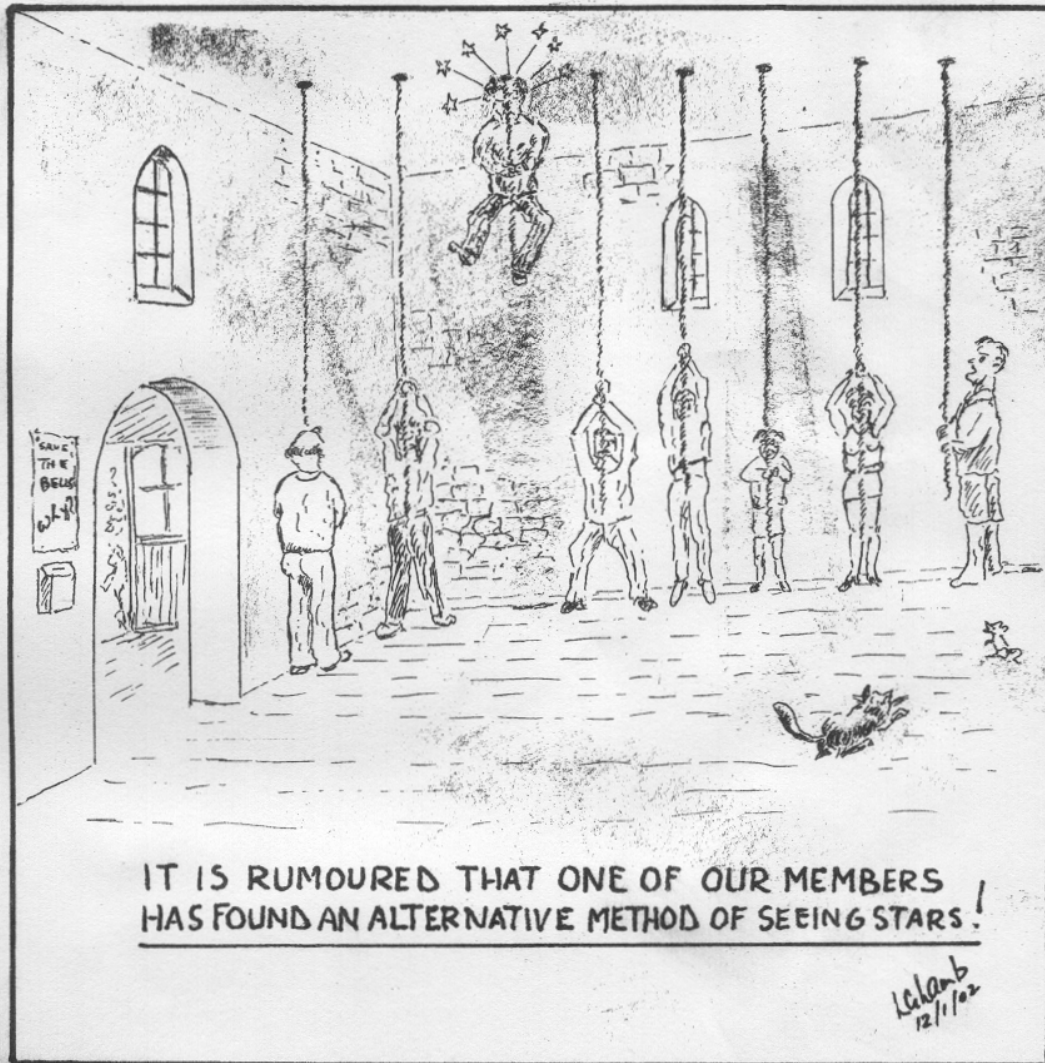


# ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL

## SOCIETY IPSWICH

Charity No 271313

### FEBRUARY 2002



## Society News

### 1 Next Committee Meeting [ NOTE CHANGE OF DATE ]

The next committee meeting will be held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March from 19:30 in the clubroom. This is an open meeting and any one who is interested is invited to attend.

### 2 Membership Subscription for 2002

Subscriptions for 2001 are due from 1st of January. If you have already paid please ignore this request.

