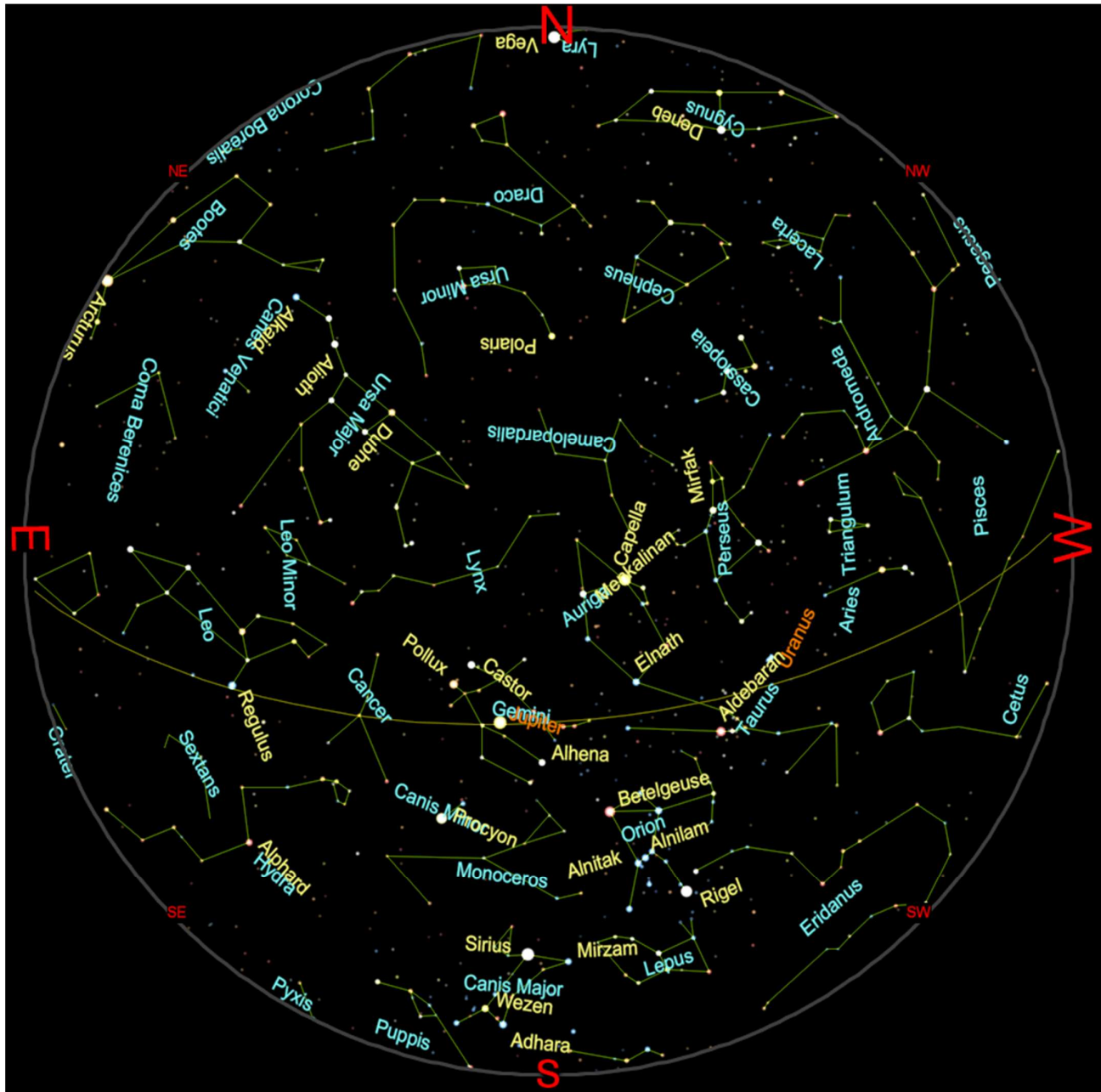


# The Night Sky in February 2026



## Monthly Guide compiled by Doug Bickley

PERTON LIBRARY  
ASTRONOMY  
GROUP



The chart is based on location 52.6° N, 2.2° W (Perton, Wolverhampton) @ 21:00 on 15/02/2026.

