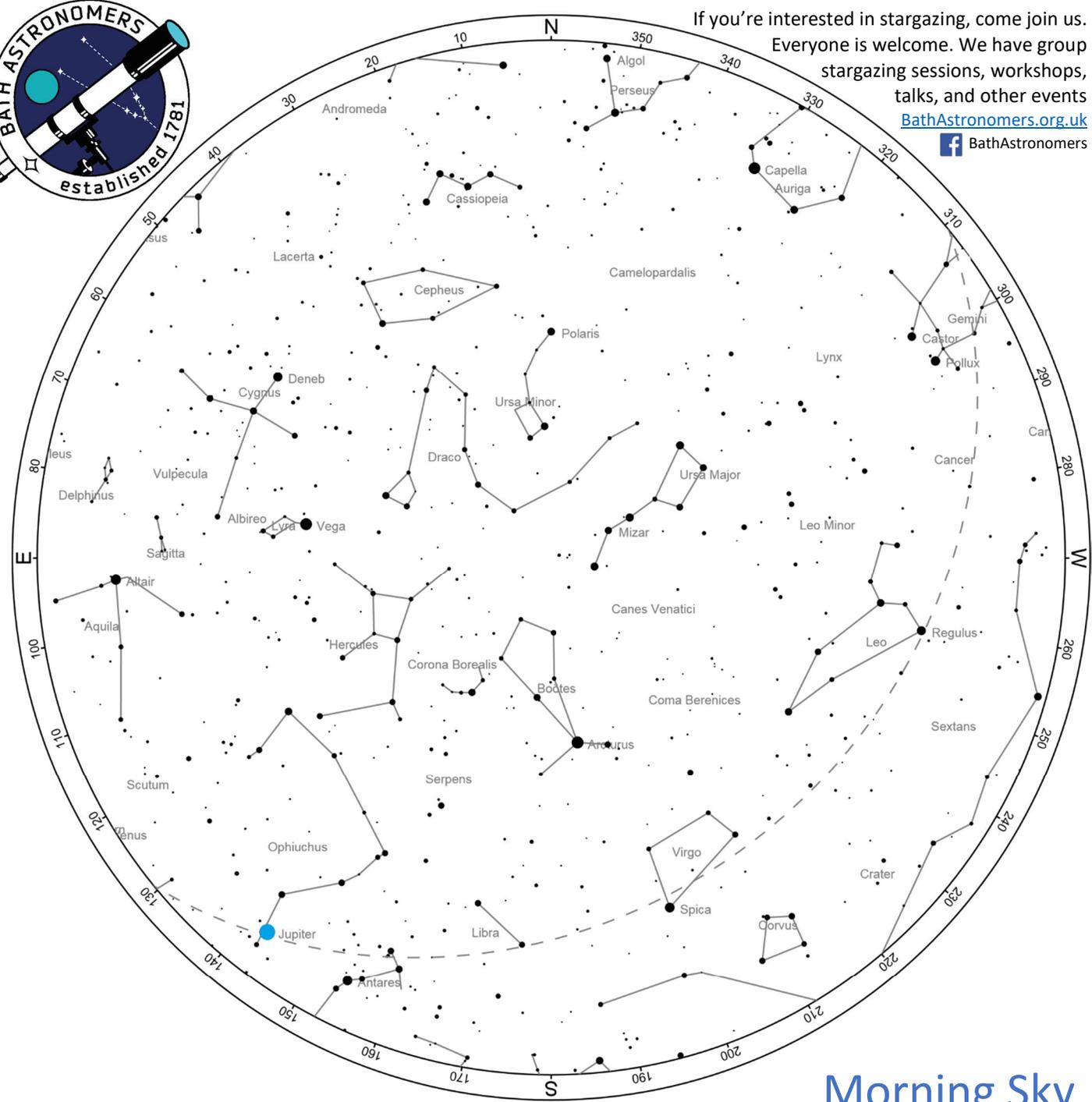




If you're interested in stargazing, come join us. Everyone is welcome. We have group stargazing sessions, workshops, talks, and other events [BathAstronomers.org.uk](http://BathAstronomers.org.uk)



This month is the run up to Deep Sky observing season and sees the re-emergence of the Zodiacal Light.



