



ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY (IPSWICH)

Registered Charity No 271313
www.oasi.org.uk

NEWSLETTER 2005 DECEMBER

No 403

Merry Christmas!



**A seasonal view of the
Royal Observatory, Greenwich
In the Edwardian era**

Image from the collection of Roger Jones

SOCIETY NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY

Roy Gooding

1 2006 AGM Saturday 14th January 20:00 Note New Venue

Next year's AGM will be at the new Lecture venue. It will be at the Methodist Church Hall in Blackhorse Lane. This will be the first time we have held the AGM away from Orwell Park.

All members are invited to attend this meeting, with a start at 20:00

The church has a car park, bigger enough to take about 30 cars in Black Horse Lane. Alternatively there is a Park & Display car park at the top of Black Horse Lane, next to the Town Council Offices. This is about 100 yards from the church.

Black Horse Lane has only one entrance, which is from Elm Street. This is just past the Police Station, if you are arriving from Civic Drive. The church car park is on the right, just past the Black Horse pub. Access to the hall will be at 19:30. This will give time to set up tables and chairs for the meeting

Committee membership for 2006

I have included as usual a Committee membership application form with this newsletter.

Brief Meeting Agenda

- Reports from the society Officers and other Committee members
- Election of the 2006 committee
- Proposals for 2006.
- Any other Business
- Break for Tea and Coffee if there is sufficient time

2 Events for 2005

Meeting	Venue	Date
Astronomy Workshop Filters for Astronomy Presented by Pete Richards	Venue: the class room under the fire escape in the small car park area (School side entrance)	Wednesday 7 th December 20:00
Christmas Meal	Oyster Reach Restaurant	Wednesday 14 th December

3 Events for 2006

Meeting	Venue	Date
AGM	Methodist Church Hall Blackhorse Lane	Saturday 14 th January 20:00
Lecture meeting An Introduction to Radio Astronomy in the BAA	Methodist Church Hall Blackhorse Lane	Friday 27 th January 20:00
Astronomy Workshop Elementary Imaging Processing (No hard sums) Presented by Nigel Stubbington	Venue: the class room under the fire escape in the small car park area (School side entrance)	Wednesday 8 th February 19:45
Astronomy Workshop	Additional meetings are still in the planning stage	
AstroFest	Kensington Town Hall Hornton Street London	Friday 3 rd and Saturday 4 th February
Society Excursion	Herstmonceux	May
Summer Barbecue	No venue yet	No date yet
BAA Exhibition Meeting		June
FAS Convention	Institute of Astronomy Cambridge	October

This event list will be updated through out next year

4 New Lecture Meeting Venue

The last lecture meeting we held in Ipswich was in a room at Methodist Church in Blackhorse Lane. Every one who attended this meeting agreed that it was a better venue than the Friends Meeting House

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Black Horse Lane has only one entrance, which is from Elm Street. This is just past the Police Station, if you are arriving from Civic Drive. The church car park is on the right, just past the Black Horse pub.

Meeting starts at 20:00, doors open at 19:30

5 Society Equipment Inventory

I would like to compile an inventory of society member's astronomical equipment. If you would like to participate please supply me with a list of what observational equipment you have. This inventory list with the relevant names will remain with in the society. Though the total numbers of each class of instrument maybe added to the Society Web site.

6 Welcome to New Members

Mr. Peter Wynn
Mr. Jeffrey Hurst
Mr. Raj Patel

7 Astronomy Workshops 2005 / 2006 Season

The new season of workshop meetings is in the planning stage. Ted Sampson has handed over the co-ordination of these meetings to Mick Whybray. Any questions you may have about the new season please contact Mick. If you would like to volunteer to be a principle speaker for any of these meetings please also contact Mike

8 New Session of Night Sky Section Meetings

If there is sufficient interest again I will restart meetings of the Night Sky Section this autumn. These will follow the same format as last year. The venue will again be on Nacton shores. No formal dates will be set, as meetings will take place on an ad hoc basis on Wednesdays. All you have to do is to ask me, and we can go down to Nacton shores for an observing session.