The orange line is the ecliptic.

**We are looking SOUTH** (as shown at the bottom of the chart) at the constellations Hydra, Orion and Eridanus with the constellations Leo, Cancer, Gemini and Taurus overhead.

**TO USE THE CHART - hold it so that the direction you are facing is at the bottom** – the lower part of the chart shows the sky ahead of you and the centre of the chart shows the sky directly over your head.

## Events to look out for this month:

- 1 Full Moon
- 3 Moon close to Regulus (morning)
- 3 Moon close to Spica (morning)
- 16 Saturn near Neptune
- 17 New Moon
- 17 Annular solar eclipse visible from Antarctica but not from the UK.
- 18 Moon between Venus and Mercury (evening twilight)
- 19 Perton Library Astronomy Group meeting 7pm
- 19 Mercury greatest Eastern elongation (evening)
- 19 Saturn near Neptune
- 20 Mercury at highest altitude (evening)
- 23 Moon near Pleiades M45
- 26 Venus and Mercury in conjunction
- 28 Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are above the horizon after sunset

Late February – parade of 6 planets

### The phenomena of the month : February 2026

Times are given in UT for PERTON (2° 11' 53" W, 52° 35' 26" N, zone Z).

Date	Hour	Description of the phenomenon
yyyy mm dd	hh:mm	
1 2026 02 01	22:09	FULL MOON
2 2026 02 03	03:41	Close encounter between the Moon and Regulus (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.4°)
3 2026 02 07	07:23	Close encounter between the Moon and Spica (topocentric dist. center to center = 2.6°)
4 2026 02 09	12:43	LAST QUARTER OF THE MOON
5 2026 02 10	16:52	Moon at apogee (geocentric dist. = 404576 km)
6 2026 02 11	06:11	Beginning of occultation of 23-tau Sco (magn. = 2.82)
7 2026 02 17	12:01	NEW MOON (annular eclipse of the Sun not visible in PERTON)
8 2026 02 19	11:00	Mercury at its perihelion (distance to the Sun = 0.30750 AU)
9 2026 02 19	12:00	GREATEST EASTERN ELONGATION of Mercury (18.1°)
10 2026 02 20	17:59	Close encounter between Saturn and Neptune (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.8°)
11 2026 02 23	23:59	Close encounter between the Moon and Uranus (topocentric dist. center to center = 4.8°)
12 2026 02 24	12:28	FIRST QUARTER OF THE MOON
13 2026 02 24	23:18	Moon at perigee (geocentric dist. = 370135 km)
14 2026 02 26	03:44	Beginning of occultation of 136 Tau (magn. = 4.56)
15 2026 02 26	04:29	End of occultation of 136 Tau (magn. = 4.56)
16 2026 02 27	20:16	Close encounter between the Moon and Pollux (topocentric dist. center to center = 3.3°)
17 2026 02 27	21:42	Beginning of occultation of 77-kappa Gem (magn. = 3.57)
18 2026 02 27	22:38	End of occultation of 77-kappa Gem (magn. = 3.57)
19 2026 02 27	23:46	Close encounter between Mercury and Venus (topocentric dist. center to center = 4.5°)
20 2026 02 28	20:54	Close encounter between the Moon and M 44 (topocentric dist. center to center = 0.8°)

# THE MOON

## Lunar Phases this month

Full Moon is on 1 February.

New Moon is on 17 February.



Ancient cultures giving the Full Moons names like Flower Moon makes these names common in the media as the names are still in use today. Of course these vary by time zone, but all this guide is based on the local time in Wolverhampton.

The Snow Moon is the Full Moon in February, named after the snow on the ground. Some Native American tribes also named this the Hungry Moon due to the scarce food sources and hard hunting conditions during mid-winter, while others named it Bear Moon, referring to bear cubs being born this time of year.

Celtic and Old English names for the February Full Moon are Storm Moon and Ice Moon and also Snow Moon.

