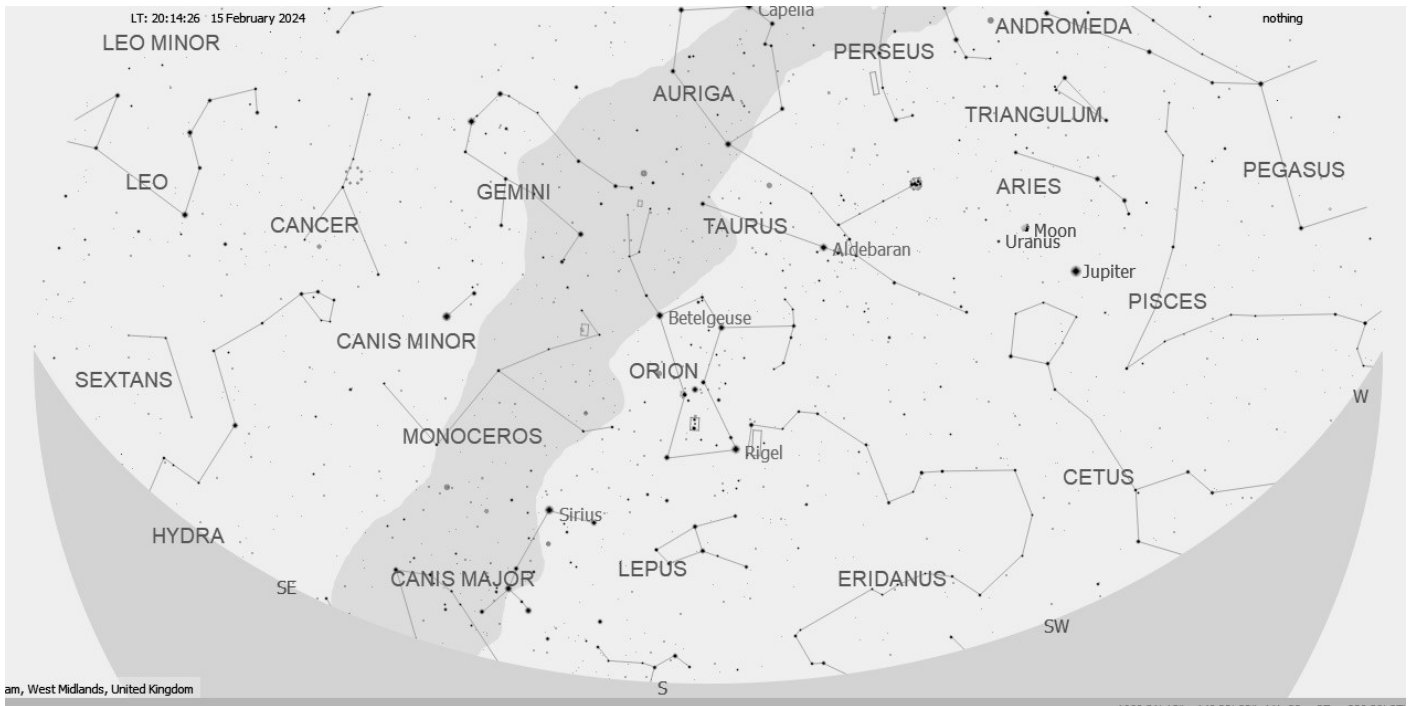
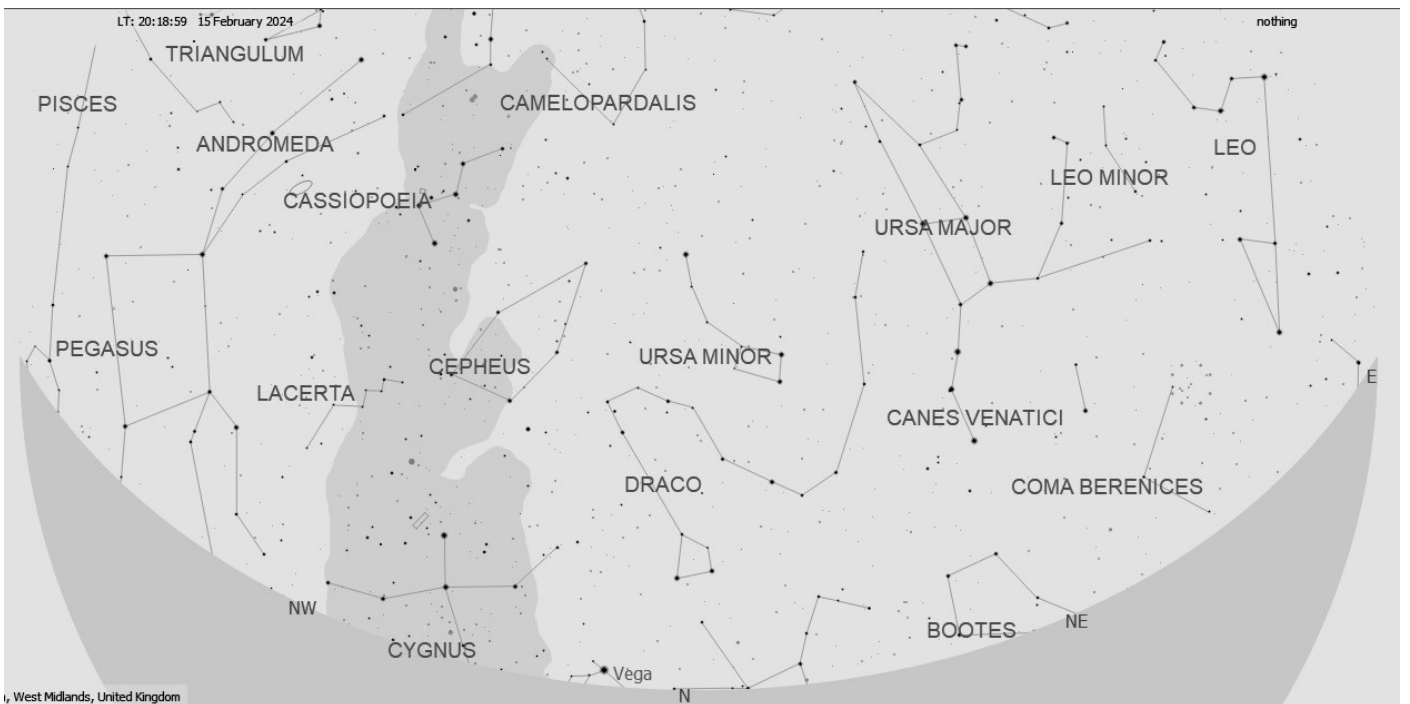