The rates for 2001 are:

Junior & Concessionary	£11.00
Adult	£15.00
Family	£17.00

**A renewal form is included with the January newsletter.** Return this form with your 2002 subscription, so that the society membership records can kept up to date.

Please make cheques & P.O.'s payable to the: -

**ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY (IPSWICH)**

Please return all subscriptions **with the renewal form** to

Martin Cook

Ipswich  
IP4 5PZ

### 4 Telescope Review Articles ( Old and New )

Society members own a verity of telescopes, both old and new. I would like to request a series of review articles, from members on their telescopes.

The eventual aim would be to product a booklet on member's equipment that can be given to prospective new members, who ask for advice on telescopes.

The first of these articles was recently written by Neil Morley. Neil reviewed his short focal length 80mm refractor.

Event	Details	Date
AstroFest Full details in Astronomy Now	Kensington Town Hall Hornton Street London	8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> February <b>Note the corrected date</b>
Astronomy Workshop	School science room 19:45 to 21:00 <b>Hubble Telescope</b> Paul Whiting	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> February
Training Evening	If you are interested in receiving training in operating the telescope and observatory, please come along.	Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> February
Astronomy Workshop	School science room 19:45 to 21:00 <b>Aurora</b> Pete Richards	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> March
Astronomy Workshop	School science room 19:45 to 21:00 <b>Time</b> Ted Sampson & others	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April
BAA Winchester Weekend		6 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> April
Astronomy Workshop	School science room 19:45 to 21:00 <b>Computer Packages</b> Paddy O' Sullivan	Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> May
BAA Exhibition Meeting	London Guildhall University ?	Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June.
Summer Barbecue	Ken Goward's garden Tuddenham	Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> July
Summer Excursion	Provisional destination is Oxford	Date to be fixed in September
FAS Convention	Venue: Rutherford Appleton Laboratory Oxfordshire	5 <sup>th</sup> October?
Open Weekend		Date to be fixed.
Equinox Star Party	Thetford Organiser; Loughton A.S	6 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> September
Christmas Meal	Provisional date	11 <sup>th</sup> December

This events list, is updated monthly, so watch this space.

## Night Sky

All times GMT

### Sun

The sun will be rising approximately between 07:30 to 06:50  
The sun will be setting approximately between 16:50 to 17:30

### Moon

3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	New Moon	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	Full Moon
4 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>

**Mercury** Mercury will be at greatest western elongation on the 27<sup>th</sup>. As the planet is very low down it will be observable this month.

**Venus** Venus will be setting at about 18:20 at the end of the month. It will be difficult to see this month as it is very low down in the evening twilight sky.

**Mars** Mars moves into Aris towards the end of the month. It will be setting at about 22:00 this month. Magnitude 1.2

**Jupiter** Jupiter remains prominently visible in Gemini. The planet will be observable most of the night, setting at about 05:00 in mid month. Magnitude -2.5

**Saturn** Saturn remains will placed for observation this month, in Taurus. It will be setting at about 02:40 in mid month. Magnitude 0.0

**Uranus** Uranus is in conjunction with the sun on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Neptune** Neptune will be rising at about 06:40 in mid month. Magnitude 8.0

## OCCULTATIONS DURING FEBRUARY

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

D / R	Date & Time (UT)	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (°)	Star Alt (°)	Min Dist rad	Star	Mag
D	05 Feb 02:44	0.43-	-43	7	0.11N	zeta 1 Lib	5.6
R	03:50		-34	14			
D	21 Feb 22:14	0.64+	-42	43	0.56N	108 Tau	6.3
D	22 Feb 00:00	0.65+	-48	27	0.40S	109 Tau	5.0
R	00:56		-47	19			
D	22 Feb 23:33	0.75+	-47	41	0.31N	9 Gem	6.2
D	23 Feb 00:26	0.75+	-48	33	0.12S	10 Gem	6.6
D	23 Feb 00:43	0.75+	-47	30	0.60S	11 Gem	6.9

The Moon occults Jupiter during the month. The following table gives details of the event.