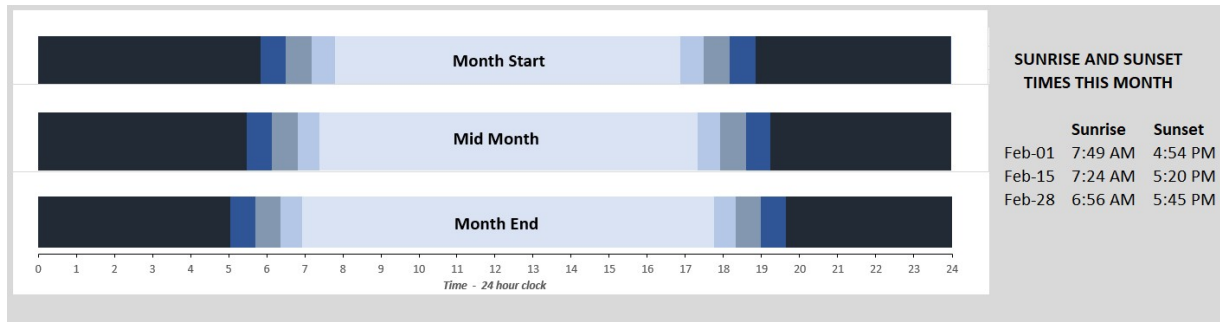
The Moon is so bright to our eyes that it just looks black and (very) white.

But the image on the right where I have increased the colour saturation shows its real colours caused by the minerals and chemical composition of the lunar rocks. Blue and orange shades indicate volcanic lava flows. Dark blues are richer in titanium-bearing minerals. Pinks indicate iron-poor, aluminium-rich feldspars and orange and purple indicate regions that are relatively poor in titanium and iron.



# THE SUN

Graphical format showing sun rising, setting and twilight linked to an online data source (time-ok.com) to show twilight zones more clearly. Location is set at Wolverhampton UK.



Key:

Night	Twilight			Day
	Astronomical	Nautical	Civil	

Do you know what Noon means?

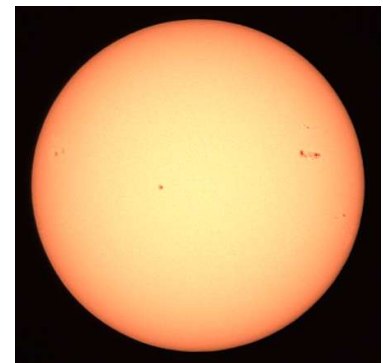
Here's one for you quizzers (along with Full Moon names):

We usually refer to noon as 12 o'clock civil time, which is the moment when morning ends and afternoon starts. You could say it's the opposite of midnight.

But in terms of solar time, noon is the moment when the Sun crosses the meridian (an imaginary line of longitude connecting the poles) and reaches its highest point in the sky. This version of noon is also called solar noon or high noon and is at about 12.20pm (try telling that to Gary Cooper - he'd miss the train!).

As I write, solar activity is fairly low but with some active regions developing new sunspots.

Here's a shot I took the other day:



Looking at our twilight diagram above, and as a reminder, civil twilight is where the sun is less than 6° below the horizon, nautical where it is between 6° and 12° below the horizon and astronomical where it is between 12° and 18° below, the latter is when full darkness occurs. In February we can still see faintish stars and objects so make the most of this time of year. Our old friends M42 the Orion Nebula, M45 the Pleiades Cluster (7 Sisters) and M44 the Beehive Cluster are large objects visible with binoculars and small telescopes. Slightly more difficult requiring a dark sky are M81 the Cigar Galaxy and M82 Bode's Galaxy.



(Images taken by author)

## PLANETS THIS MONTH

Here's my usual summary table showing planetary observation opportunities based on mid-month data:

Planetrise/Planetset, Sun, 15 Feb 2026				
Planet	Rise	Set	Meridian	Comment
Mercury	Sun 07:56	Sun 19:00	Sun 13:27	Slightly difficult to see
Venus	Sun 07:53	Sun 18:09	Sun 13:01	Slightly difficult to see
Mars	Mon 07:14	Mon 16:24	Mon 11:49	Extremely difficult to see
Jupiter	Sun 13:17	Mon 05:51	Sun 21:34	Perfect visibility
Saturn	Sun 08:37	Sun 20:23	Sun 14:30	Average visibility
Uranus	Sun 10:13	Mon 01:59	Sun 18:06	Difficult to see
Neptune	Sun 08:32	Sun 20:28	Sun 14:30	Extremely difficult to see

Data from [timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com)

### Late February – A parade of planets

At the end of February there will be six planets visible in the night sky, an event popularly known as a 'parade' of planets because they'll all appear in a roughly straight line across the sky. Mercury, Venus, Saturn, Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune will all technically be visible, but it will be a challenge to see all six.

