



Evening sky in AUGUST 2015

The Milky Way Galaxy contains 400 billion stars and our Sun is one of those stars. It lies about 27 000 light years from the galactic centre. Looking straight up, in the direction of the constellations Scorpius (Scorpion) and Sagittarius (Archer), we look towards the centre of our galaxy. Three other galaxies are visible to the naked eye on dark nights, the two Magellanic Clouds appear low in the south and the Andromeda Galaxy rises after midnight in the northeast. The bright stars of Crux (Southern Cross) and the Pointers (Alpha and Beta Centauri (Centaurus)) are found high in the southwestern sky. To the north Arcturus indicates the position of Boötes (Herdsman) and Altair shows the position of Aquila (Eagle). The fainter stars of the constellation Hercules, the strong man, appear between the two.

Early in the month planets Mercury, Venus and Jupiter are in the west shortly after sunset. After mid-month Venus has disappeared from the evening sky while Mercury is at its most favourable for observation, moving from Leo (Lion) into Virgo (Maiden). Jupiter is in Leo and planet Saturn is in Libra (Scales).

The Moon is in the evening sky until 2 August and again after 16 August.