

Some things to observe in the early evening skies:
during December 2022

The Moon:

To view craters (with a small telescope or binoculars) the best time is around first quarter Moon which will be, as in November, at the beginning and the end of the month (about 6.00pm and later) looking South.

The Planets:

The two giant planets JUPITER and SATURN remain on view throughout the evenings to the South and Southwest although by the end of the month Saturn has almost disappeared into the Western horizon. A good time to spot the pair is on the 1st and 2nd of the month when Jupiter is very close to the Moon with a much dimmer Saturn off to the right (West) and much lower (see the simulation below).
To the end of the month MARS is rising in the East but more on Mars in the coming months.

A few constellations to learn and recognise:
(see SKYMAP below)

Constellations are just patterns of stars in the sky. They have LATIN (and English) names.

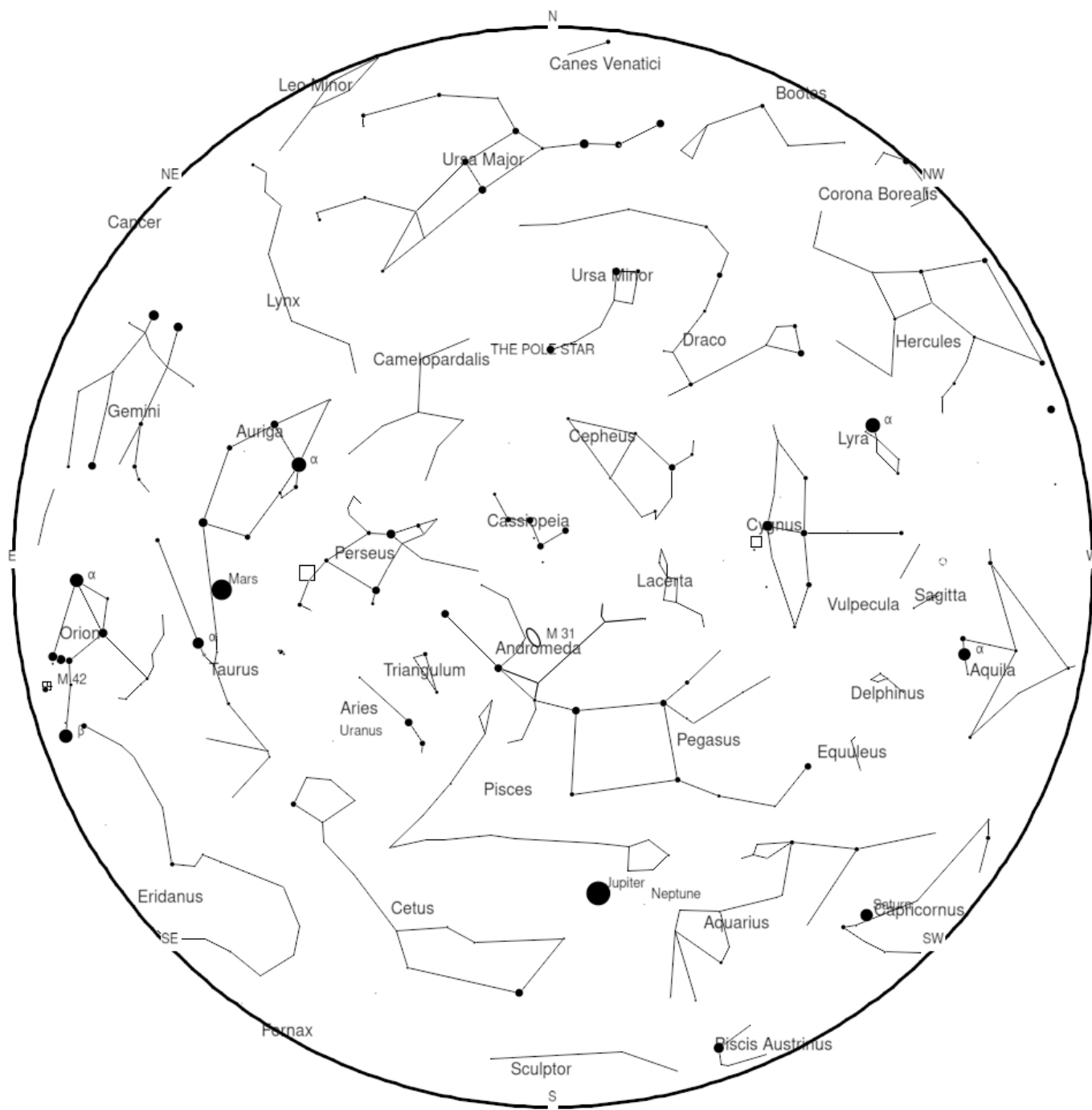
Now among the many constellations you might view at this time of the year is the constellation of PEGASUS (The Winged Horse) high to the South with a large square of stars at its centre .. ‘The Square of Pegasus’. See attached photo.