Mercury, Venus, Saturn and Neptune will be visible in the west very close to the horizon just after the Sun sets, so the twilight and low objects on your skyline will hinder spotting these planets. Neptune of course will require a telescope to see. Uranus is higher in the sky in the constellation of Taurus and will set around midnight, so you've got a better chance of finding the planet if you have a telescope. Jupiter will be high in the sky for most of the night in the constellation of Gemini and will be the easiest of the six to find.

And here is my usual run-down of planetary movements for the month of February:

**Mercury** is in the WSW in Aquarius shining at mag -1.1 but dimming during the month to mag +2.0 and is always difficult to see and you need to wait until the Sun has set. On 1 February it will be close to Venus (mag -3.8). On 18 February, a 1%-lit Moon sits between Mercury and Venus.

**Venus** is in the W in Aquarius shining brightly at mag -3.8 with evening observing improving during the month. On 18 February a thin 1%-lit Moon sits between Mercury and Venus and on 28 February the two planets will be in conjunction, although Mercury will be dim.

**Mars** reached solar conjunction on 9 January and is too close to the Sun to be seen.

**Jupiter** remains in the S in Gemini at a maximum altitude of 60° shining at mag -2.6 and still the "star" of the night sky (many people saying "what is that bright star")

**Saturn** is in the SW in Pisces at a maximum altitude of 21° shining at mag +1.1 and you will need to be quick to see the planet before it's observing window closes before month end. On 19 February a 5%-lit waxing Moon sits close to the NW and on the same date Neptune will be close by, you will need binoculars to catch this.

**Uranus** is still in the S in Taurus, shining at mag. +5.7 at a maximum altitude of 56° just S of the Pleiades star cluster and will be visible but dim all month. On 23 February a 43%-lit waxing crescent Moon sits nearby.

**Neptune** is still in the SW in Pisces at a much reduced maximum altitude of 9°, shining at mag. +7.7 and as it is in the same part of the sky as Saturn their observing window closes this month. On 19 February both Saturn and a 5%-lit waxing crescent Moon will be close by.

## International Space Station (ISS)

Forecast time for all visible passes this month

Date	Mag	Transit time	Start			High point	End		
			Time	Alt.degs.	Az.		Time	Alt.degs.	Az.
12-Feb	-0.8	03:44	06:31	10°	S	14°	06:35	10°	ESE
14-Feb	-1.7	05:44	06:30	10°	SSW	26°	06:35	10°	E
15-Feb	-1.3	04:57	05:42	10°	SSW	19°	05:47	10°	E
16-Feb	-1.1	02:37	04:55	13°	SSE	14°	04:58	10°	ESE
16-Feb	-2.8	06:27	06:29	10°	SW	45°	06:36	10°	E
17-Feb	-2.4	05:05	05:42	18°	SSW	34°	05:47	10°	E
18-Feb	-2.0	02:54	04:56	25°	SSE	25°	04:59	10°	E
18-Feb	-3.5	06:39	06:29	10°	WSW	66°	06:36	10°	E
19-Feb	-0.7	00:39	04:09	13°	ESE	13°	04:10	10°	E
19-Feb	-3.3	04:54	05:42	26°	SW	55°	05:47	10°	E
20-Feb	-2.9	02:57	04:56	42°	SE	42°	04:59	10°	E
20-Feb	-3.7	06:42	06:29	10°	W	77°	06:36	10°	E
21-Feb	-0.9	01:00	04:09	17°	E	17°	04:10	10°	E
21-Feb	-3.7	04:54	05:42	29°	WSW	73°	05:47	10°	E
22-Feb	-3.4	03:02	04:56	61°	SE	61°	04:59	10°	E
22-Feb	-3.6	06:42	06:29	10°	W	71°	06:35	10°	ESE
23-Feb	-1.1	01:12	04:09	20°	E	20°	04:10	10°	E
23-Feb	-3.8	05:00	05:42	27°	W	76°	05:47	10°	E
24-Feb	-3.7	03:09	04:55	73°	SE	73°	04:58	10°	E
24-Feb	-3.3	06:32	06:28	10°	W	52°	06:35	10°	ESE
25-Feb	-1.3	01:19	04:09	22°	E	22°	04:10	10°	E
25-Feb	-3.6	05:04	05:42	25°	W	63°	05:47	10°	ESE
26-Feb	-3.8	03:15	04:55	71°	S	71°	04:58	10°	ESE
27-Feb	-1.4	01:22	04:08	22°	E	22°	04:10	10°	E
27-Feb	-3.2	04:52	05:41	23°	W	42°	05:46	10°	SE
28-Feb	-3.5	03:06	04:55	52°	S	52°	04:58	10°	ESE