February 2024 Sky Diary



Looking South Mid-February 2024 at 20.14 hrs

Orion is well placed this month, a good chance to observe M42, The Orion Nebula just below the three stars forming the belt. The nebula is a birthplace for new stars, great object in binoculars. Jupiter is still with us of course in the south west, just below the waxing crescent of the moon.



Looking North Mid-February 2024 at 20.14 hrs

In the northwest you have the great 'Square of Pegasus', the top righthand star as you look at the square is Alpheratz, count two stars above it and just to the left you should see a fuzzy elongated disc. This is the galaxy Andromeda. At around 2.2 (ish) million light years away it is our sister galaxy and it is coming our way!

The Moon

Phases for February:

New Moon: February 9 (10.59pm)

First Quarter: February 16 (3.01pm)

Full Moon: February 24 (12.30pm)

The 'Snow Moon' Which is the second full moon of the year will reach its peak on the 24th February.

Praesepe (The Beehive Cluster)

At about the centre of the constellation Cancer, there is a lovely open star cluster known as 'The Beehive' or Praesepe (manger or crib) also known in the Messier Catalogue as M44. Easily visible in binoculars, a very nice grouping of about 1,000 stars. Cancer is a relatively faint constellation and be found about midway between Leo and Gemini.

Pleiades and Hyades

To the southwest the Eye of the Bull (Aldebaran) links the 'V' shaped Hyades star cluster, one of the closest to Earth at a mere 150 light year away! A short distance away is a group of stars known as the Pleiades (or Seven Sisters), another great sight in binoculars. Yet another Messier observation, this is number 45 in his catalogue (M45), at 440 light years away. The nebulosity that surrounds the cluster is thought to be dust that the group is passing through and not associated with the cluster itself,

Good viewing

Frank