I would recommend bringing along a pair of binoculars, a torch and suitable footwear for walking down a potentially muddy path.

For those who are new to the society, here is a little background for the reason I implemented these meetings last year.

New members have often mentioned that they are interested in Astronomy, but being beginners, they have only limited knowledge. One of their reasons to join us was to find like-minded people, with a greater knowledge than they have. Finding their way around the night sky held a high priority.

At our public Open Weekends I usually take visitors outside to show them the night sky, and identifying the principle constellations. All that is required for this is the naked eye and binoculars.

If any one is interested in doing this, please contact me (Roy Gooding)

9 Access into the School Grounds

If the second gate into the School grounds is locked, you will have to phone someone in the observatory to let you in. My mobile number is [REDACTED]. (Roy Gooding)

Night Sky (December)

All times GMT

Sun

The sun will be rising approximately between 07:40 and 08:05
The sun will be setting approximately between 15:52 and 15:54

Moon

New Moon	1 st Quarter	Full Moon	3 rd Quarter	New Moon
1 st	8 th	15 th	23 rd	31 st

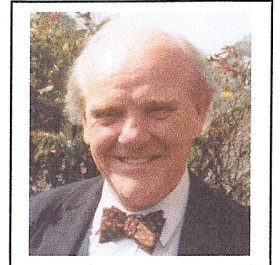
- Mercury** Mercury has moved back into the morning sky this month. It will be rising about 2 hours before the sun. Greatest western elongation is on the 12th
- Venus** Venus will be at its brightest this month at magnitude -4.7 on the 9th. It will be setting about 2 ½ hours after the sun.
- Mars** Mars will be fading in magnitude this month to only 0.8. By the end of the month it will be setting at about 03:30.
- Jupiter** Jupiter will be rising at about 03:30 by the end of the month. Magnitude -1.8
- Saturn** Saturn will be rising at about 18:30 by the end of the month. Magnitude 0.0
- Uranus** Uranus is presently in Aquarius. It will be setting at about 21:00 at the end of the month. Magnitude 5.7
- Neptune** Neptune is presently in Capricornus. It will be setting at about 19:00 at the end of the month. Magnitude 7.8

Meteor Showers

Showers	Maximum	Limits	ZHR
Geminids	December 14 th	December 7 th – 16 th	100
Ursids	December 22 nd	December 17 th – 25 th	10

Meteor source is the BAA Handbook

A Christmas Message from the OASI Hon President, Professor Allan Chapman



It really is a source of great pleasure and delight to be the President of the Orwell Astronomical Society. And as always, I greatly enjoyed my visit once again in April 2005. Thank you for having me back.

I suppose that 2005 has, astronomically speaking, been largely dominated by the 100th anniversary of Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity, which has had such an impact on astronomy and cosmology. No one can deny the impact, which Einstein's ideas have had on the development of cosmology and the physical sciences during the 20th century. Yet let us not forget that Einstein's ideas on space and time and matter have not just had an impact on physics. They have also helped to fuel ideas in the relationship between science and religious faith. For not only was Albert Einstein a Jew with a deep respect for religion – "Subtle is the Lord" he once said – but his ideas opened up all sorts of religious possibilities. Time, for instance, was not the same in all places, as Newtonian physics had taught. Nor was matter really 'hard', while light itself, that divine force of mystery and wonder in Jewish theology, was shown to have ever more breathtaking possibilities than anyone had imagined before. Indeed, 20th century physics as developing from Einstein, going through Niels Bohr, Arthur Eddington and many others, was shown to possess a multi-faceted order, and a profound mathematical coherence – linking light, atoms, galaxies and energy – which looked suspiciously like a "grand plan" or a design. And while such a design does not prove God's existence – it makes it much harder to exclude it as a viable option. And even if as Stephen Hawking tells us, there may be no simple "singularity" behind the Big Bang, let us not forget that no matter where we choose to place it in the space-time continuum, at one point Existence began; once there was nothing; then there was something. And part of that something is not only the stars which we see in the night sky, but also us; our sense of self-awareness, curiosity, and ability and drive to ask the question "where did we all come from?" A question, indeed, which inevitably begs at least the possibility of a religious answer.