I use this square to find the ANDROMEDA GALAXY (our closest major galaxy nearly 2 million light-years away).

The SKYMAP shows the galaxy to the top left of the square (labelled M31) and the photo shows the galaxy circled.

On a clear, dark night you can spot it with the naked eye as a fuzzy patch but a pair of binoculars helps. If you have a telescope so much the better.

Clear Skies!



Skymap for:

December 2022

The map shows the night sky at about 7.00pm on the 15th of the month, when it should be dark enough to begin observing.

The Earth spins on its axis once every 24 hours.

This axis passes through the North (or Pole) Star so all the constellations appear to rotate around this (almost) stationary star and so will drift during the night. More Northerly ones never set.

The Pole star (labelled on the map) is in the constellation of URSA MINOR (The Little Bear) and since it is always due North it has been a useful guide star for travellers in the past.

Hold the map with 'S' at the bottom when looking South and rotate with 'N' at the bottom when looking North etc.

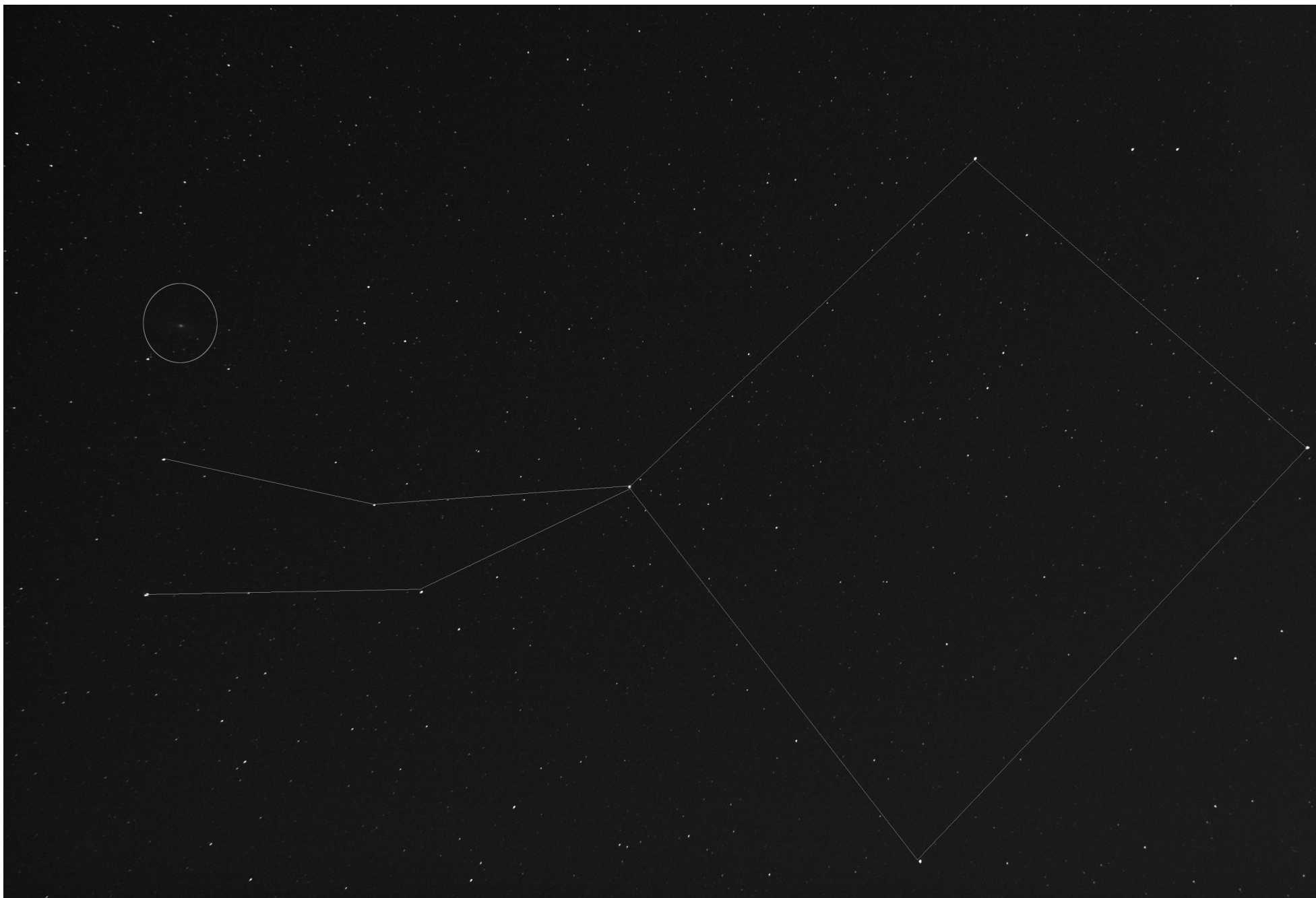


Moon

Jupiter

Saturn

S



PEGASUS (The Winged Horse) with the ANDROMEDA GALAXY circled