D / R	Date and Time (UT)	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (°)	Jupiter Alt (°)	Min Dist rad	Jupiter Mag
D	Sat 23 Feb 02:53	0.76+	-36	12	0.45S	-2.5
R	03:38		-30	6		

Although the planet is close to the horizon during the occultation, it is well worth attempting to observe this event if weather conditions are favourable, as occultations of Jupiter are rare at present (the next night time occultation of Jupiter is in 2012).

## NEW LIBRARY BOOKS

I recently obtained the following books for the OASI library. OASI paid for the first book in the list, which will prove invaluable if we go ahead with construction of the 48cm Dobsonian telescope. Springer-Verlag very kindly donated the remaining books as a way of supporting our recent Open Weekend.

1. David Kriege, Richard Bery, *The Dobsonian Telescope, A Practical Manual For Building Large Aperture Telescopes*, Willmann-Bell Inc, 2001.
2. Chris Kitchin, *Solar Observing Techniques*, Springer-Verlag Ltd, 2002.
3. John Catchpole, *Project Mercury, NASA's First Manned Space Programme*, Springer-Praxis, 2001.
4. David J Shayler, *Gemini, Steps To The Moon*, Springer-Praxis, 2001.
5. David M Harland, *Exploring The Moon, The Apollo Expeditions*, Springer-Praxis, 1999.
6. Rex Hall & David J Shayler, *The Rocket Men, Vostok & Voskhod, The First Soviet Manned Spaceflights*, Springer-Praxis, 2001.
7. David J Shayler, *Skylab, America's Space Station*, Springer-Praxis, 2001.
8. Stuart Clark, *Life On Other Worlds And How To Find It*, Springer-Praxis, 2000.
9. Stephen F Tonkin (Ed.), *Astronomy With Small Telescopes, Up to 5 inch, 125mm*, Springer-Verlag 2001.
10. Michael Maunder & Patrick Moore, *Transit, When Planets Cross The Sun*, Springer-Verlag 2000.
11. Patrick Moore, *Eyes On The Universe, The Story Of The Telescope*, Springer-Verlag 1997.

The library is housed in the Orwell Park Observatory. It holds a selection of astronomy books, videos and magazines. All members of OASI are welcome to use the library. Please contact the librarian with requests for purchases of books, videos and software, or if you would like to donate any good-quality astronomy material to the library.

This is my very last article for the OASI Newsletter as Librarian. Following the AGM on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2002, a new librarian will be responsible for acquisition and maintenance of OASI's stock of astronomy books, videos and magazines. I wish him/her well!

James Appleton

## Astronomy Workshops – so far very good!

Halfway through the fourth series of astronomy workshops seems a good time to reflect on how they are going, and maybe the above title sums up the situation. This time the topics were taken on the basis of members offering to present a subject of particular interest to them. The first topic was perhaps more general, when several members brought their telescopes, and we discussed features and relative advantages. The second was presented by the Les and James duo, with a constellation close-up of Orion. Mike Nicholls then took us into some serious astronomy with a look at variable stars. Bringing us to the halfway point Neil Morely led his fourth session on astrophotography, with extra material from Mike and Dave. We revert to the first Wednesday in the month, and look forward to February 6<sup>th</sup> when Paul Whiting will present information on the Hubble Space Telescope. March 6<sup>th</sup> Pete Richards will look at the wonders of Aurora. The subjects of 'Time', and 'Computer packages' will complete the series. We hope to publish dates and subjects each month in the journal. It is not too early to think about another series. If members enjoy the workshops, and six or seven members are prepared to lead on a topic of their own choosing, then why not. Keep the idea in mind, and let me know what you think. Ted Sampson.

## Small Telescopes Night – Monday Feb 11<sup>th</sup>- Something different!!

An idea discussed at the Open Weekend, and then at the last STN at the observatory, was to take telescopes to a dark location for a sort of star party. This will happen as an experiment on Monday Feb 11<sup>th</sup>, at Ted Sampson's house in Offton, which is between Somersham and Needham Market, weather permitting. Address: [REDACTED], Offton, Ipswich. Tel [REDACTED]. Directions from A14: Take Sproughton exit, and TR at sliproad roundabout. Follow road to T Junc, with Wild Man pub opposite. TR for approx 1 mile to Bramford area: new junction TL to Somersham, through Somersham, continue for 2 miles to Limeburners pub on LHS, TL past pub, signed Bildeston. Follow road 800 yds to church(set back from road) and tiny Green with village sign. Fork left. 200 yds TR. 90yds TL into cul-de-sac Castle Lane (Not CastleMeadow) [REDACTED]. Light on over porch(60 Watts). If total cloud we will cancel. If 50% then go-ahead. **But Phone Ted if in Doubt.**

