodies in a line. During this phase, the planet is closest to Earth, invisible due to the Sun's glare, but it will re-emerge into the morning sky. Not a very good month for viewing.

Venus is in the W in Aries shining at mag -3.8 and a bright evening planet. On 7 March mag +0.7 Saturn is close with mag +8.0 Neptune nearby too. On 20 March at around 19:00 UT the planet will be close to a very thin 3%-lit waxing crescent Moon.

Mars is currently a morning planet but too close to the Sun to be seen..

Jupiter remains in the S in Gemini at a maximum altitude of 60° (dropping to about 50° by month end) and shining at mag -2.3 and still steals the show. With a small telescope or binoculars it is easy to see the biggest Galilean moons. On 26 March Jupiter will be close to a 61%-lit waxing gibbous Moon.

Saturn is in the W in Pisces at a maximum altitude of only 6° shining at mag +0.7 and is moving towards the Sun. On the evenings of 7 and 8 March Venus will be close by. Saturn reaches solar conjunction on 25 March when the planet is behind the Sun as seen from Earth, and it will stay too close to the Sun to be seen in the morning sky for the rest of the month.

Uranus is still in the SW in Taurus, shining at mag. +5.7 at a maximum altitude of 46° at the start of the month and is easily visible. The planet is to the South of the Pleiades. However observing gets worse as the planet moves towards the Sun.

Neptune is still in the SW in Pisces very low on the horizon shortly after sunset, making it challenging to observe and is moving too close to the Sun to be seen. It reaches solar conjunction when the planet is behind the Sun from Earth's perspective on 22 March.

International Space Station (ISS)

Forecast time for all visible passes this month

Date	Mag	Transit time	Start			High point	End		
			Time	Alt.degs.	Az.		Time	Alt.degs.	Az.
01-Mar	-3.1	02:48	04:52	42°	S	42°	04:55	10°	SE
02-Mar	-1.2	00:54	04:07	17°	ESE	17°	04:08	10°	ESE
02-Mar	-2.1	03:24	05:40	17°	WSW	19°	05:44	10°	SSE
03-Mar	-2.1	01:49	04:55	22°	S	22°	04:57	10°	SSE
11-Mar	-1.3	00:31	20:08	10°	SSW	13°	20:08	13°	SSW
12-Mar	-1.9	02:22	19:21	10°	S	16°	19:23	16°	SE
12-Mar	-0.8	00:14	20:56	10°	WSW	12°	20:56	12°	SW
13-Mar	-2.7	02:28	20:09	10°	SW	34°	20:11	34°	S
14-Mar	-2.7	04:27	19:21	10°	SW	29°	19:26	21°	ESE
14-Mar	-1.5	01:17	20:57	10°	WSW	21°	20:59	21°	WSW
15-Mar	-3.7	03:25	20:10	10°	WSW	61°	20:13	61°	SSE
16-Mar	-3.4	05:23	19:22	10°	WSW	49°	19:28	20°	E
16-Mar	-1.9	01:46	20:59	10°	W	28°	21:01	28°	W
17-Mar	-3.9	03:47	20:11	10°	W	76°	20:15	65°	ESE
18-Mar	-3.7	05:44	19:23	10°	WSW	70°	19:29	19°	E
18-Mar	-2.1	01:57	21:00	10°	W	31°	21:02	31°	W
19-Mar	-3.8	03:52	20:12	10°	W	74°	20:16	60°	SE
20-Mar	-3.7	05:49	19:25	10°	W	77°	19:30	18°	E
20-Mar	-2.0	01:57	21:01	10°	W	29°	21:03	29°	WSW
21-Mar	-3.5	03:54	20:14	10°	W	56°	20:18	48°	SSE
22-Mar	-3.6	05:51	19:26	10°	W	67°	19:32	17°	ESE
22-Mar	-1.7	01:50	21:03	10°	W	22°	21:05	22°	WSW
23-Mar	-2.7	03:54	20:15	10°	W	35°	20:19	30°	S
24-Mar	-3.0	05:56	19:27	10°	W	45°	19:33	14°	SE
24-Mar	-1.1	01:14	21:05	10°	WSW	13°	21:06	13°	SW
25-Mar	-1.7	03:46	20:16	10°	W	19°	20:20	16°	S
26-Mar	-2.0	05:49	19:28	10°	W	26°	19:34	10°	SSE
28-Mar	-1.1	03:45	19:30	10°	WSW	14°	19:34	10°	S

you can also install these apps to check for passes

Android:
ISS Detector
Satellite Tracker

IOS:
ISS Spotter

No evening passes this month so I've shown all visible passes forecast.
As always check the Heavens-Above website for the latest forecasts.
[source: https://www.heavens-above.com/]

METEOR SHOWERS

No meteor showers this month from our location
But as always there is a chance of a sporadid meteor.

ARTEMIS II

After the successful "wet dress rehersal" fuel fill of the SLS on 19/20 February NASA has indicated an earliest launch scheduled for no earlier than 6 March 8:29 p.m. EST (7 March in the UK). The mission will see four astronauts take part in a 10-day fly around the far side of the Moon and back to Earth again.

PERTON LIBRARY ASTRONOMY GROUP

The group meets on the third Thursday of every month of the year at Perton Library from 7pm to 9pm. No subscription, no need to book, all free, just drop in at any time during the evening.
(Location WV6 7QU or on what3words ///saints.empty.stands)
The group is a relaxed and friendly gathering with the occasional talk.

We are particularly suited to beginners who very often bring their telescopes along for advice on how to set up, and we have experienced members who can help with this. If the skies are clear we do try to do some observing with library and member equipment.

WOLVERHAMPTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY LECTURE PROGRAMME

The Wolvas annual subscription remains a bargain at £10 per annum and you can sign up now our website www.wolvas.org.uk and pay your subscription, preferably by bank transfer.

We put together a yearly 16 lecture programme and some of this year's programme is shown below.

The host location for our live talks remains the University of Wolverhampton in the city centre. Access and facilities are excellent - details are available on the Wolvas website. Lectures in person or online will only be available to paid-up members of the Society. Members will receive regular emails with invitations to the Zoom sessions and reminders of the in-person lectures.
Non-members may attend the talks live for £2 on the door.

Our lecture season has now resumed for the 2025/26 season.

Here is a list of the upcoming lectures, please keep an eye on our website for updates and also synopses of the individual talks:

02-Mar-26	Fran Bagenal	NASA's Juno Mission to Jupiter (live from Colorado)
16-Mar-26	Simon Banton	The Astronomy of Stonehenge
13-Apr-26	Simon Holbeche	The Women who discovered what stars are made of
11-May-26	TBC	TBC
08-Jun-26	Paul Fellows	Once around the moons of Pluto

As well as our website we will be posting details of events on social media, so keep an eye on our Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/wolvasuk) and X *[Twitter]* (https://twitter.com/wolvasuk) pages for the latest news.