Daylight information for the month is:

Sunrise: 07:47 (1<sup>st</sup>)      06:57 (28<sup>th</sup>)  
 Sunset: 16:58 (1<sup>st</sup>)      17:47 (28<sup>th</sup>)



New Moon: 4<sup>th</sup> February  
 First Quarter: 12<sup>th</sup> February  
 Full Moon: 19<sup>th</sup> February  
 Last Quarter: 26<sup>th</sup> February



This month is a great opportunity to see bright planets. In the morning skies, we have Venus and Jupiter brilliant just before dawn in the East. They will soon be joined by Saturn as it escapes from the glare of the Sun over the month. By 26<sup>th</sup> February, they will also be joined by the Moon making a string of bright objects pointing to the Sun before dawn. Venus has spent the last few months stretching away from the Sun in the morning sky, but it is now plunging back in to the melee passing majestic Jupiter late in January. On 31<sup>st</sup> January the thin crescent Moon will sit between them before dawn.



As we've all missed Jupiter over the last few months, now is a good time to spy the 4 Galilean moons from morning to morning and note how they move. This should keep you busy until 18<sup>th</sup> February when, after 6am, Venus and Saturn will pass within 1 degree of each other and be visible in the same field of view.

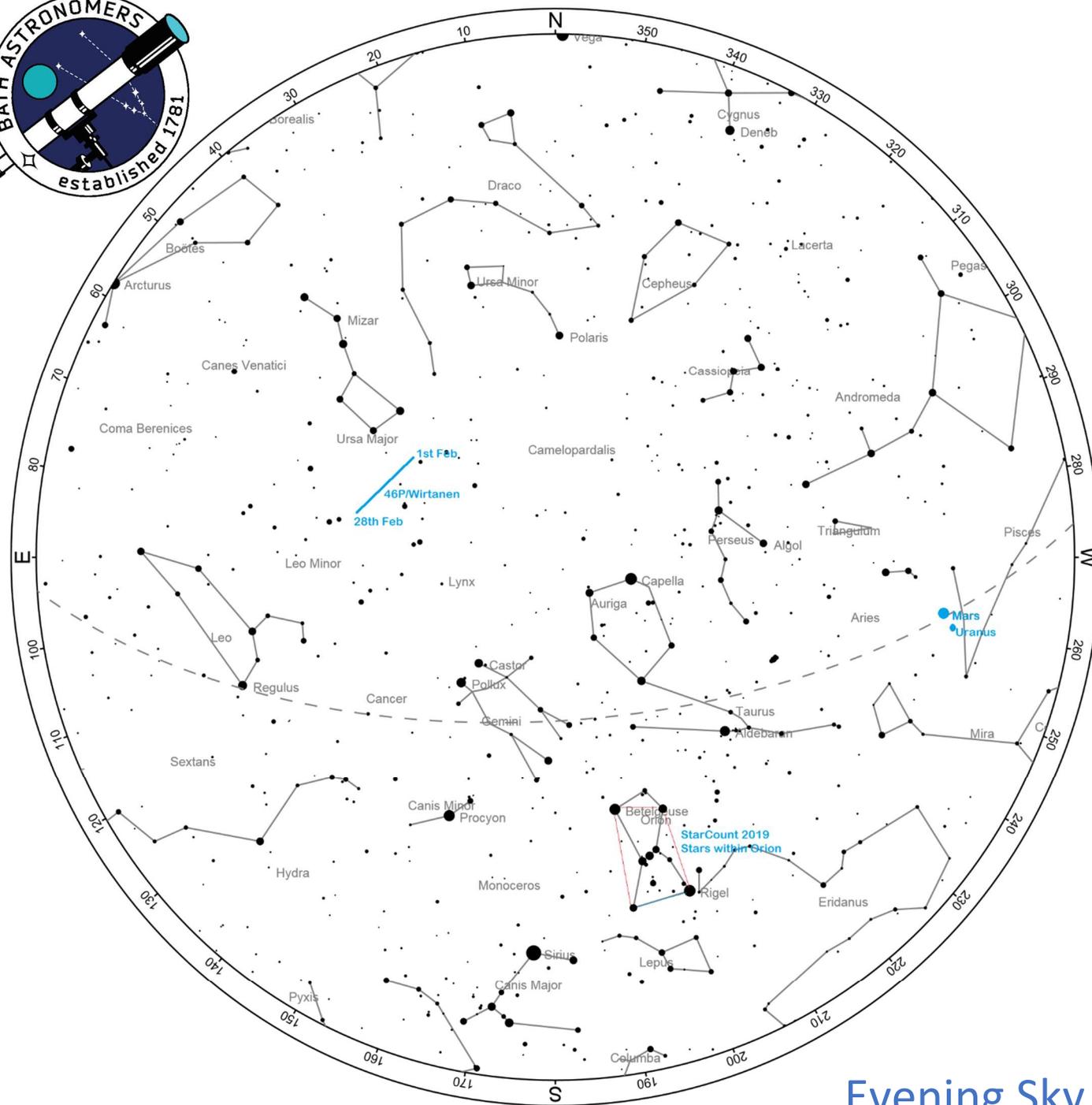


If you train a telescope on to the same Venus and Saturn "flyby", you'll be treated to the distinct phased shape of Venus like the Moon. Just a short hop away is the now positively youthful Rings of Saturn. You might note the star close to Venus, Albadah, as you hop. It is part of Sagittarius and is 600 times dimmer than Venus.

## Morning Sky in February 2019

Location: Bath, UK, 51.3758°N, 2.3599°W  
 Time: 16 February 2019 05:00 (UTC +00:00)

Jupiter rises 3.5 hours before the Sun each morning and you can see the banding, the Great Red Spot and the shadow of Europa from 05:30 on 14<sup>th</sup> February.



Location: Bath, UK, 51.3758°N, 2.3599°W  
