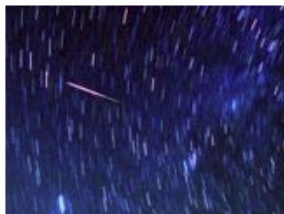


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Twitter's meteor shower party



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One group of UK stargazers will be leading the first ever global 'Twitter Meteorwatch' overnight, as they observe a shooting star display.

The Perseid meteor shower lights up the night sky every summer, as the Earth's orbit takes it through debris

scattered by the tail of Comet Swift-Tuttle.

Every year, astronomers rig up telescopes to enjoy the display, which can see up to 80 meteors streaking overhead every hour.

But this year, Newbury Astronomical Society will be holding a "meteor star party" on Twitter, involving thousands of worldwide guests, "tweeting" live pictures of the Perseids and other celestial objects.

It comes after a similar "Twitter Moonwach" organised in May.

Richard Fleet, the society's President, said of the event: "We realised early on that what people want are images of the night sky, so we used our array of telescopes and cameras to provide a constant stream of pictures which we uploaded straight to Twitter...we had thousands of people who had probably never looked through a telescope before asking us questions directly and viewing images."

The best time to see the Perseids will be after 10.30pm on Tuesday evening, in the early hours of Wednesday morning, and on Wednesday night.

The mass participation event is planned as part of the International Year of Astronomy.

The National Trust says top sites to watch the show in Britain include Stonehenge in Wiltshire, Black Down in Sussex and Friar's Crag in the Lake District.