

# ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL

## SOCIETY IPSWICH

Charity No 271313

### SEPTEMBER 1999



## Society News

### 1 Next Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting will be held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September from 19:30 in the clubroom. As usual this is an open meeting and any one who is interested is invited to attend.

### 2 Observatory Decorating

The observatory stair well walls have been given a first coat of paint. This is a lengthy process, and as much help as possible would be appreciated. So far all painting has been done on a Wednesday evening. If you are able to help please come along and give a hand.

### Events for 1999

Event	Details	Date
Astro Camp	Mid August	
Lecture meeting	Orwell Park School in the Beginners meeting room 20:00 <b>Note change of venue</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> September
Summer Excursion	Will be to Greenwich. Names to Roy Gooding as soon as possible, to enable a suitable sized coach can be booked	11 <sup>th</sup> September
Leighton Sky Camp	Phone Mike Cook [REDACTED] Venue is near Thetford	10 <sup>th</sup> to 19 <sup>th</sup> September
FAS meeting Cambridge		2 <sup>nd</sup> October
Open Weekend	To be arranged	16 <sup>th</sup> 17 <sup>th</sup> October
Christmas Meal	To be arranged	8 <sup>th</sup> December

Other events will be added to this list throughout the year

## Night Sky

All times GMT

### Sun

The sun will be rising approximately between 05:00 to 06:10

The sun will be setting approximately between 19:00 to 17:40

### Moon

New Moon	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	Full Moon	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
8 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>

### Mercury

Mercury will be at inferior conjunction on the 15<sup>th</sup>. By the end of the month it will be rising about 2 hours before the sun.

<b>Venus</b>	Venus is now visible in the morning sky, rising about 4 hours before the sun at the end of the month. Magnitude -4.6.
<b>Mars</b>	Mars will be setting at 20:30 by the middle of the month. Magnitude 0.5
<b>Jupiter</b>	Jupiter will be rising shortly after sunset. Magnitude -2.7
<b>Saturn</b>	Saturn will be rising at 20:00 in mid month. Magnitude 0.3
<b>Uranus</b>	Uranus will be setting at 02:00 in mid month. Magnitude 5.7
<b>Neptune</b>	Neptune will be setting at 01:00 in mid month. Magnitude 7.8

### Meteor Showers

Shower	Maximum	Limits	ZHR
Piscids	September 8 <sup>th</sup> September 21 <sup>st</sup> October 13 <sup>th</sup>	September to October	10 5 ?

Meteor source is the BAA Handbook

*Roy Gooding*

### OCCULTATIONS DURING SEPTEMBER 1999

The table lists stellar occultation disappearance events which occur during the month under favourable circumstances. The data relates to Orwell Park Observatory, but will be similar at nearby locations.

D or R	Date & Time (UT)	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (d)	Star Alt (d)	Min Dist (rad)	Star	Mag
D	19 Sep 18:42	.68+	-7	16	.28S	PPM 269573	7.4
D	21 Sep 21:56	.86+	-32	20	.25N	ZC 3086	6.2
D	23 Sep 01:21	.93+	-34	11	.09S	iota Aqr	4.3

James Appleton

### Eclipse Reporting Session

The above session has been returned to its original date of Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8.0 pm, and will be held in the science classroom at Orwell Park School, the same venue as the above workshops. Some reporting has taken place via e-mail, and the weather may have reduced the 'oohs and arrhs' factor for many. But some had better luck, and much fun was had at the BAA site in Cornwall. So come and give your account, wherever you were, and whatever you saw, be it of astronomical or human interest.

### That Was the Eclipse That Was *Roy Gooding*

Any one interested in astronomy remembers reading about the prediction of a Total Eclipse of the sun in August 1999. This date has been included in most popular astronomy books for at least the last 3 decades. A date, that at first knowledge seemed to be in the distance future, 30 years or more away. Gradually this date came closer, 10 years, 5 years 1 year, next month and then tomorrow.

Plans for observing this event were not finalised until the beginning of the year. I decided to observe the Eclipse at Paignton in Devon, and ideally from a vantage point over looking Torbay. The next problem to solve was what equipment should I take and how to transport it together with case large enough for weeks stay. I decided to take everything I had which could prove useful. These include: -

- 2 tripods
- A Maksutov telescope
- Solar projection screen
- 2 cameras, SLR and compact
- Camcorder
- Miscellaneous solar filters.

Everything fitted into one backpack and one suitcase with two tripod cases strapped to the top. To overcome any potential rush I travelled down by train on the preceding Saturday.

