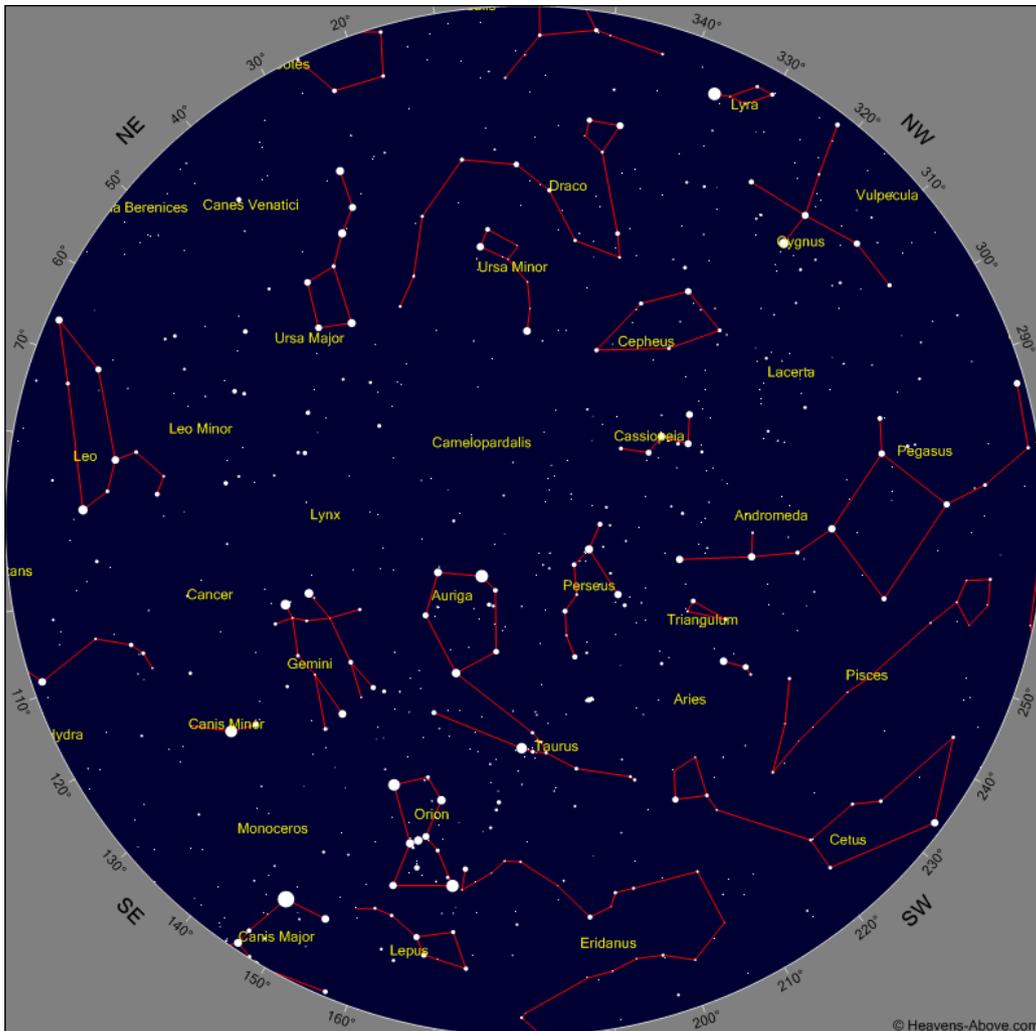


# Dundee Astronomical Society

## Sky Notes for January 2017

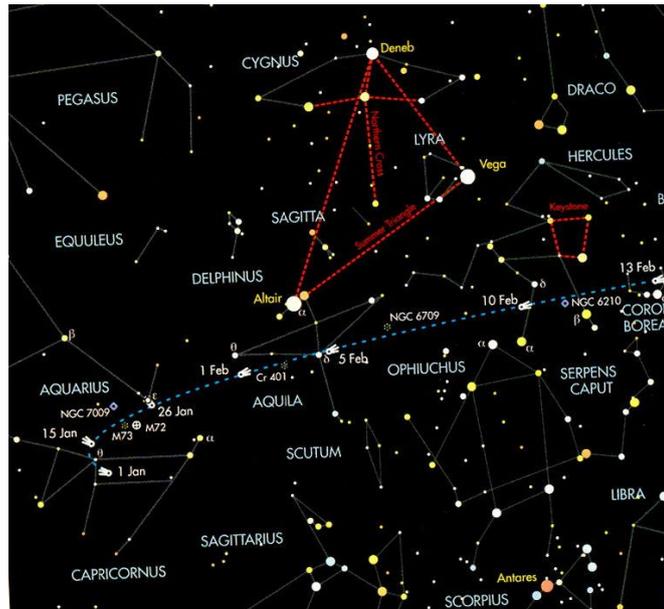
Sky Map for 15<sup>th</sup> January 22:00



*Illustration Courtesy of [www.heavensabove.com](http://www.heavensabove.com)*

Here we at last into the New Year and with nights becoming shorter (hee hee) and hopefully with clearer skies, (not like last month - at least in my part of Fife) so let's look forward and see what's in store. The first object that comes to mind is Comet 45P/Honda-Mrkos-Pajdusakova which will cross our skies in the early part of 2017. With a Magnitude +7.1 it should be visible in binoculars, but a much better object in a telescope. On the first of the month the comet is just below Theta Capricornus and hopefully we can capture an image or three. Below is a graphic that you can use to track it. What else is there to see, well, all the winter favourites are still there, Orion, Pegasus, Leo and many others, although we see and talk about these regulars many times I still don't tire of looking at them all. Of course don't forget some of the clusters, Hyades, Pleiades, etc. Why don't you look for the Winter Triangle consisting of Betelgeuse in Orion, Procyon in Canis Minor and Sirius in Canis Major - another set of markers to cross off your 'to find' list? Also look between Elnath in