## Telescope Training – Wed Feb 13<sup>th</sup>: 8.0-9.0pm.

Taking a break from the heavy work in the lift shaft and library floor, Martin is offering a new series of Training sessions on the Tomline Refractor. The first of these will be held in the dome on Wed Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, from 8.0 to 9.0 pm. with other sessions to follow as announced.(Ask Martin when). Four members graduated to become official operators last year, each receiving their certificate, and their

name appearing on the society list. The new series of training sessions gives an opportunity for members almost ready to take the operators test to sharpen up, but also for any member to put themselves forward to become competent users of the telescope. It is valuable to the society to have as many trained operators as possible. It is also valuable to members to be able to feel more confident when using the telescope. Opportunities to take the Telescope Test will be given in the coming months, but members will need to tell Martin and Dave when they think they are ready to do so, and to ask for a date to take the test. In our astronomical society, things are more likely to be achieved if individual members take the initiative! Ted Sampson.

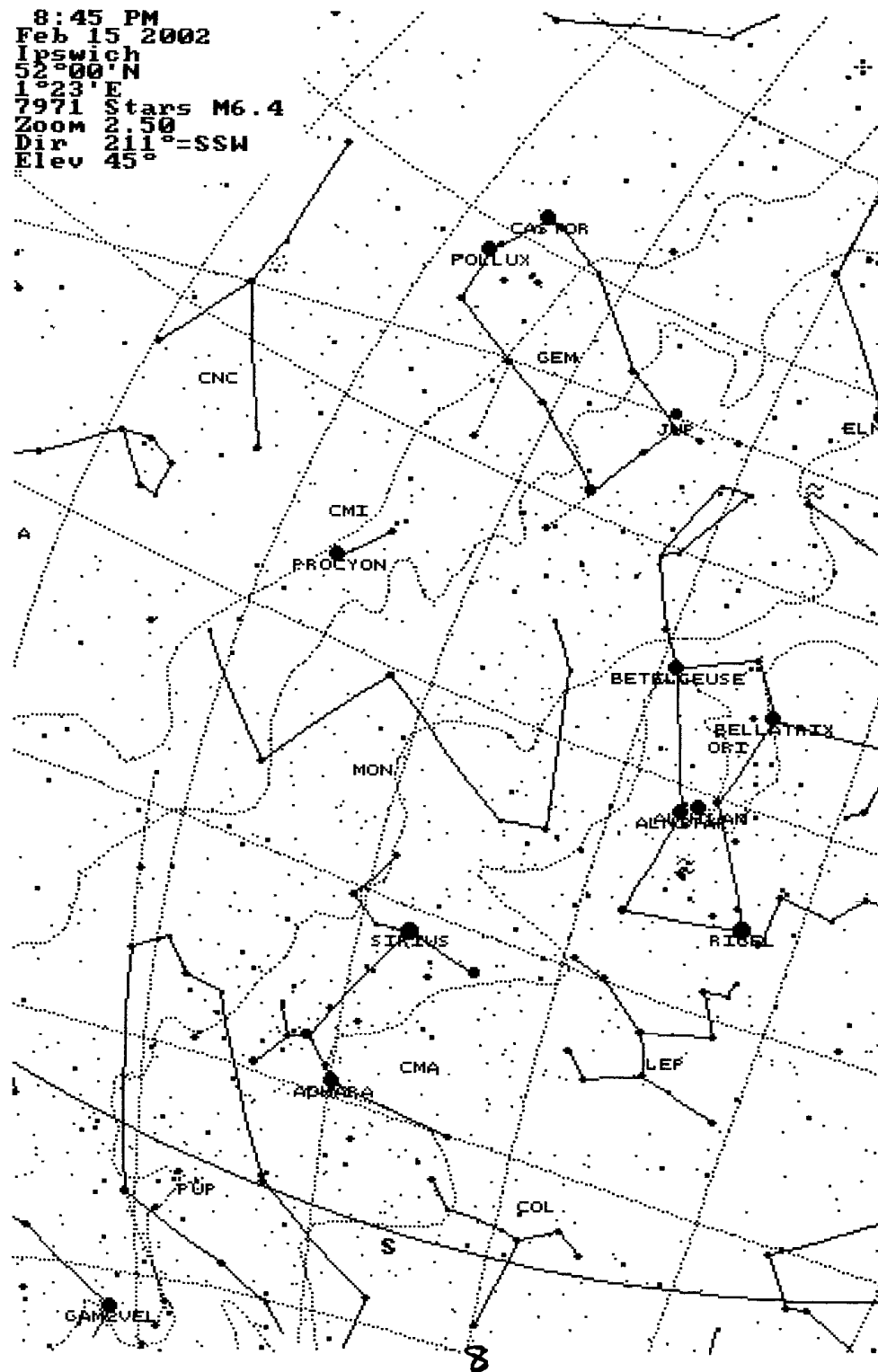
**List of visits to Observatory Winter Season 2001/2002**

