

Sky Notes : June 2011

We are entering the summer months with the shorter nights – most suited to the ‘night owls’ amongst us!

With the reduced opportunity for deep sky observing, we can witness the start of the noctilucent cloud (NLC) season. The clouds appear at a height of about 82km in the atmosphere and are visible when the sun is between 6 and 16 degrees below the horizon.

➤ **Moon** : New on 2nd and Full on 15th

- A total lunar eclipse occurs on 15th, but is not well placed. A clear south-eastern horizon is required. The moon rises in eclipse at 21:36 and totality will last for a further 30 minutes.

➤ **Sun** : 21st is the summer solstice – the longest day.

➤ **Planets**

- **Saturn** : The best planet well placed for observing. Still prominent, it will be found in the south-eastern sky in Virgo.
- **Mars** : Rising early in the morning, it will not achieve any great altitude before being swamped by the dawn sky.
- **Jupiter** : Rises a little earlier than Mars in the morning sky & will achieve a useful altitude before sunrise.