Some things to observe in the early evening skies: during March 2023 around 7.00pm

The Moon:

To view craters (with a small telescope or binoculars) the best time is around **first quarter Moon** which will be about the **28th March** (around 6.00pm and later) looking South.

The Planets:

How unfortunate that the close conjunction of Venus and Jupiter was mainly clouded out at the beginning of the month. However both planets still remain close(ish) before **Jupiter** sets by mid-month.
Bright **Venus** however will rise higher and higher above the Western horizon throughout the month and on the 24th is very close to a lovely crescent Moon.
Mars remains a small orangey blob very high in the Southwest.

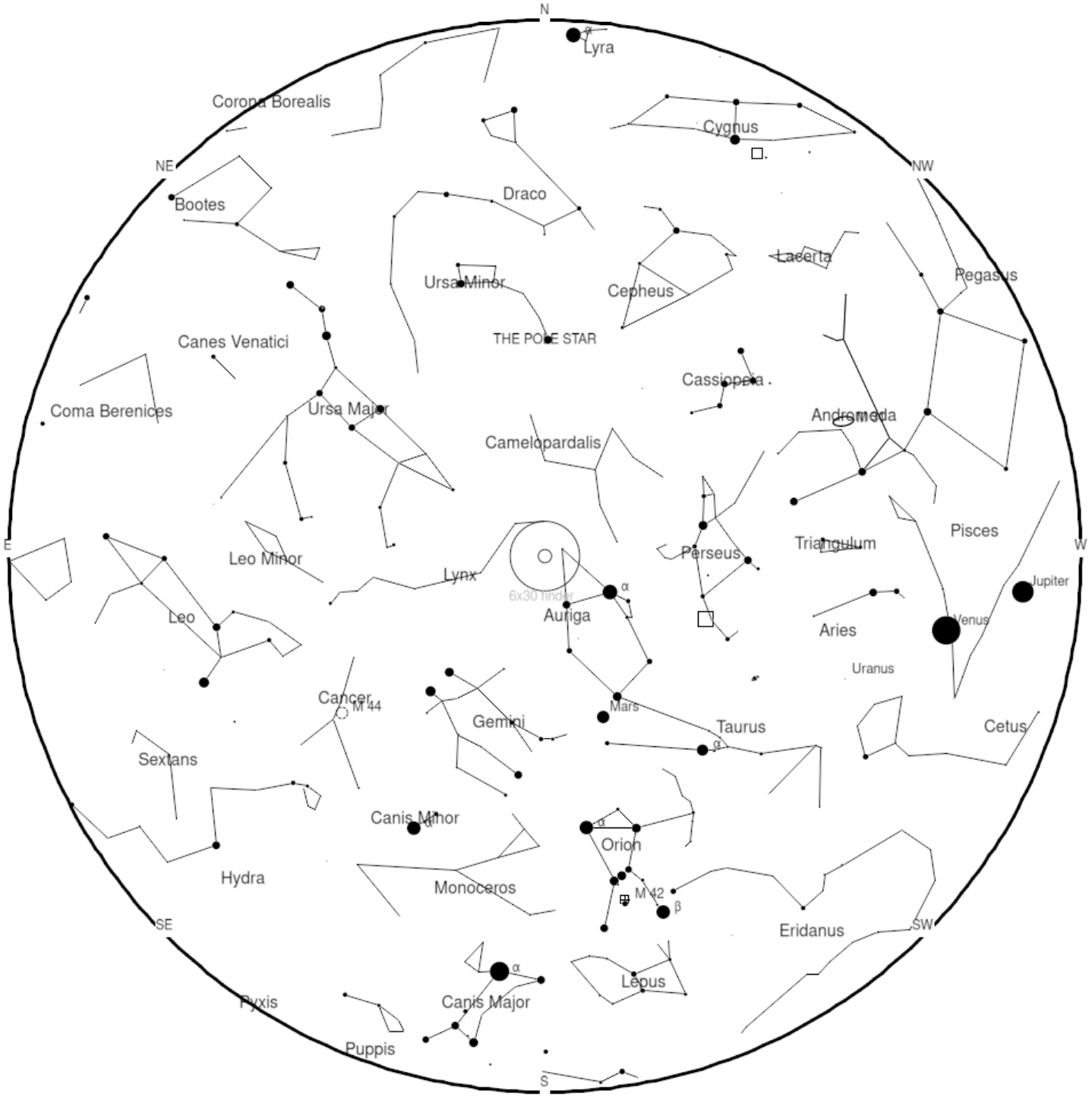
A few **constellations** to learn and recognise:
(see the Skymap)

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

Well last month's ORION is still visible to the South and just a little further left (East) we can now see the constellation of GEMINI (The Twins). Use the skymap to spot the two bright 'twin' stars of Castor and Pollux. (See the circled stars on the attached photo). Castor is the 'higher' one. In fact Castor is a famous double star but you will need a telescope to check this out.