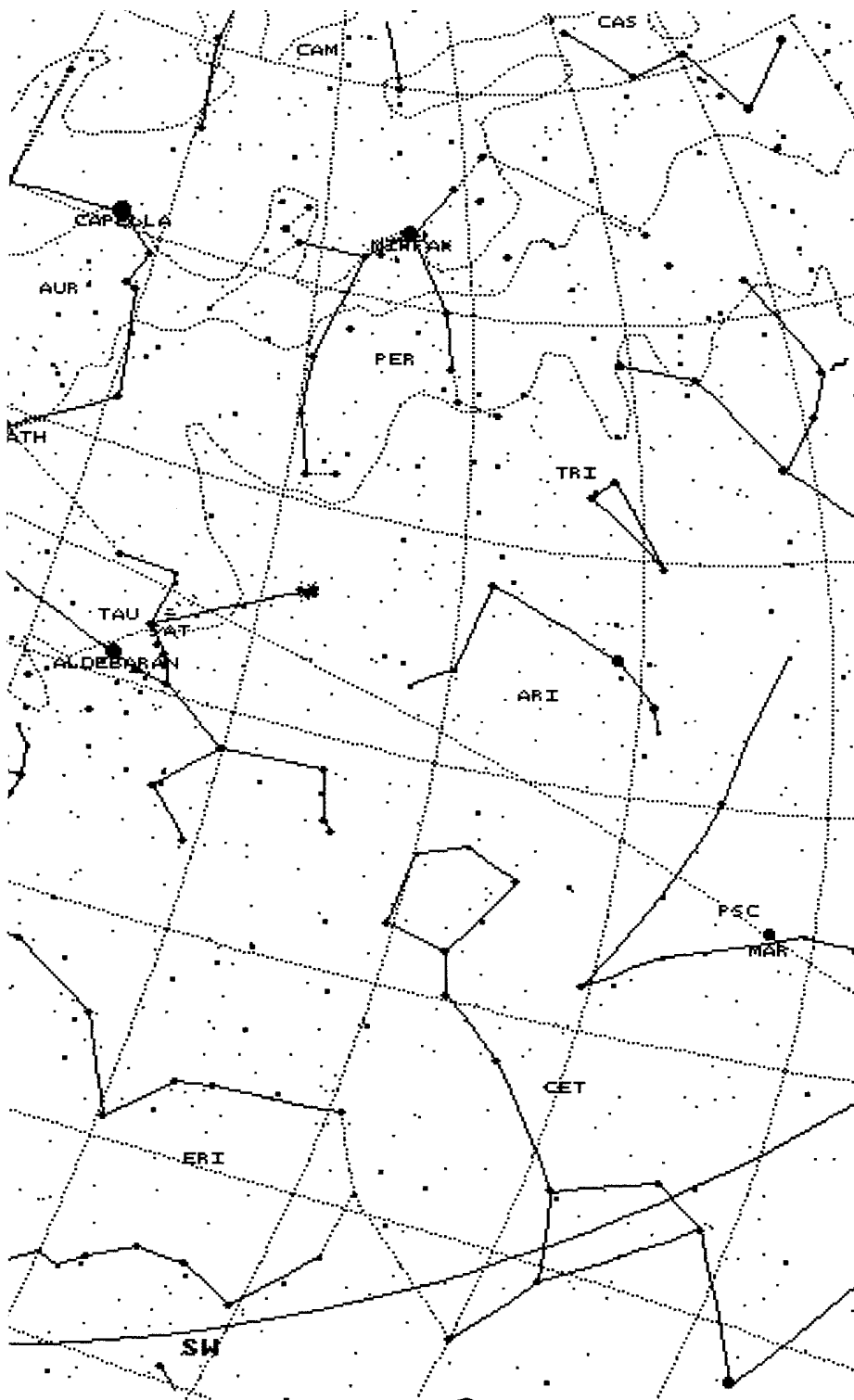
ORGANISATION	DATE of VISIT	HOSTS	REMARKS
Updated 20/01/02	Thursday 8pm Unless stated otherwise		
	<b>YEAR 2002</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> Samford Scouts	24 <sup>th</sup> January	Monica Lustig Garry Coleman Paul Whiting	
Ranger Guides	1 <sup>st</sup> February Friday	James Appleton Ted Sampson Paul Whiting	This visit is on a Friday Rearranged from November last
University of East Anglia	12 <sup>th</sup> Feb Tuesday	Ted Sampson Paddy O'Sullivan Garry Coleman	This visit is on a Tuesday
Orwell Radio Club	14 <sup>th</sup> February	Pete Richards Paul Whiting Garry Coleman	
Civil Service Club	21 <sup>st</sup> February	Paul Whiting Volunteers required	
6 <sup>th</sup> Felixstowe Scouts	25 <sup>th</sup> February Monday	Pete Richards James Appleton Volunteer required	This visit is on a Monday
Mid Suffolk Rangers	14 <sup>th</sup> March	Volunteers required	
Box Office Club	18 <sup>th</sup> April	Paul Whiting James Appleton Volunteer required	

