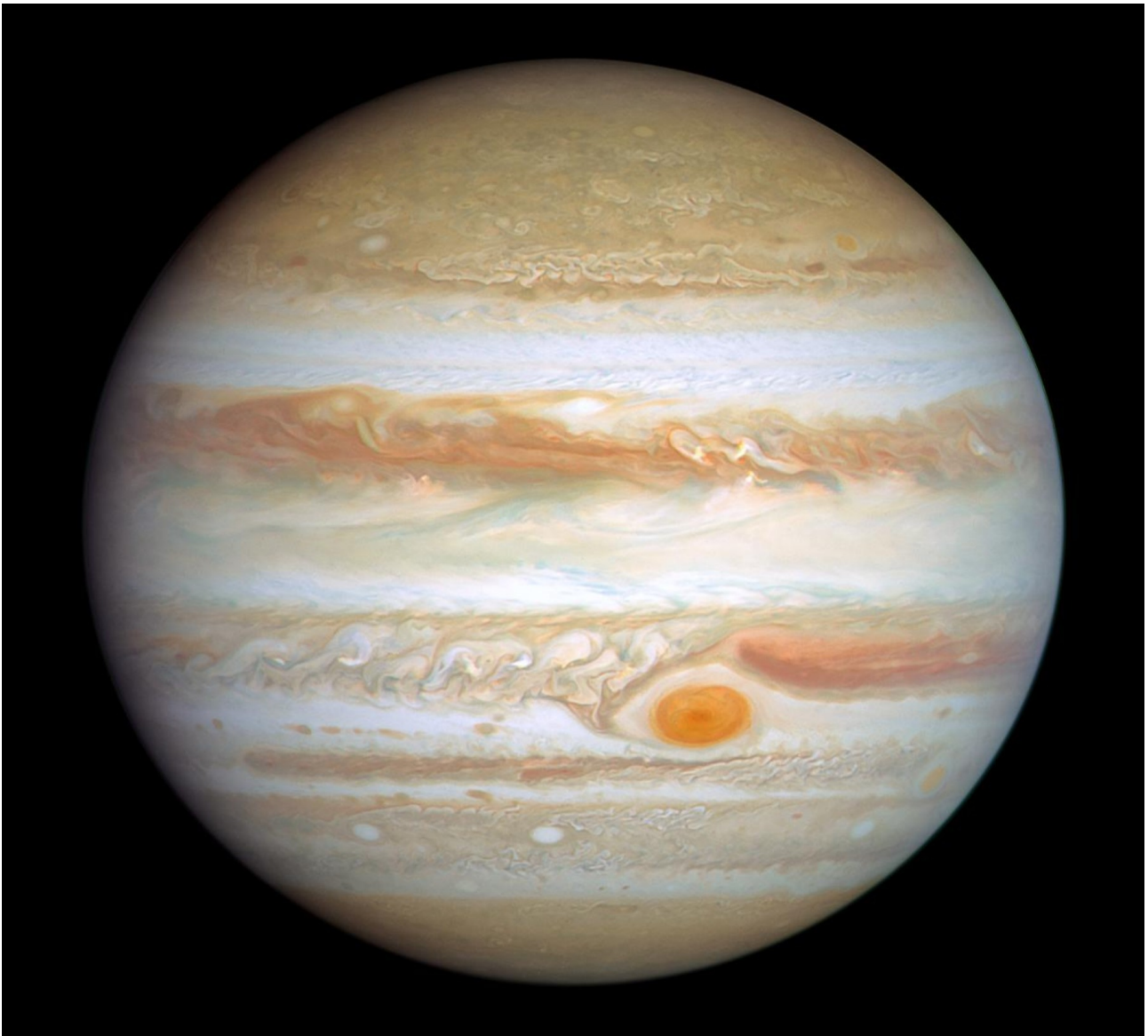


Betelgeuse

Monthly newsletter of the East Oxford Astronomy Club
Issue 2: March 2026.



from *Wikipedia*

Jupiter

Natty Mark Samuels

Editorial

How many planets did you see, with or without optical aid, during the recent phenomenon? They orbit the Sun at different speeds. For example, it takes Mercury eighty eight days to orbit our star; Neptune, 165 years. Also, there's the distance. Because of the elliptical (oval shaped) nature of orbits, there are wide variations; between perihelion, closest to the Sun and aphelion, furthest distance from it. But there are times, when seen from Earth, that planets seem to be close together in a linear positioning (although they are multi-million miles distances between them), influenced by the ecliptic, the path of the Sun; generating what is known as planetary alignment aka planet parade. The potential to see six is a rarity. The next seven planet alignment is expected in 2040.