Even further left (to the East) is the constellation of LEO (The Lion) which will become easier to see later in the month (or later in the evening) as the sky drifts westwards.
I always see this as a lion lying down with his head up to the right and his back legs curled underneath him to the left. See the attached photo.
The brightest star in Leo just under his head (his front paw?) is called Regulus.

Clear Skies!



Skymap for:

March 2023

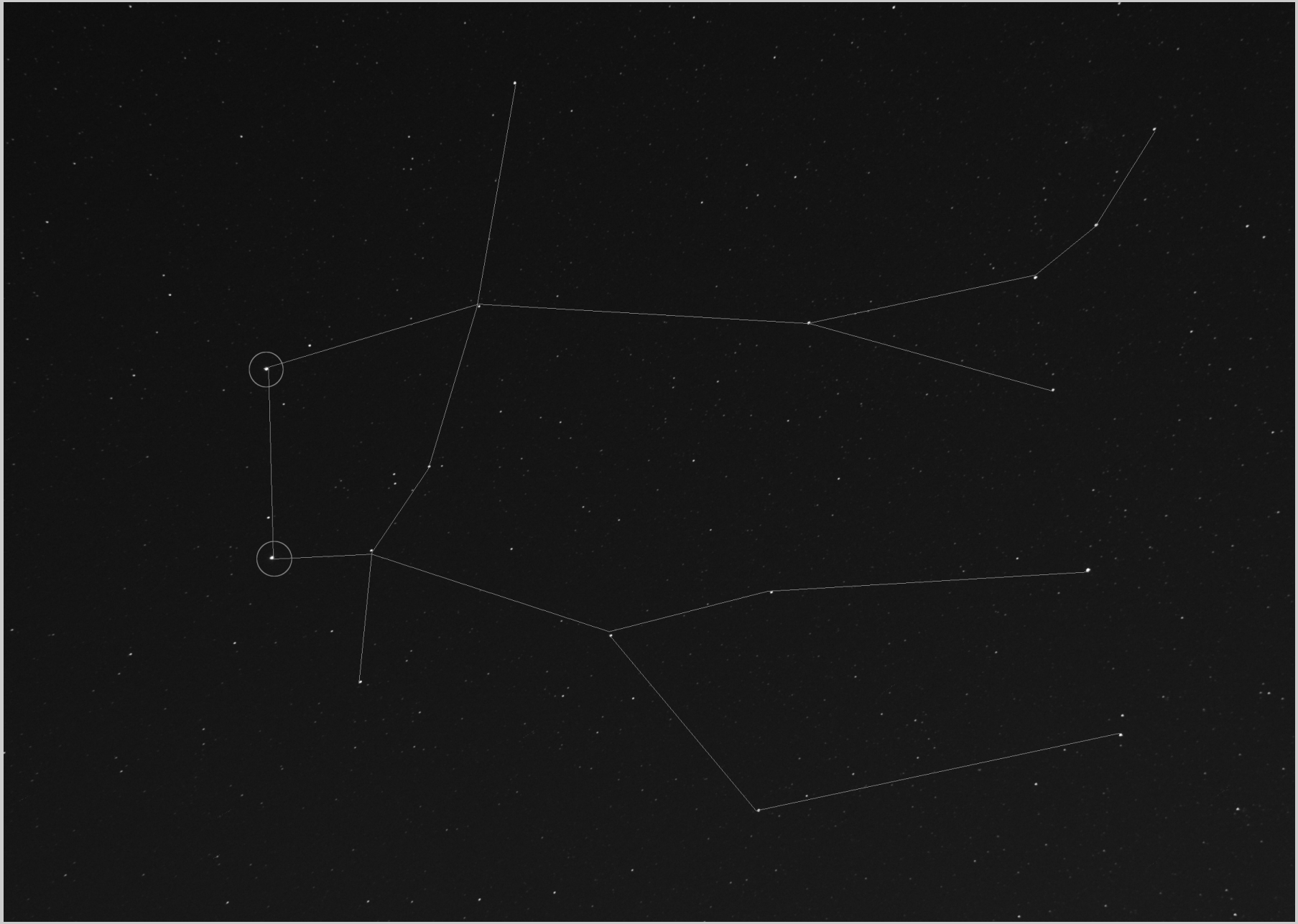
The map shows the night sky at about 7.00pm on the 15th of the month, when it should be dark enough to begin observing.

