

Storm to bring Northern Lights to Britain

February 17 2011



A display of Aurora Borealis, northern lights, in Ostby, Sweden, in August 2006. Britain should experience spectacular Northern Lights displays from Thursday due to a large solar storm which could disrupt communication networks, the British Geological Survey (BGS) said.

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"Since February 13 three energetic solar flares have erupted on the sun and spewed clouds of charged plasma called coronal mass ejections (CMEs) out towards the earth," a BGS [geomagnetic storm](#) warning said.

"Already one CME arrived on the 14th sparking Valentine's Day displays of the Northern Lights (aurora borealis) further south than usual.

"Two CMEs are expected to arrive in the next 24-48 hours and

further...displays are possible some time over the next two nights if skies are clear."

The strongest storm in four years is expected to interfere with satellites and electrical networks, with astronomers in southern China already reporting disturbances to [radio communications](#).

The BGS Wednesday published geomagnetic records dating back to the Victorian era which it hopes will help in planning for future storms.

"Life increasingly depends on technologies that didn't exist when the magnetic recordings began," Alan Thomson, BGS head of geomagnetism said.

"Studying the records will tell us what we have to plan and prepare for to make sure systems can resist solar storms," he added.

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