Distance and orbits are part of the first piece, where the spotlight is put on Sednoids, objects in the furthest regions of the solar system, out there beyond Pluto.

The second piece is from a new collection of writings, which may evolve into a novella. In the form of letters – five have been written so far - I introduce Betelguese and the constellation Orion. Here is what ESA (European Space Agency) says about the Cosmic Microwave Background. ***The Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) is the cooled remnant of the first light that could travel freely throughout the Universe. This 'fossil' radiation, the furthest that any telescope can see, was released soon after the Big Bang...ESA's Planck mission detected this first light, which is also the 'oldest' radiation detectable and carries information about our past and future. By observing it, Planck saw the universe as it was almost at its origin.***

Now, lets talk books, a favourite subject of mine! If you want to buy astronomy books in Oxford, there's the two Oxfam shops in the town centre; one on Turl Street, the other on St. Giles: both sell only books. The astronomy section in both shops is downstairs. There's also the Oxfam shop in Summertown, where the book section is upstairs. And then there's Blackwell's. Yes! Downstairs in that shop is where you'll find the latest books on astronomy; about half of my astronomy books come from that particular treasury. Children's books can be bought from the Space Store in the Covered Market.

Recommended book

Webb's Universe - Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Recommended YouTube video

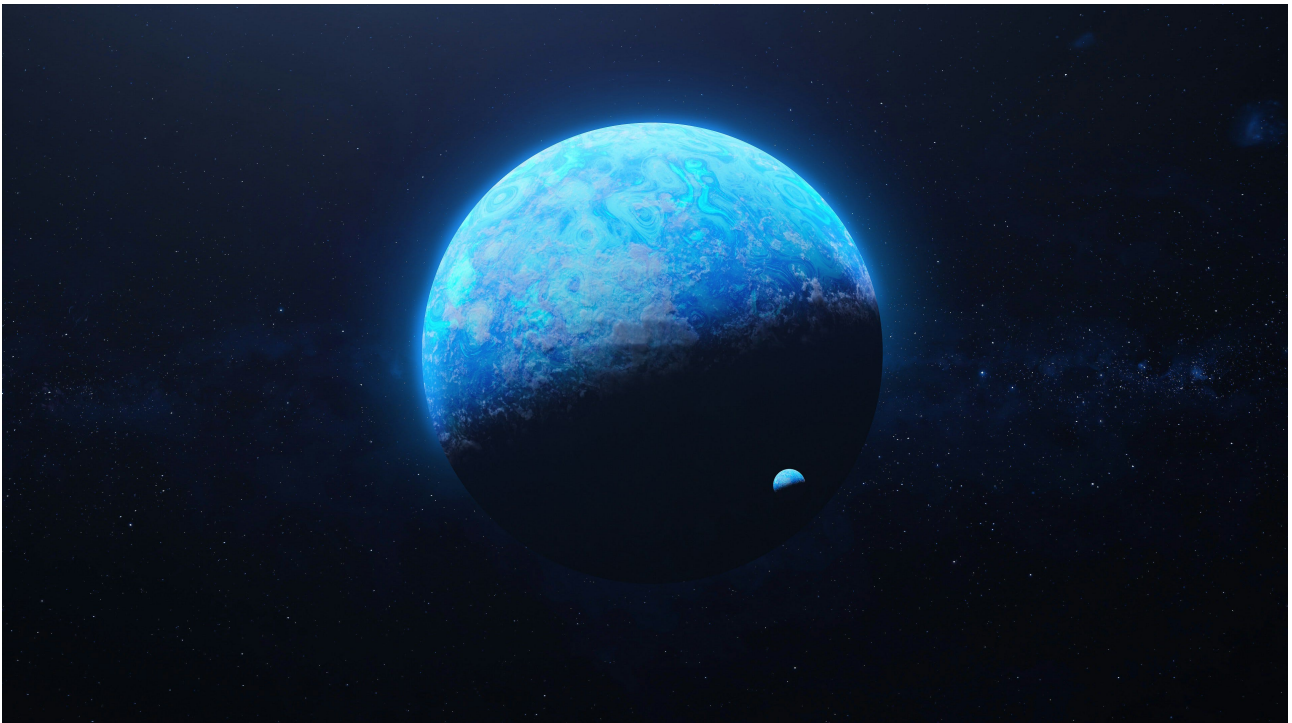
Discovering Ammonite: The Rare Sednoid Of Our Solar System
Culture Craze

Sednoid

You've heard of asteroid, but maybe not of Sednoid. And where there are millions of asteroids, there are just four sednoids; the fourth one was confirmed this month, July 2025. The discovering astronomers, are an international team led by Japanese and Taiwanese scientists. Discovered through the Subaru telescope, confirmed by the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope. They have nicknamed this sednoid Ammonite, till official IAU designation.