Taurus and Theta Auriga for M37 (+6.0), M36 (+6.3 mag) and M38 (+7.0 mag). These are all open clusters and well worth the viewing as well as good to image.



### The Planets

- Mercury** Well placed as a morning object, reaches greatest western elongation on 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Venus** Bright in our night sky, best seen on the 12<sup>th</sup> when it reaches greatest eastern elongation.
- Mars** Still in Aquarius, very low in our western sky and very close to Neptune on the 1<sup>st</sup>, (20 arcminutes).
- Jupiter** Resident in Virgo visible in the morning with the moon nearby on the 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Saturn** Morning object in Ophiuchus, again with the moon nearby on the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Uranus** in Pisces best seen at the start of the month at approximately 18:30 UT
- Neptune** Another evening planet in Aquarius, very close to Mars on the 1<sup>st</sup> and Venus on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

Just a note, watch out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> when Venus, the crescent Moon and Mars form a straight line in the evening sky.

### The Moon

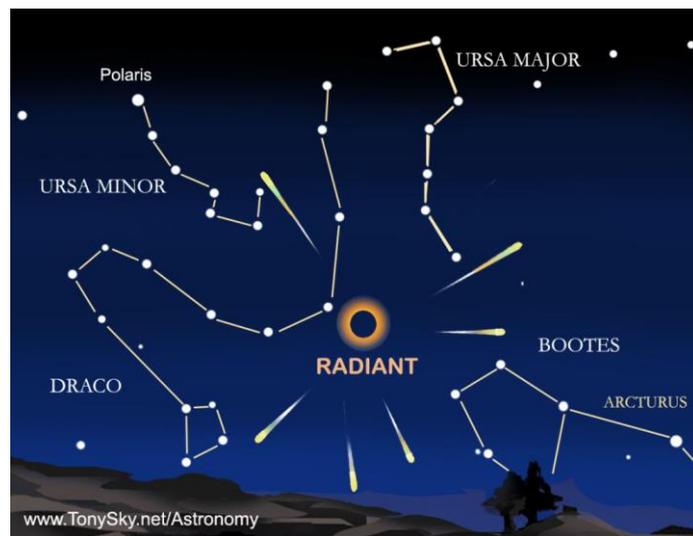
- First Quarter 5<sup>th</sup> January
- Full Moon 12<sup>th</sup> January
- Last Quarter 19<sup>th</sup> January

