

Stars & Planets May 2016

The Sun shines from the Ram until the 14th when it becomes a Bull Sun. Mercury is lively and definitely one to watch in the Ram all month and playing with the line of the Sun! Venus is well out of sight beyond the Sun approaching outer conjunction on 6th June. Mars and Saturn both continue to move retrograde in the Scorpion, shining as visible planets all night. Mars stands opposite to the Sun on 22nd (only 4 light minutes away from us!) well inside the earth/sun sphere. But not as near as will be next time in July 2018. Saturn reaches opposition just 5 days into June. So both are at their brightest and stand in contrast to Antares, the heart of the Scorpion. Jupiter is still there too, stationary on 9th and becoming direct again below the tail end of the Lion.

Mercury, having been at Greatest Eastern Elongation and nearly 3° north of the ecliptic in the middle of April has been drawing back down towards the Sun on a collision course to pass through his descending node and across the face of the Sun on 9th.

If we are blessed with a sunny day this will be a fascinating visible event. One that brings the relationship and ratio of Sun, Mercury & Earth to our consciousness if we're lucky. (get your eye protecting glasses and pin hole camera's ready!)

For the remainder of the month Mercury moves retrograde and out into the morning sky ahead of the Sun, but due to an opposite relationship to the tilt of the Zodiac that made him stand high in the evening sky in April he won't be easy to find low on the horizon for us in the northern hemisphere. (Think that one out!)

So while our inner planets play in the Sun's light our night sky has the three outer planets visible. Perhaps if we can meditate upon the three of them sitting there with their respective brightness and colour we can gain some insight into their qualities. Their influence is deeply felt in the human psyche and in our biography. And, their spheres have formed stages in Earth evolution connecting us with the working of the four elements in the world around us! (elementals as co-workers of the hierarchical beings)

The constellations of the evening sky are much as last month with everybody just moved a bit to their west if one makes one's observation at the same time each evening. But with the lengthening evening light we probably need to adjust our viewing time a bit later. In the north the 'clock' of the pointers in the Plough move on 30° anti-clockwise. Last month's sky diagrams hold good.

As in April the Moon enters May as a waning crescent, 6 days from New. The Moon of the Hawthorn blossom begins. And for others the countdown to the month of Ramadan. The sighting of the tiniest new crescent of the Moon being the signal for each new month in Islam. In modern times many people follow the timing according to world-wide astronomical calculation rather than as of old with the first actual sighting of the moon wherever one would happen to be. So generally Ramadan will start this year with the sunset on 5th June. Sunrise to Sunset being the hours of fasting, with Eid al-Fitr, the festival to mark the end of the month of fasting coming on 6th July this year.

Ephemeris for May 2016

	Moon in:-	BST
1 st	10h Waterman	Sun about 12 ^o through the Ram, progressing 1 ^o a day
2 nd	Waterman	Moon conjunct Neptune & opposite Jupiter
3 rd	05hrs Fishes	Warmth trine of Sun & Jupiter
4 th	Fishes	
5 th	18h Ram	Ascension. Moon passes Uranus
6 th	Ram	Moon passes Venus. Then Perigee. Then New Moon
7 th	08h Bull	Moon meets Mercury. Warmth trine of Sun with Pluto
8 th	Bull	Moon goes opposite to Mars and then Saturn
9 th	18h Twins	Mercury passes across the face of the Sun from 12h to 19h. visible with eye protection! (L to R & downwards)
10 th	twins	
11 th	19h Crab	
12 th	Crab	
13 th	09h Lion	Mercury and Pluto make a warmth trine. Mercury passes Venus heading retrograde.
14 th	lion	Sun enters the Bull. Venus and Pluto make a warmth trine too. (that's 5 warmth trines!) Waxing Moon approaches Jupiter.
15 th	lion	Whitsun. Moon at Apogee. Moon passes Jupiter
16 th	06h Virgin	
17 th	Virgin	
18 th	Virgin	Moon opposite Uranus
19 th	Virgin	Venus enters the Bull
20 th	03h Scales	Moon opposite Mercury
21 st	15h Scorpion	Full Moon 22h and standing right above Mars.
22 nd	Scorpion	Mercury in the morning sky now turns to direct motion. (greatest elongation doesn't come until 5 th June though) Just waning Moon passes Saturn
23 rd	Scorpion	
24 th	04h Archer	
25 th	Archer	Venus is opposite to Mars (remember comment by Alex) and the Moon passes Pluto
26 th	13h Goat	
27 th	Goat	
28 th	16h Waterman	
29 th	Waterman	Moon passes Neptune and is opposite Jupiter
30 th	12h Fishes	Sun conjunct Aldebaran (in the eye of the Bull!)
31 st	Fishes	A sixth warmth trine! Mercury now heading forwards again trines with Pluto to end the month.