Sednoids are Trans-Neptunian Objects (TNO), residing beyond the orbit of Neptune, in the outer regions of the solar system. Sednoid comes from Sedna – Inuit goddess of the sea - one of the most distant objects in the solar system, discovered in 2003. One of the distinguishing features of a sednoid, is the distance. For example, Ammonite is approximately 71 astronomical units (AU) from the Sun; at perihelion, when it is closest to it. In celestial measuring, it is one astronomical unit from the Sun to Earth; Neptune is 30 AU from the sun.

from Leys Satellite issue two



from Medium

Ammonite

Greetings Humanity

How's things?

As I begin this correspondence with you, first of all, let me dispel a myth; let me tell you that giants are real; I am a living example of their existence. So let's talk of this word giant. One of your dictionaries says '*A giant is a creature, person or thing of unusually immense size, strength, or importance.*' Well, I am so big, they call me a supergiant. As far as strength goes, I'm the tenth brightest thing up here. And talking of importance, I'm also known as Alpha. Yes, the tenth brightest star, also known as Alpha Orionis: I am Betelgeuse.

You're thinking, how does Betelgeuse know of such things? Well, this is due to the one we call Mama S. No one knows what the S stands; some say Sky, others say Sage; some say Serene; many think it signifies Shrine. Anyway, we call her Mama S; well, that is us the younger denizens like me: ten million years old or younger. The Great Elders like Sun, can call her S. Now, how can I explain her to you? General consensus is that she's been around since just after the Big Bang, like the Cosmic Microwave Background, that you document and discuss. So she is original emanation, ethereal spirit; our archive, as well as teacher. So, if you reflect on what the Webb and other telescopes have given you; orbiters and rovers; the dishes of radio detection, Mama S is like that to us. She gives us information into your exploration and discoveries of our residences. And just like you have Space.com, Space in Africa, Earth Sky and so on, Mama S gives us regular updates, as you continue to leave there and come up here, in person or through machine. She comes through like a sacred messenger, sprinkling knowledge here and there.

And she goes here and there, from Orion neighbourhood, into Taurus, Monoceros, Eridanus and so on; through all the neighbourhoods: no postcode turbulence around here. She passes through anywhere, telling us of you.

As well as the exploration of our neighbourhoods, all eighty eight of them, now and again, she'll give us an insight into your lives. One evening, before passing on to Canis, south west of Orion, she recited a poem named after me, then quietly drifted away.