Time: 15 February 2019 21:00 (UTC +00:00)

## Evening Sky in February 2019



The bright planets in the evening sky this month are Mercury and Mars. The former will be at its maximum separation from the Sun on 26<sup>th</sup> February and will appear bright and star-like just after Sunset. You should be able to make it out by mid-February in the Southwest about 10 degrees above the horizon, improving to 17 degrees by the end of the month. Mars can be seen higher in the Southwest at Sunset moving from Pisces to Aries as the month progresses. It'll set around midnight.

This month is home to the CPRE's Star Count 2019 survey (2<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February) in which the general public is invited to count the stars within the bright stars of Orion: Betelgeuse, Bellatrix, Rigel and Saiph. The more stars you can count, the darker your sky. Get involved via <https://bathastronomers.org.uk/StarCount2019>

February evenings are also blessed with opportunities to see the Zodiacal Light. The dust in the plane of the Solar System reflects sunlight creating apparent cones of milky white light stretching up from the horizon around where the Sun went down. It requires darkish skies as it is faint and some mistake it for light pollution. Its whitish colour and persistence for up to an hour and a half after Sunset give you confidence that you're seeing Zodiacal Light.



On 13<sup>th</sup> February, Mars will pass close to Uranus separated by just two Moon widths or a degree in old money. They'll be visible in the same field of view. Uranus is 85 times fainter than Mars at this point and only half as wide.



Our friend Comet 46P/Wirtanen is still in Ursa Major dimming as the month progresses but worth a goodbye view. The main activity this month has got to be practicing finding deep sky objects. This will come in very handy during Messier Marathons in March especially if you don't have a Goto Telescope mount.



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