



The Newsletter

of the
Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)



Registered charity No 271313
www.oasi.org.uk

2007 March

No 417

LEST WE FORGET



Grissom

White

Chaffee



The year 1967 was a time of new beginning and of tragedy– the beginning of a new Astronomical Society – OASI - and the terrible tragedy of the Apollo 1 launch pad fire, in which NASA Astronauts Lt. Col. Virgil I. (Gus) Grissom (USAF), Lt. Col. Edward H. White (USAF), and Roger B. Chaffee (USN) perished.

That terrible event took place on the evening of 27th January and the 40th anniversary has been overlooked by the UK media.

The fire started by an arc from a grazed cable close to Gus Grissom's feet and spread throughout the Apollo Capsule with its Oxygen-rich environment. The capsule door had been designed to open inwards and the pressure build up made it impossible to open from the outside. The whole event lasted just 20 seconds and the crew died from asphyxiation.

Following an intense investigation into the causes of the fire, the Apollo Capsules were redesigned and those successful modifications led to mankind making its first steps on another world just 30 months later.

Society News (Roy Gooding)

1 Committee Meeting Saturday 31st March

The next committee meeting will be held on Saturday 31st March from 20:00 at the Methodist Church halls. This meeting is open to any and any member who would like to attend.

2 Events for 2007

This event list will be updated through out the year

Meeting	Venue	Date
Lecturer Meeting Nick Szymanek	Methodist Church Hall Black Horse Lane	Friday 2 nd March 20:00
OASI Workshop The Meade ETX And other Telescopes Gerry Pilling	Nacton Village Hall	Wednesday 7 th March 19:45
SPA Convention 2007	Institute of Astronomy Cambridge Maddingley Road	Saturday 10 th March 10:00 to 17:30
40 th Anniversary Open Weekend		March 24 th and 25 th 19:30 to 22:00
OASI Workshop RA and Dec. Celestial Co-ordinates Paddy O' Sullivan	Nacton Village Hall	Wednesday 4 th April 19:45
BAA Winchester Weekend	Details in BAA Journal	April 7 th & 29 th
Lecture Meeting Dr. Allan Chapman	Methodist Church Hall Black Horse Lane	Friday 4 th May
NSC Leicester Exhibition Meeting	National Space Centre Leicester	30 th June
Summer Barbecue	This event may be held at Orwell Park School	To be decided
FAS Convention	Birmingham	October
Autumn Workshop	To be planned	To be planned
Lecture Meeting Dr. David Whitehouse	Orwell Park School	Friday 16 th November
Christmas Meal	To be planned	Wednesday 12 th

3 Welcome to New Members

Nigel Golfin (rejoined)

Dennis Kell

Stewart Moore

4 Access into the School Grounds and Observatory Tower

Please use the third gate into the school grounds, this is the gate behind the Gym. If the Black door entrance at the base of the observatory tower is locked, you will have to phone someone in the observatory to let you in. My mobile number is [REDACTED]. (Roy Gooding) alternatively the Observatory mobile is [REDACTED] during meeting hours.

5 Lecture Meeting Venue

Our town lecture venue is now at the Methodist Church, in Blackhorse Lane. The church has a car park can accommodate about 30 cars, in Black Horse Lane Alternatively there is a Park & Display car park at the top of Black Horse Lane, next too the Town Council Offices. This is about 100 yards form 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.

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

6 New Session of Night Sky Section Meetings

If there is sufficient interest again I will restart meetings of the Night Sky Section. 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 lane. 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.

7 Subscriptions for 2007

Subscriptions were due on 1st January for 2007. If you have yet paid, this Newsletter will be the last one you will receive. Please send you subscription together with the renewal form, that was include in January's Newsletter, to:

Mr. M. Cook

Ipswich
IP4 5PZ

Rates	Child & OAP	£12:00
	Adult	£16:00
	Family	£18:00

8 Observing Projects for 2007

Graze Occultation's

Date	Star	Track Time
Tuesday 2 nd October	ZC797	01:34:12
Thursday 1 st November	ZC1221	01:53:24
Sunday 30 th December	μ Leo	03:04:37

Other Occultations

Pleiades	
Date	Time
23 rd February	22:30
6 th August	23:30
27 th October	23:30
21 st December	21:00

Venus	
Date	Time
18 th June	14:03

Luna Eclipse 3rd March

Meteor Watches

Showers	Maximum Date	Moon Age	Observing Date
Lyrids	April 22 nd	4 days	Saturday 21 st
η Aquarids	May 4 th	18 days	Saturday 5 th
Perseids	August 13 th	27 days	Saturday 11 th
Geminids	December 14 th	5 days	Saturday 15 th

9 OPEN WEEKEND 2007

Our annual fund raising event this year will be on Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th
We will be open for the public from 19:30 to 22:00.