*you can also install these apps to check for passes*



**Android:**  
*ISS Detector Satellite Tracker*



**iOS:**  
*ISS Spotter*

Plenty of evening passes this month, we just need some clear skies.

Always worth trying a long exposure photograph, just plan to get yourself in place in advance.

As always check the Heavens-Above website for the latest forecasts.

[source: <https://www.heavens-above.com/>]

## METEOR SHOWERS

**No meteor showers this month from our location**

(Alpha Centaurids visible from Southern Hemisphere).

## AURORA

There have been some sightings in January so keep looking during February.

As usual the author hasn't managed to get any decent pictures!

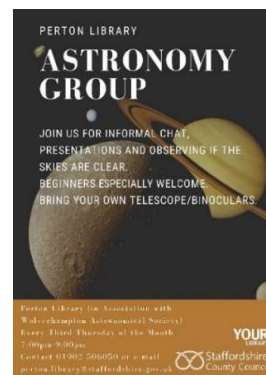
## PERTON LIBRARY ASTRONOMY GROUP

The group meets on the third Thursday of every month of the year at Perton Library from 7pm to 9pm. No subscription, no need to book, all free, just drop in at any time during the evening.

*(Location WV6 7QU or on what3words ///saints.empty.stands)*

The group is a relaxed and friendly gathering with the occasional talk.

We are particularly suited to beginners who very often bring their telescopes along for advice on how to set up, and we have experienced members who can help with this. If the skies are clear we do try to do some observing with library and member equipment.



## WOLVERHAMPTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY LECTURE PROGRAMME

The Wolvas annual subscription remains a bargain at £10 per annum and you can sign up now our website [www.wolvas.org.uk](http://www.wolvas.org.uk) and pay your subscription, preferably by bank transfer.



We put together a yearly 16 lecture programme and some of this year's programme is shown below.

The host location for our live talks remains the University of Wolverhampton in the city centre. Access and facilities are excellent - details are available on the Wolvas website. Lectures in person or online will only be available to paid-up members of the Society. Members will receive regular emails with invitations to the Zoom sessions and reminders of the in-person lectures.

Non-members may attend the talks live for £2 on the door.

Our lecture season has now resumed for the 2025/26 season.

Here is a list of the upcoming lectures, please keep an eye on our website for updates and also synopses of the individual talks:

02-Feb-26	Gary Poyner	T Corona Borealis - The Jewel in the Crown
16-Feb-26	Kieron Nixon	Understanding Special Relativity (without the maths)
02-Mar-26	Fran Bagenal	NASA's Juno Mission to Jupiter (live from Colorado)
16-Mar-26	Simon Banton	The Astronomy of Stonehenge
13-Apr-26	Simon Holbeche	The Women who discovered what stars are made of
11-May-26	Jacco van Loon	Mysterious matter in interstellar space
08-Jun-26	Paul Fellows	Once around the moons of Pluto

As well as our website we will be posting details of events on social media, so keep an eye on our Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/wolvasuk>) and X [Twitter] (<https://twitter.com/wolvasuk>) pages for the latest news.