

PLANETS ALIGN IN DECEMBER

There are no formal Star parties in early December, probably just as well in view of the weird weather forecasts. But here are some ideas on how to see rare events in the first week or so this December.

Alderney is an ideal place to view planets & Moon playing tag & aligning, & a rare chance to spot elusive Mercury.

A WORD OF WARNING AT THIS POINT. To see Mercury so very close to sunset do not attempt to view before sunset because of the risk of looking directly at the sun, definitely never ever before with binoculars.

However, with extreme care, just before in the last few seconds of sunset, visitors are invited to see if you can spot the famous "Green Flash" that is very commonly seen from the superb clear atmosphere on Alderney.

The picture forecast on December 2 will give you an idea of where to look in the South Western sea horizon sky, just to left of the set sun. Ideal views, but be very careful in the dark, are from The Giffoine region and overlooking Les Etacs.

Choose a time and place with a good horizon and do have a go on at least one day when the weather is kind.

Many will want to photograph the way the Moon plays tag as it moves through the planets and Maunder's famous "Five, Six" Rule still works well with any digital camera, although invented for older film cameras.

Try any digi camera on auto and see what happens. If happy, stick with that, otherwise MAUNDER'S 5 6 Rule is :

"With an ISO of 56, lens set at f5.6, you'll get good twilight pictures with an exposure of 5 to 6 seconds."

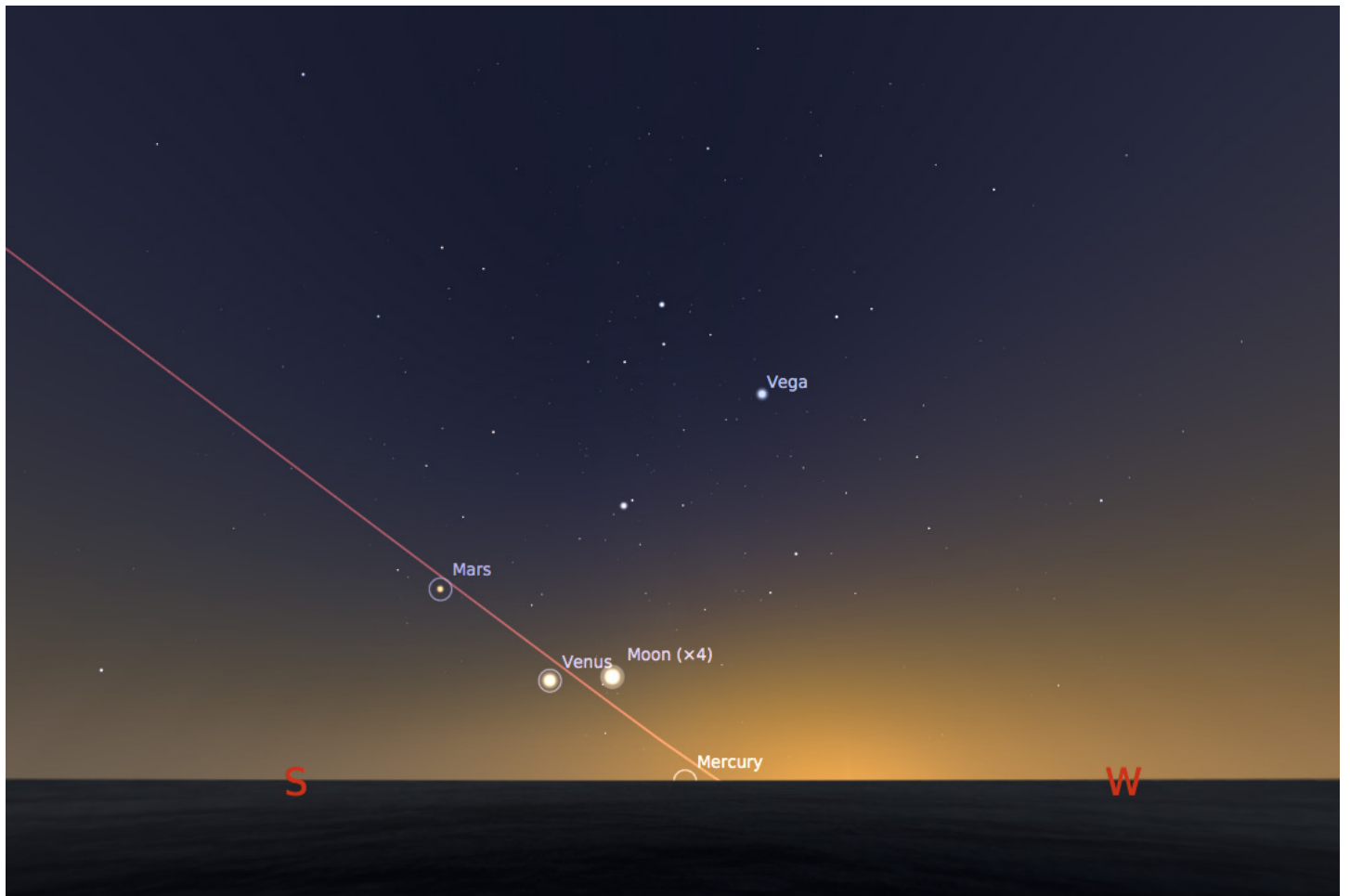
Thus, a digi camera @ ISO 200 and lens at F4 an exposure around 1second is to be expected.

Modern mobiles and tablets on auto give some amazing results under these conditions, but as with all photography of this type a tripod or rigid mount is de riguer. A selfie stick can be better than nothing as it can be supported on a fence &c. A remote release is now quite common with these aids, and essential in my opinion.

Michael Maunder

For more information, contact Michael by email on mike.speedibrews@gmail.com

SOME IDEA OF WHAT TO SEE FROM 2nd DECEMBER



Watch Mars, Mercury, Venus & the Moon change into the mid-month