As in previous years as much help as possible is requested from members.
Please find a good home for the enclosed poster

Night Sky (March)

All times GMT

Moon

Full Moon	3 rd Quarter	New Moon	1 st Quarter
3 rd	12 th	19 th	25 th

Object	Date	2 Times		Mag.	Notes
		Rise	Set		
Sun	1	06:51	17:43		
	31	05:43	18:36		
Mercury	1	06:11	16:39	0.4	Mercury will be greatest western elongation on the 22 nd , 28 th
	31	05:16	15:59		
Venus	1	07:47	20:29	-4.0	Venus is well placed this month in the evening sky for observation
	31	06:46	22:06		
Mars	1	05:40	13:59	1.1	Mars is in Capricornus this month, visible in the morning twilight sky
	31	04:36	14:12		
Jupiter	1	02:39	10:35	-2.2	
	31	00:50	08:44		
Saturn	1	15:30	06:32	0.2	Saturn is visible all night for observing
	31	13:22	04:31		
Uranus	1	07:05	18:00	5.7	Uranus is in conjunction with the sun on the 5 th
	31	05:10	16:12		
Neptune	1	06:17	16:39	7.8	
	31	04:21	13:51		

Total Luna Eclipse 3rd March

Contact	Time
1 st Penumbra	20:18
1 st Umbra	21:30
Total 1 st Umbra	22:44
Total 2 nd Umbra	23:57
2 nd Umbra	01:11
2 nd Penumbra	02:23

OCCULTATIONS DURING MARCH

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.

Date	UT	D R	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (d)	Star Alt (d)	Mag	Star
20 Mar	19:22:17	D	0.04+	-12	10	6.9	ZC 196
24 Mar	23:25:38	D	0.41+	-36	21	7.4	Hip 25871
26 Mar	01:04:41	D	0.53+	-34	15	6.9	ZC 1013
27 Mar	01:44:20	D	0.63+	-31	15	7.4	Hip 36874
29 Mar	01:39:10	D	0.81+	-31	25	6.6	83 Cnc
30 Mar	03:28:38	D	0.89+	-19	10	1.4	Regulus

There is also a lunar occultation of Saturn during March. The following table provides details. As above, the data relates to Orwell Park Observatory, but will be similar at nearby locations.

Date	UT	D R	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (deg)	Planet Alt (deg)	Mag	Planet
02 Mar	02:38:56	D	0.97+	-36	32	0.0	Saturn
	02:58:49	R		-33	29		

James Appleton

A NOTE ON THE RECENT MEETING BETWEEN OASI AND THE ORWELL PARK SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

As many OASI members will be aware, a meeting took place on 8th February between the school and representatives of our society viz; SCHOOL SIDE Simon Pott (School Governor) and Simon Dodsworth (School Business Manager). OASI SIDE Ken Goward (Chairman) Roy Gooding (Secretary) Dave Payne (OASI Trustee) Martin Cook (Committee). The headmaster also popped in for a few moments and was enthusiastic in his support for OASI.

Forthright, positive plain, though friendly, speaking was the order of the day and from the outset it was made **ABUNDANTLY** clear to us that the school does **NOT** wish to see the back of OASI and that they **VERY MUCH** want us in occupation at the Observatory.

Access was discussed at length and all our concerns and the reasons for those concerns were explained in detail by Dave – and both Simons listened to all he said with great interest. For the time being, however, the 8pm access time remains in place, but we are confident that the school will move towards us on this point. There are complex and wholly justifiable reasons for the ‘curfew’ having been imposed, but they were at pains to say that ‘something can be done’. Indeed, the firm presently overseeing the security arrangements may be replaced by a more reliable local company.

- David and I have agreed/undertaken to collate all our concerns onto a written proposal to go before the next full meeting of the school Governors in June.
- We have agreed to come up with a revised and much simplified (plain English) Operating Licence to offer to the Governors. It looks as though that simplified licence will be five-yearly, but on a rolling basis so that we do not need to re-negotiate every time it comes up for renewal and the school would have the right to offer something like a 1 year notice to quit at the end of a licence period – *just in case some totally unexpected and wholly unlikely scenario arose – such as the government wanting to annex Orwell Park as an asylum hostel or whatever!*
- We have also been asked to make some proposals (a wish list if you like) for renovations in and around the observatory tower.
- We have agreed to present all this to Simon Dodsworth no later than 15th April, subject to discussion at Committee on 31st March and any member is entitled to come along to that meeting (see back page).

The school were very positive about us making better use of their facilities and it’s likely we’ll be able to stage a 40th anniversary BBQ in their grounds, subject to further discussion – more details will be announced in due course.

Kenneth J. Goward FRAS
Chairman OASI



The BAA/OASI Back to Basics Workshop

The first of this year's OASI 40th anniversary events



Around 55 visitors plus a fair number of helpers from OASI and the BAA attended the first of our 40th Anniversary events, the BAA/OASI 'Back to Basics Workshop' held at the Methodist Halls, Ipswich town centre on Saturday 20th January and was adjudged to have been a great success.

The event really began the evening preceding, when a small group of volunteers transformed the Church and side rooms into a credible Conference and Exhibition venue in the space of a couple of hours. One particularly nice touch being the hymn number boards on either side of the altar arranged with four figure NGC numbers, and at least one visitor commented on the seemingly high number of hymns that must be contained within the Methodist Hymn books!