The society does need hosts to help out with group visits. Hosts are needed for visits on the 21<sup>st</sup> Feb, 25<sup>th</sup> Feb, 14<sup>th</sup> Mar, 18<sup>th</sup> April  
All members are always welcome to come along and help on these visit evenings.

Please contact Garry Coleman on [redacted] or e-mail [redacted]

8:45 PM  
Feb 15 2002  
Ipswich  
52°00'N  
1°23'E  
7971 Stars M6.4  
Zoom 21.50  
Dir 211° =SSW  
Elev 45°





## The Other View of that Eclipse

by Paul Whiting

While Mike and Sue were lucky enough to see the annular eclipse [report last newsletter] from their exotic viewpoint of the Tamarindo Pacific beach resort in north-western Costa Rica, please spare a thought for those of us they left behind in the rain sodden capital, San Jose. It was a case of thinking "Costa Rica is a hot place. It doesn't rain much there. It can't not be clear. We don't need to spend all that extra money travelling to the coast, etc etc". Thus it was Mike and Sue and the other faces we keep meeting on these tours left Diana and myself behind as they flew to the beach.

However, last minute planning from a central point can pay off, as it did for us for the 1999 eclipse. We decided we had to get out of the central valley in Costa Rica, as the rainy season was hanging on too long. We decided we should catch a bus to get to the west coast at Puntarenas. The service bus would cost about 10 US dollars for both of us return, but the Lonely Planet guide suggested we would be mugged/pick-pocketed or stolen from, and that we should avoid the Coca Cola Bus Station (named after the former soft drink bottling plant on the site) at all costs. Guess where the Puntarenas bus left from. As the day of the eclipse approached our feet got colder and colder. The day before the eclipse we went to the Kuoni Travel partners company office and asked their advice on what best to do. They said there were two basic options – travel north to the volcano area or west to Puntarenas. They even offered to phone the Costa Rican weather bureau to see which would be clearest. Apparently the furthest we could go south west within the "annular umbral" track would give the best viewing chance. Our hearts went out Mike and Sue who, according to the weather bureau, had headed towards thick cloud!