And as far as I am concerned, that Creator God not only made us along with every particle in the vastness of space, but just over 2,000 years ago

took human form as the infant Jesus in a stable in Bethlehem. He came, as the Gospels tell us, to bring “a light into the darkness”, and to bring Joy, Peace and Salvation into the world – if only we will let him.

Best wishes, and a happy, joyous and peaceful Christmas to you all.

Allan Chapman.

Christmastide, 2005.

And from the OASI Chairman

Kenneth J Goward FRAS

Following on from Allan’s thought-provoking message it seems to me that 2005 was significant for another historic milestone, the bi-centenary of the battle of Trafalgar. Leaving aside any mention of how the nation celebrated the event – despite the best efforts to neutralise those celebrations by insidious PC zealots – Trafalgar and the British naval tradition has much to thank the science of astronomy for. For in 1675 Charles II approved the building of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich for the express purpose of the King’s Astronomical Observator (John Flamsteed) to accurately chart the positions of the fixed stars for the purpose of determining Longitude at sea. So began a 300- year tradition of positional observations that helped our sailors, military and civilian, to become masters of the oceans – the zenith era being generally thought of as from Nelson’s great victory in 1805 to the time of the First World War. Moreover, positional astronomy applied in the modern era has led to spectacular scientific success, not least the soft landing of the Huygens probe on Titan at the very start of this year. How sad that today the Royal Navy appears a shadow of its former strength and Greenwich is now a museum, albeit one of world standing.

But enough of this navel contemplation (excuse lousy pun), Allan has emphasised how much pleasure and delight he obtains from being the Hon President of OASI. As Chairman I heartily agree with him that it is the greatest pleasure to serve this society, not only for the high reputation OASI enjoys within the amateur astronomical community, but also for the delight of meeting and having the valuable friendship of so many fellow members. **Have a joyous and peaceful Christmas and a Happy and cloud free New Year!**

Ken Goward

YOUR CHANCE TO SHAPE OASI

At the Annual General meeting, as members will know, the whole Committee and all three officers (Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer) stand for election/re election. This is YOUR chance to stand up and be counted – YOUR chance to help shape the future path for OASI by putting yourself forward for election – and fresh ideas/approaches are always welcome in that respect.

Both the current Chairman and Treasurer have to contend with unforeseen changes in their personal circumstances that render their OASI responsibilities more difficult and although both are willing to remain in post if no other candidate comes forward, both would have weight taken from their shoulders if volunteers could be found? The same applies for at least one further member of the committee.

Please **DO NOT** feel that you would be ‘*taking someone’s job*’ – far from it. And – Newer Members - please don’t think that because you’ve only been a member for ‘*five minutes*’ that somehow makes you ‘*unqualified*’ – you have just as much right to stand as any other member.

If you fancy getting involved in the management of OASI, then have a chat with any member of the committee – get yourself a Proposer – and get yourself Elected!!!

See you at the AGM...

Kenneth J. Goward FRAS
OASI Chairman

Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

NOMINATION FOR THE 2006 COMMITTEE

NAME OF NOMINEE

PROPOSED BY

SECONDED BY

Any members who are nominated must have given their consent. All forms must be returned to the secretary as early as possible before the AGM. Any members who are elected on the 2006 committee will be expected to attend as many committee meetings through out the year as possible and to actively participate in the running of the society.