The Earth spins on its axis once every 24 hours.

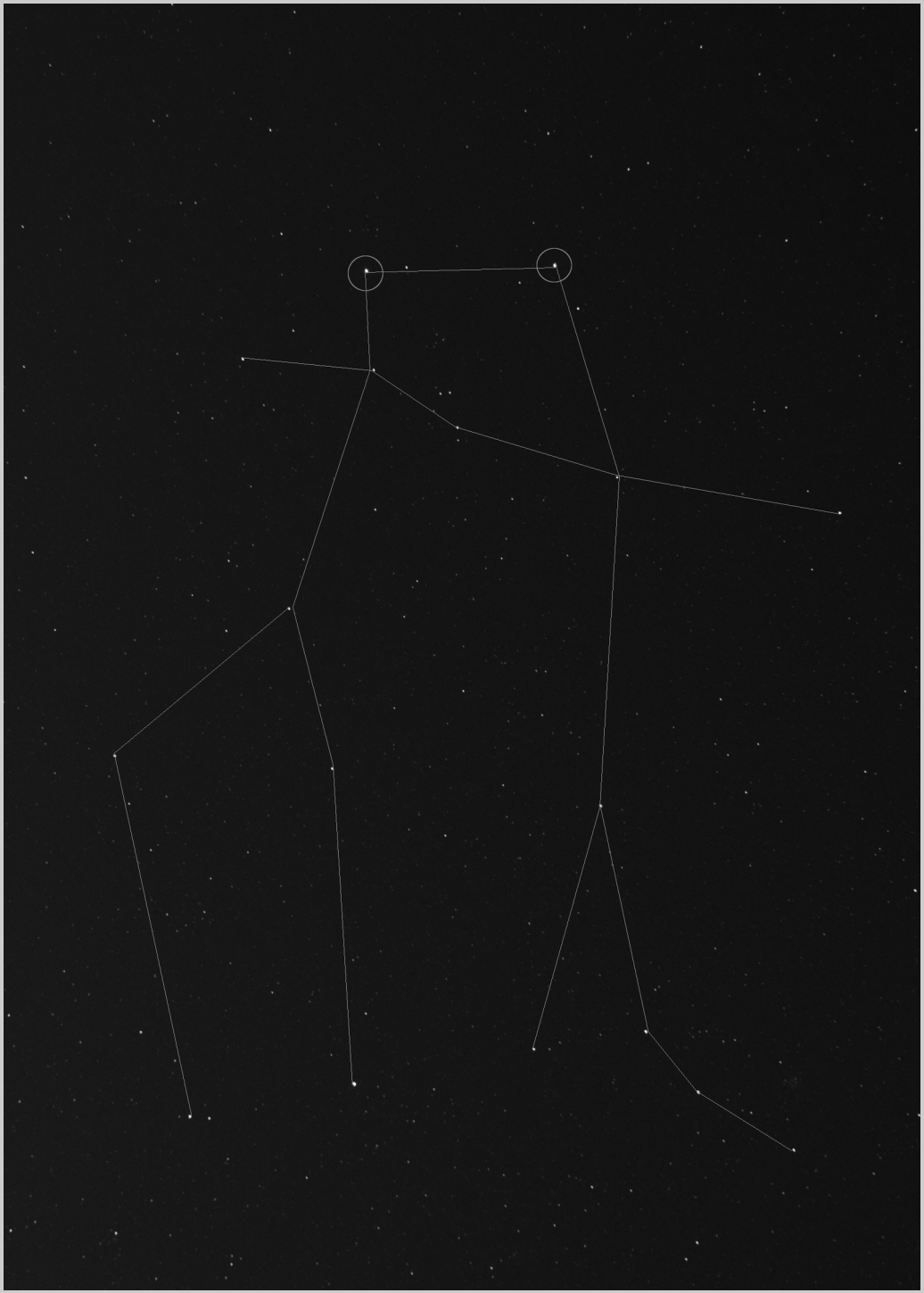
This axis passes through the North (or Pole) Star so all the constellations appear to rotate around this (almost) stationary star and so will drift during the night. More Northerly ones never set.

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.

