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| New Moon 5 th @ 01:35 | First Quarter 12 th @ 00:03 | Full Moon 19 th @ 00:38 | Last Quarter 27 th @ 00:41 |
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Note: Times are in Chailey local time – GMT+1 until 27th October, then GMT+0

A quick reminder that the clocks go back 1 hour on the 27th October.

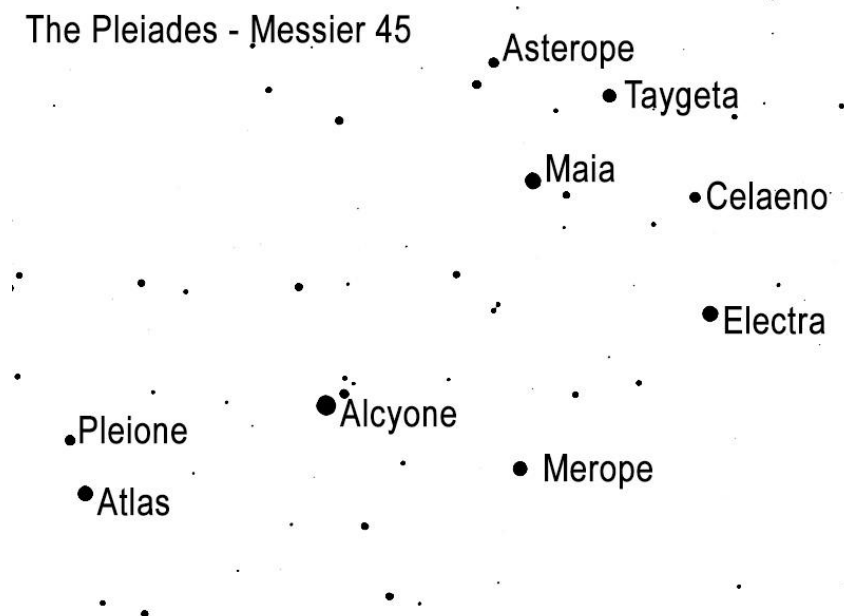
It was the beginning of the Autumn on the 22nd September, so the night sky is now visible for longer than daytime. There are plenty of things to look at with just your eyes at this time of year. One of the jewels of the Autumn and Winter skies is the early rising Pleiades cluster.

Easily visible even from towns, I remember looking at this cluster as a child before bedtime. I had a couple of books on Astronomy then, but that was it. As we learnt last month, even the nearby stars are a long long way away, and it takes many hundreds of years for any movement to be seen by the naked eye. When you look at the night sky, it is almost completely unchanged from what your distant ancestor saw several thousand years ago.

Finding the Pleiades is very easy. As do all objects, it rises from the East, and at 22:00 it is about 15 degrees above the horizon in the East. Look for a loose group of bright stars about the distance between your first and little fingers above the horizon.

I can pick out 6 bright stars easily myself, and some say that they can see 7 or even eight, but in reality this is a nearby cluster of hot middle-aged stars about 100 million years old. These stars live fast and die young, and are expected to last for only another 150 million years.

This cluster has been around so long, and is so noticeable in the night sky that there are legends and stories covering most cultures of the world. The Celts associated the cluster with tears and mourning, whereas the Greeks associated them with the seven daughters of the titan Atlas and his wife Pleione, which is how the principal stars are named today. Maia was the eldest, and Merope the youngest.



Don't forget that you can learn more about South Common Observatory, see the pictures I have taken from Chailey, or order my Astronomical Greetings cards from my website: <http://nebul.ae>.

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