OCCULTATIONS DURING DECEMBER

The following 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 (°)	Star	Mag
D	05 Dec	16:38	0.21+	-8	13	ZC 3032	7.5
R	06 Dec	16:46	0.31+	-9	19	43 Cap	4.7
D	06 Dec	18:40	0.31+	-26	15	ZC 3191	7.4
D	06 Dec	18:42	0.31+	-26	15	Hip 107509	7.5
D	07 Dec	18:33	0.42+	-25	24	ZC 3327	6.8
D	07 Dec	21:40	0.44+	-52	8	LQ Aqr	6.7
D	09 Dec	16:32	0.64+	-7	30	Tycho 2-0709-1	7.3
D	09 Dec	21:23	0.66+	-50	32	44 Psc	5.8
D	11 Dec	01:56	0.78+	-52	8	ZC 205	7.4
D	12 Dec	01:56	0.86+	-52	19	19 Ari	5.7
D	13 Dec	19:19	0.96+	-32	46	ZC 556	5.4
D	14 Dec	04:12	0.97+	-33	21	36 Tau	5.5
D	25 Dec	04:03	0.36-	-35	19	g Vir	5.6
R		04:54		-27	24		

James Appleton

Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

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OASI COMMITTEE CONTACTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Kenneth J Goward FRAS	Chairman	☎	Press Publicity with the Secretary. Open Weekend.
Roy Gooding	Secretary	☎	Main point of Society Contact. Press Publicity with the Chairman. Observatory Decoration. Visits by potential new members.
Garry Coleman	Treasurer	☎	Finance. Supervision of Grant Applications.
James Appleton	Committee	☎	Committee Meeting Minutes. Web site.
Martin Cook	Committee	☎	Membership. Tomline Refractor Maintenance.
Neil Morley	Committee	☎	Equipment Curator.
Ted Sampson	Committee	☎	Tomline Refractor tutoring.
Eric Sims	Committee	☎	Newsletter
Mike Whybray	Committee	☎	Librarian. Workshops
Paul Whiting FRAS	Committee	☎	Visits by outside groups.
Bill Barton FRAS	Committee	☎	Safety & Security
Peter Richards	Co-opted	☎	Lecture Meetings Email Distribution Lists

ADVANCE NOTICE

The OASI Annual General Meeting will take place on the evening of Saturday 14th January, 2006, at the Methodist Hall, Museum Street, Ipswich.

Full details in January newsletter.

DIARY FOR DECEMBER

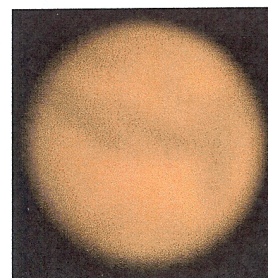
MONDAY	SMALL TELESCOPES OBSERVING NIGHTS 5 th , 19 th Perseus, Aries, Triangulum ☎ Paddy O'Sullivan
WEDNESDAY	OBSERVATORY CLUB NIGHTS 7 th , 21 st , 28 th ☎ Martin Cook
WEDNESDAY 7 th Science Classroom from 7.45pm	OASI WORKSHOP Filters for Astronomy By Peter Richards ☎ Mike Whybray
WEDNESDAY 14 th From 8pm	OASI CHRISTMAS MEAL THE OYSTER REACH RESTAURANT, WHERSTEAD. ** PLEASE NOTE - THE OBSERVATORY WILL BE CLOSED ON THIS EVENING ** ☎ Roy Gooding
THURSDAY	OBSERVATORY VISIT BY OUTSIDE GROUP 1 st from 8pm – Amberfield School ☎ Paul Whiting FRAS

SOCIETY PRIMARY CONTACTS

CHAIRMAN Kenneth J Goward FRAS ☎ (daytime & evenings)
SECRETARY Roy Gooding ☎ (daytime) (evenings)
E-MAIL QUERIES ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk
Contact details for the full Committee may be found on the inside back page

Society Trustees

Roy Adams David Brown David Payne
Hon President
Professor Allan Chapman D.Phil MA FRAS



Mars imaged through the Tomline Refractor using a Celestron Planet Imager Webcam. A composite of 1684 frames stacked via Registax 3 software.
2005 October 20th 21.30BST.

Image by Paul Whiting FRAS