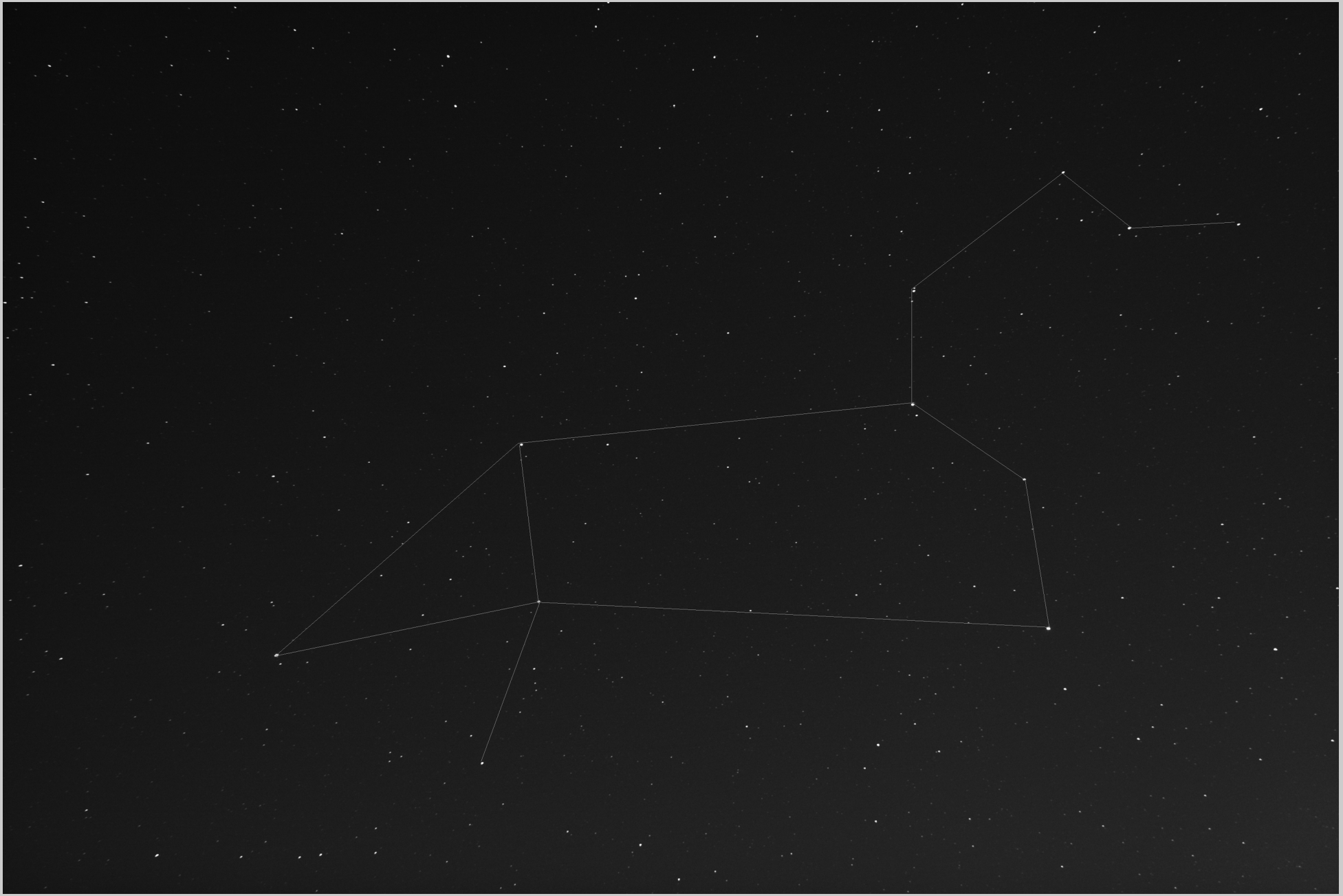
Hold the map with 'S' at the bottom when looking South and rotate with 'N' at the bottom when looking North etc.



The constellation of GEMINI (The Twins)
As it is normally seen



However rotate it through 90 degrees and you can more easily see ‘the twins’ holding hands!



The constellation of LEO (The Lion)

The skymap above was produced using free software available at:

https://www.ap-i.net/skychart/en/start

but you may prefer to plan your observing using this free software:

https://stellarium.org/en_GB/
which allows you to see what is out there at any time, any place any date! (also available as a 'STELLARIUM' app for mobile phones.)

There are also many apps for mobile phones (eg 'Sky Map') which allow you to point your mobile phone at the sky and you see on the screen what you are pointing at!