Once at Paignton I started looking for a suitable observing site. I required a place with an unrestricted view to the south east without any nearby street lights. A small area of parkland on top of one of the cliffs fitted these requirements. This area was about ¼ mile round the bay beyond the harbour, and shielded from any annoying street lights, with a clear view to the south east over Torbay and into the English channel beyond. Both entrances to the park had large notices saying that this area would be an unregulated area for the Eclipse with out any official giving safety advice. This seemed just the place to be, and perhaps the notices would discourage members of the public from using this area.

The morning of the Eclipse started well with bright sunshine. Cloud cover was only about 50% at 06:30. However as the morning progressed the cloud became more extensive until it was virtually 100% cover around 08:30. I set out for the observing site a little after 09:00. The park area had already started filling up with people. Many had camcorders or cameras with long focal length with lens mounted on tripods, while others were just settling down for a picnic on the grass. I assembled my equipment, telescope on one tripod and camcorder on the second, and settled back to wait. As far as I could see I was the only one with solar projection equipment. The person next to me had a radio on tuned into the local Torquay station, with reports coming from all around the bay.

As first contact occurred nothing could be seen of the sun. Some time later the cloud thinned enough to glimpse the sun. There was insufficient time to focus the projection equipment and to much cloud to find the sun with the milar sun filter on the camcorder. I removed this filter and started searching for the sun through the cloud. The partial phase was recorded successfully on several occasions pyre to second contact. As second contact approached the temperature dropped very noticeably. By now it was obvious that the clouds would not allow the observation of Totality. I changed tack and began to video the surrounding area and the passing shadow. The light during totality seemed quite odd. In this period I managed to get a good impression of this effect.

Leading up to totality a blue ITN helicopter had been flying around the whole of Torbay. Was any member watching the ITV eclipse coverage?

Out to sea near the horizon there was a bank of thunderous looking clouds, billowing to a very high altitude. The sun had been illuminating these for all the time I had been on site. This cloud bank acted as a very good marker to observer the shadow moving away from the land and out to sea. The northern limit of totality was also well seen. Towards the east the clouds were noticeable illuminated by the partial eclipse of the sun. After the eclipse shadow had passed by, spontaneous applause broke out from the people all around, after which the vast majority of the people started to disperse. I stayed for about another half-hour hoping to resume recording the partial phase again. I saw it once, for about a couple of minutes. By this time the cloud seemed continuous so I decided to call it a day

Two additional snippets of information I cleaned later in the week. The people who had chosen to observe the Eclipse from the most southerly point of Torbay, at Berry Head managed briefly see Totality. This was about four miles from where I was. All the small pleasure and ferry boats from in and around Torbay took groups of people off shore to be nearer the centre line. During Totality they reported see thousands of lights from all around the bay. These were camera flashlights.

### **Astronomy Workshops – New Series.**

The first in the new series of workshops **takes place** on Wednesday September 8<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 in the science classroom **at Orwell Park School**, near **to** the observatory, and on the ground floor. **The subject is** ‘Finding your way around the sky’. Please bring a planisphere, a star chart or map, a copy of ‘Astronomy Now’ or other magazine, and a notebook. Although mainly aimed at the beginner/improver, all are welcome, and the presence of our more experienced members very useful.

### **WHAT A SHOWER!!**



#### **No. Not our general membership..**

I refer, of course, to the forthcoming 1999 Leonid Meteor Shower, which is predicted to peak over Western Europe, inc the UK, 1999 November 17-18 at 02h UT. Many of our luckier (more resourceful) members will recall last year's display, which peaked with a spectacular fireworks show (even some noise being observed) several hours earlier than predicted. It is now thought that, last year, our planet passed through a debris stream from the Comet 55P/Tempel-Tuttle, which had been shed way back in 1333. Those particles were larger than usual and, indeed, a non astronomer friend of mine, who was driving towards Felixstowe at around 4.30am on the 'better' day half thought he was driving towards downtown Baghdad and the USAF were paying a visit!! My wife and I observed for a couple of hours at the predicted 'peak' time and noted just 15 or so per hour (some were brilliant) - standing out in the back yard under copious layers of clothing and with a baby alarm for company.. contemplating the meaning of life (*yes, we've all been there!*) \*

However, we in East Anglia were the lucky ones as most of the UK was clouded out on both nights. As a result, many of the better observations sent to the BAA came from our members - particularly Mike Harlow and Co, observing from Bucklesham.