New Moon

28<sup>th</sup> January

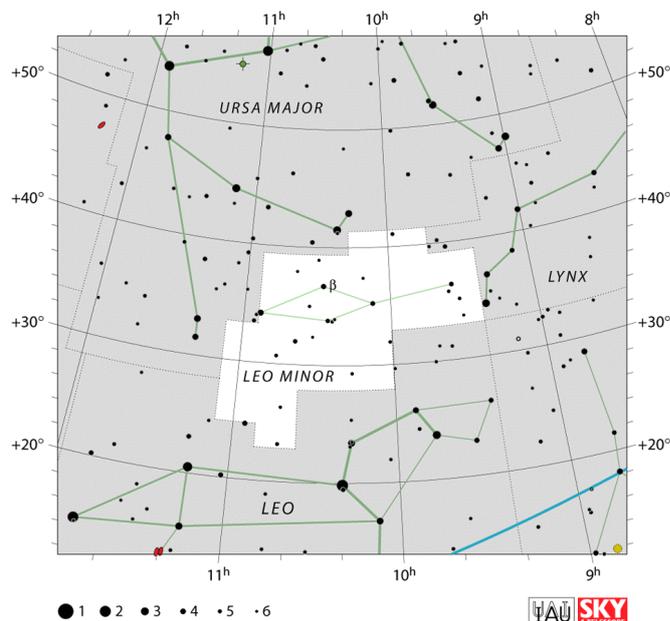
## Meteor Showers

**Quadrantids Meteor Shower** is an above average event, with up to 40 meteors per hour at its peak. It is thought to be produced by dust grains left behind by an extinct comet known as 2003 EH1. The shower peaks this year on the night of the 3rd and morning of the 4th. The first quarter moon will set shortly after midnight leaving fairly dark skies for what could be a good show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Bootes, but can appear anywhere in the sky.



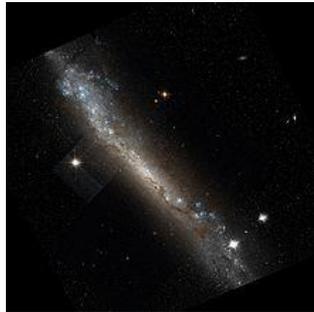
## Jim's Focus of the Month

Leo Minor belongs to the Ursa Major family of constellations, along with Boötes, Camelopardalis, Canes Venatici, Coma Berenices, Corona Borealis, Draco, Lynx, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. Leo Minor is a small, faint constellation in the northern sky, with only one star brighter than fourth magnitude. The constellation's name means "the smaller lion" in Latin.

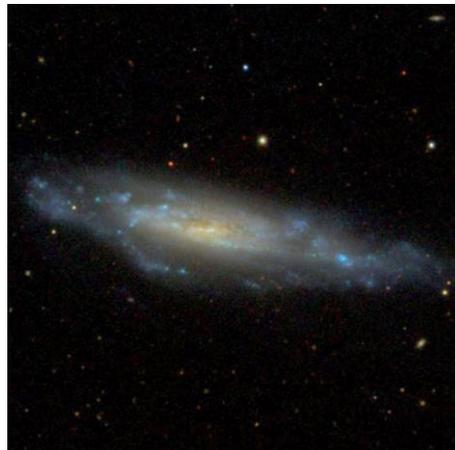


There are a few DSO's in Leo Minor, here are a few examples.

NGC 3432 is a Galaxy, also known as the Knitting Needle Galaxy of magnitude +11.3,



NGC 3003 is an almost face on barred spiral with a magnitude of +12.3. Both of these will be difficult to see and will require a reasonable size scope of at least an 8inch.



There are other interesting DSO's to see in Leo Minor, so go have a look.

### **Did You Know?**

2<sup>nd</sup> January 1959 Luna 1 was the first man made satellite to orbit the Sun.

28<sup>th</sup> January 1986 Voyager 2 becomes the first spacecraft to fly past Uranus and its moons.

7<sup>th</sup> January 1998 Lunar Prospector launched to survey the surface of the Moon.

19<sup>th</sup> January 2006 New Horizons launched on a 9-year journey to Pluto.

*Jim Barber*

**Director of Observations**

**Dundee Astronomical Society**