The travel agent said, if you change a couple of letters in the Spanish for Institute of Meteorology, you get Institute of Liars, a big joke in Costa Rica apparently. Didn't go down too well with Diana, who works for the British Met Office!

So what were our options? Well it just so happened this helpful travel agent had 2 vacancies on a day trip on a luxury catamaran, heading south west from Puntarenas – and only 99 US dollars each!

So the day dawned. We caught our luxury coach from our hotel in San Jose, consumed a wonderful continental breakfast on route to the coast. We boarded the catamaran, which held about 60 people plus crew. Fruit and soft drinks were free and plentiful on the 2 hour cruise to the desert island of Tortuga, where we had to suffer a beach party, food and wine, in and out of the Pacific on our own, exclusive desert island. What do you have to put up with in the name of astronomy?

About 2 hours before the eclipse, we set sail again out into the Pacific to see the eclipse, with our resident professional astronomer. Just two things were wrong: it was totally overcast and the astronomer hadn't arrived as he was ill. No problem, the tour guide latched on to Diana and myself (possibly because our T shirts listed the other eclipses we had seen) and we became the "tour experts". First job was to find some clear sky (everyone had already been issued with complimentary eclipse glasses, and given the safety talk). The captain of the boat insisted on travelling further and further north, but that meant we were just going into thicker cloud cover. I managed to persuade him to slow down when the clouds thinned a bit, and miraculously 5 minutes before the annular phase of the eclipse, an enormous patch of blue sky erupted. With the whole boat shouting at the captain to stop, he did.

The outcome: we saw the initial partial phase (first to second contact) intermittently, full annularity perfectly (about 2 and a half minutes) and then most of the final partial phase, setting in eclipse.

I'm glad Mike and Sue saw the eclipse, most other land based observers were disappointed. The newspaper headlines the next day were along the lines of "The Eclipse Nobody Saw" or "Eclipse? What Eclipse?". I understand Fred Espenak himself was in Tamarindo and didn't see it.

Roll on next December.

2001 COMMITTEE		Home Phone	Work Phone
CHAIRMAN	D Payne		
SECRETARY & WORK PARTY ORGANISER	R Gooding		
TREASURER & PUBLICITY	K Goward		
MECHANICS	M Cook		
NEWSLETTER CO-ORDINATOR	E Sims		
BEGINNERS MEETING CO-ORD & VISIT CO-ORD	T Sampson		
EQUIPMENT CURATOR	G Coleman		
LIBRARIAN	J Walsh		
	M Whybray		
CO-OPTED MEMBER			
LECTURE CO-ORDINATOR & DARK SKIES	P Richards		
JOURNAL ARTICLES TO CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS	E Sims	Ipswich Suffolk IP1 4HA	
	R Gooding	OASI Secretary	
		Ipswich Suffolk IP1 6AE	
MEMBERSHIP	M. Cook	Ipswich IP4 5PZ	

11

## Observing Programme For February

Dates	Observing Director	Activities
Monday		Nothing Booked
Tuesday 12th	University of East Anglia	Group Visit
Wednesdays 6th 13th 20th 27th from 8.00pm	M Cook D Payne	Nebular & Faint Objects
Thursday 14th	Orwell Radio Club	Group Visit
Thursday 21st	Civil Service Club	Group Visit
Friday 1st	Ranger Guides	Group Visit

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 ~~February 25th~~ **MARCH 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH**  
The Next Committee Meeting is to be held on Saturday ~~16th~~ **16<sup>th</sup>** of ~~February~~ **February** at 7.30pm in the club room at the observatory. All members are welcome to attend.

2. ASTRONOMY WORKSHOP February 6th  
The next Astronomy Workshop is "The Hubble Telescope" by Paul Whiting. This is held in the School Science Room 7.45pm to 9.00pm.

Society Contact Details			
		Home Phone	Work Phone
Chairman	D Payne		
Secretary	R Gooding		
Contact details for the full committee are inside the back page.			
e-mail queries:	ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk		
WWW address:	http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~ipswich/		

12