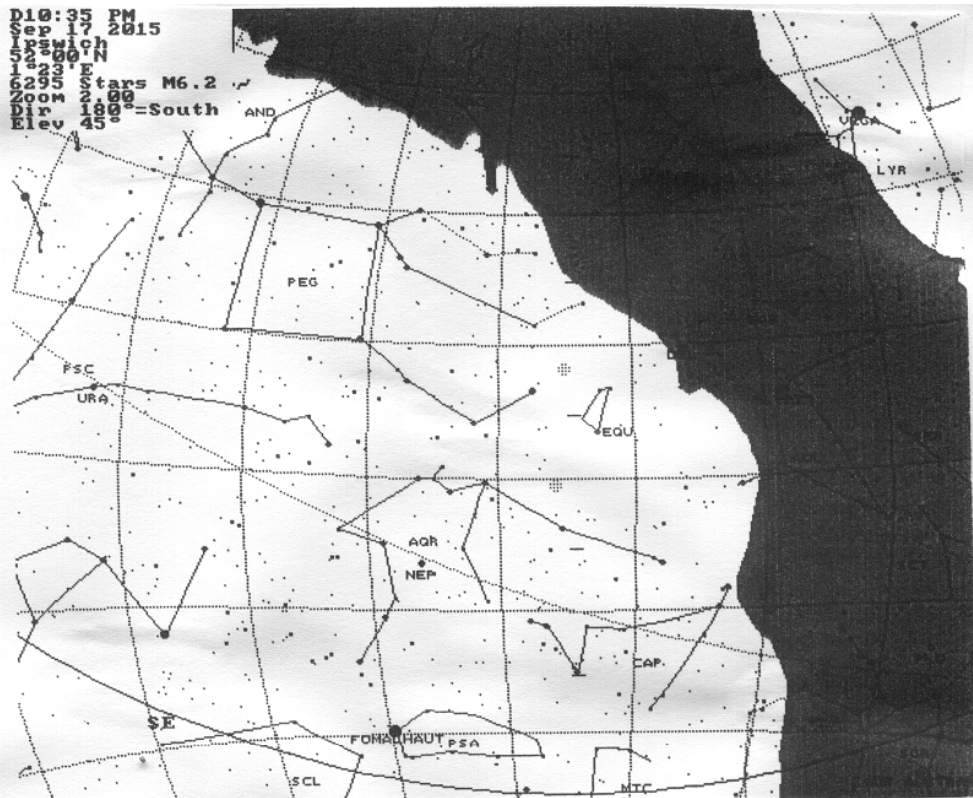
**The 1999 prediction is for a storm or, at least, 'Grand Display' with an hourly rate of between 5,000 & 10,000.** This year's heavy prediction derives, partly, from the knowledge that Earth will pass much closer to the main debris path of Tempel-Tuttle and the material will be of a smaller size.

**Neil Bone, the Director of the BAA Meteor Section, thanks our members for their valued input and has issued an invitation to all OASI members who may be interested in observing the 1999 event to come along to a BAA Meteor Section meeting which will be held just before this year's shower at the Institute of Astronomy, Madingley Road, Cambridge., at 1.30pm on Saturday 30th October.**

\* The resourcefulness of OASI members knows no limit when it comes to observing in comfort. For instance, one member - *who will remain nameless unless my palms are crossed with silver* - even had the temerity to line his bed up so that the Sickle of Leo was fully in the bedroom window!

*Ken Goward*

D18: 1.3 PM  
 2015  
 15.5  
 629  
 200  
 Elev 45



## Observing Programme For September

Dates	Observing Director	Activities
Mondays from 7.30pm	T Sampson	General Observation
Tuesdays from 7.30pm	G Coleman	Group Visits
Wednesdays from 8.00pm	M Cook D Payne	Nebular & Faint Objects
Thursdays from 7.30pm	G Coleman	Group Visits
Fridays from 7.30pm		Double Stars

All members are welcome on any night, but on nights other than Wednesday please check with the appropriate director that the observatory will be open.

## Special Events

### 1. Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting is going to be held on **Saturday 18th September** in the club room at the observatory at **7.30pm**. All members are welcome to attend.

### 2. Open Weekend

The open weekend is provisionally booked for **October the 16th & 17th**.  
**Saturday the 16th** we hope to open from **8pm to 10pm**.  
**Sunday the 17th** we want to open from **2pm to 10pm** to allow people to have a look round the observatory in day light.

## 1999 COMMITTEE

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 SECRETARY &  
 WORK PARTY ORGANISER  
 TREASURER  
 MECHANICS  
 NEWSLETTER CO-ORDINATOR  
 BEGINNERS MEETING CO-ORD  
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 M Cook  
 E Sims  
 T Sampson  
 G Coleman  
 J Walsh  
 J Appleton

Home Phone Work Phone

CO-OPTED MEMBER  
 LECTURE CO-ORDINATOR

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