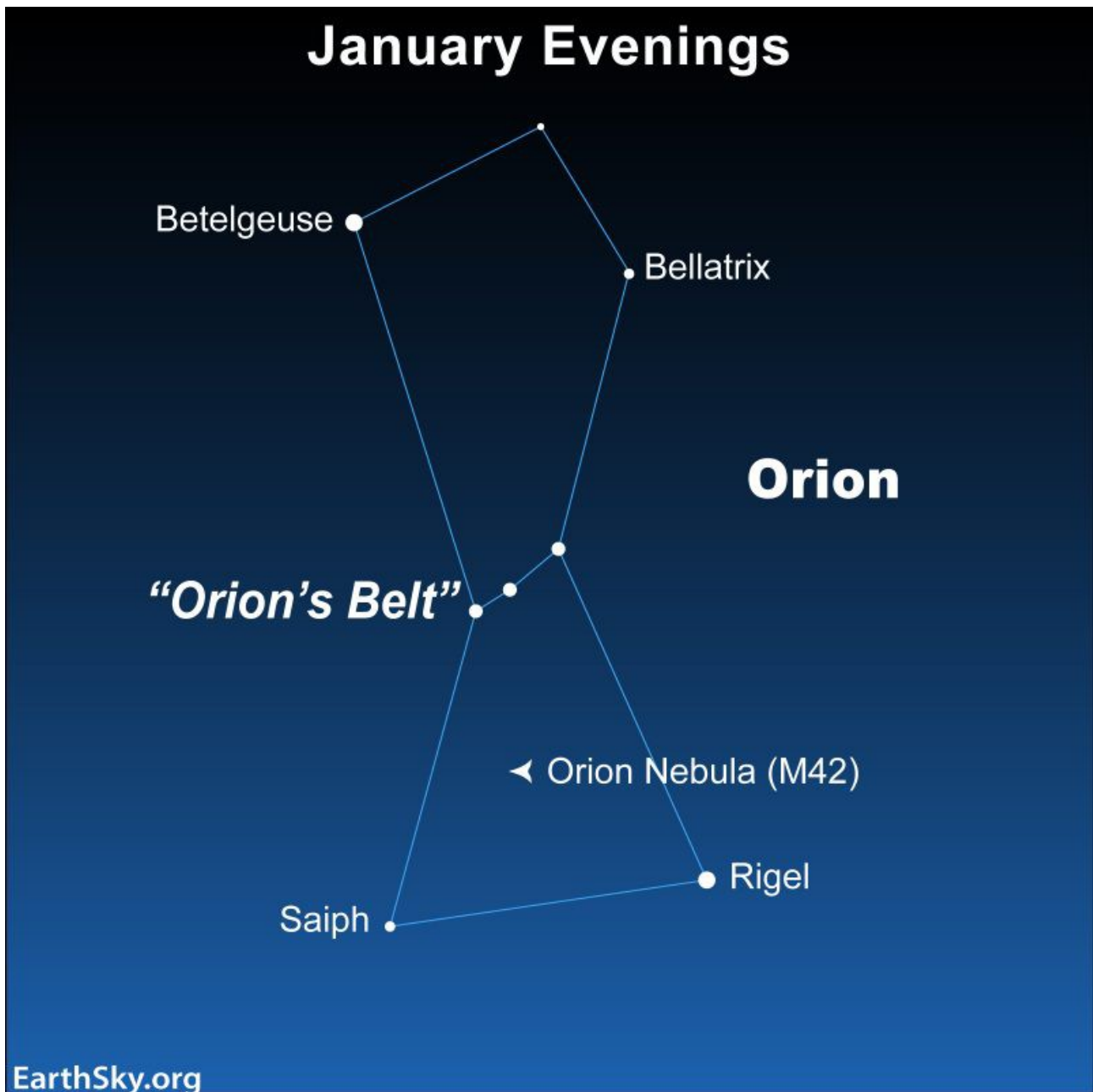
At the end of a day saddened by stagnation, the thinking that is obtuse; step outside, look up, hang out with Betelgeuse.

Fed up with the juggling. Do I pay for this or for that? During the night of the counting of pennies, trying to release the battered head from the fiscal noose; step outside, look up, hang out with Betelgeuse.

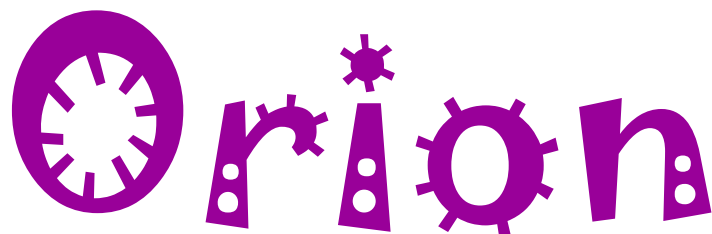
The evening newscast informs you that the minions of hate have been around again, shouting darkness, the pit bulls of division let loose; step outside, look up, hang out with Betelgeuse.

Respectfully, Betelgeuse.

from *Greetings Humanity: The Betelgeuse Letters.*



from *EarthSky*



Astronomers think that Betelgeuse is only 10 million years old, that's fifty times younger than our sun. Despite its relatively young age, Betelgeuse has already run out of the hydrogen fuel in its core and is now in the final stage, red giant stage of its life, fusing helium to carbon.

[Space.com](https://www.space.com)

Beteelguese

Community Astronomy: East Oxford

Learn about the celestial objects; how they were formed, where they reside, how they interact. The pioneering astronomers, past and present. Space programs, telescopes and observatories. Folklore of the skies and cultural astronomy.

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Open to all twelve plus. Those under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

A once monthly newsletter

For further information please contact

Danielle Sterrenburg
Learning for Leisure Team Leader
Danielle.Sterrenburg@activatelearning.ac.uk

Natty Mark Samuels
Club founder
bantudub06@gmail.com

The problem is, most people believe that real science is too difficult and complicated for them to understand. But I don't think this is the case...most people can understand and appreciate the basic ideas if they are presented in a clear way without equations, which I believe is possible and which is something I have enjoyed trying to do throughout my life.

Stephen Hawking: from *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*