On the morning of the event, we had a small publicity coup when OASI Chairman Ken Goward was invited to speak live on BBC Radio Suffolk during the Rachael Sloane Saturday show. Each week listeners are invited to enter their names in a draw for a mystery activity to try out for themselves – the prize on this occasion being two places at the Workshop, followed by a meal at the Shepherd & Dog Carvery, courtesy of OASI, thence an evening visit to the Orwell Park Observatory to tour the night sky. Ken revealed the prize to a lady drawn at random, who was over the moon on air at the prospect. However, shortly after the broadcast it transpired she had a dinner party planned that evening and the BBC promotion of the event hadn't made it clear that we would be at the Observatory. Thereafter quick telephone calls by the radio people enabled the next in line contestant to take the prize and to say that 'Colin of Mendlesham' and his partner enjoyed the day and evening visit is something of an understatement, given the fulsome praise he heaped upon OASI when interviewed by Rachael Sloane about his experience on the following Saturday show.



Delegates enjoying a good chinwag and welcome cuppa
Image courtesy of Pete Richards

By the time Ken had returned to the Methodist Halls, things were in full swing with traders preparing their stalls, BAA speakers arriving and a small group of OASI volunteers under the instructions of Dee Mc Leavey beavering away preparing a splendid buffet luncheon for the speakers and exhibitors, whilst Pete Richards and Nikky Gillard arranged welcome tea refreshments the whole day through.



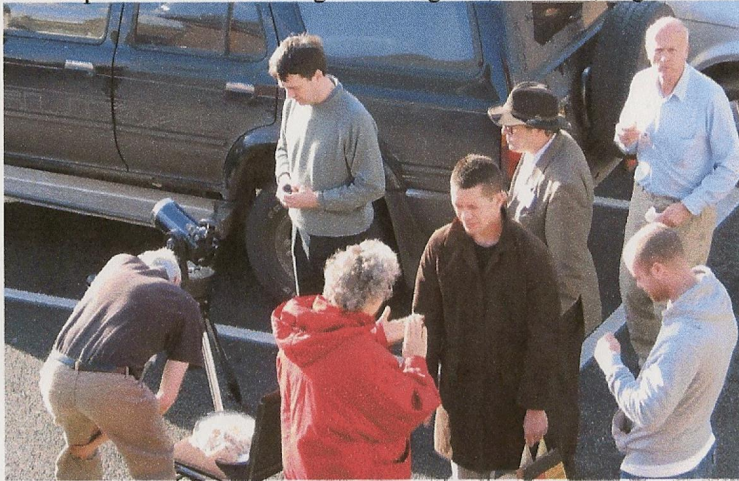
Dee Mc Leavey (right) and her 'volunteer' caterers
Image courtesy of Roy Gooding

Besides the Traders, in the main lecture hall Paul Whiting presented a very interesting display promoting OASI and its activities, along side further displays by the BAA Radio Astronomy Group and the Society for the History of Astronomy.

Amongst the BAA Speakers were well known names like Guy Hurst, Dr Stewart Moore (who lives at Thorpe-Le-Soken and has now joined OASI) and Bob Marriott, talking on subjects from getting started to Deep Sky Observations and even Radio Astronomy. Whatever one's level of experience, there was plenty of useful information from each speaker, reflecting the BAAs long tradition of excellence. The Sun even cooperated with us and good views of the solar disk through instruments out in the car park, including Bill Barton's Ha setup – luckily a nice prominence was evident.

During his closing address the BAA President, Dr Richard Miles, thanked OASI for our efforts and Ken Goward received a very nice book for our library on behalf of the society. Thereafter a number of BAA and OASI members had a meal at the Shepherd & Dog before going on for a session on the Tomline Refractor on a crystal clear evening – to make a nice change. Good views of a number of deep sky objects were obtained and several attendees took part in the Orion star count

with 'eagle eyed' Martin Cook managing to count 29 or 30 naked eye stars when fully dark adapted within the rectangle – Betelgeuse, Bellatrix, Rigel and Saiph.



Lunchtime in the car park – sarnies and solar observing, the perfect winter's day!

Image courtesy of Roy Gooding

All in all a splendid Saturday and the best of all starts for our 40th anniversary year and to top it off Ipswich FC actually won a match over at Portman Road, the reverberating full time cheer saying it all for the day! Last but not least, the event would not have been possible to stage without the wonderful support and effort of our volunteer helpers and those of the BAA. **Dee – you have a future in the catering trade!!**

**Letter from Hazel Collett, BAA Meetings Secretary & Event Organiser,
to OASI Chairman, Ken Goward**

Dear Ken

I am writing to thank you and all the members of Orwell AS for all the help both before and during the event on Saturday which made our Back-to-Basics workshop go so well. I am fully aware of the amount of work that this entailed so I much appreciate this.

We had 53 participants in total and they were all impressed with the venue and the refreshments, but more importantly there were numerous comments about how friendly and helpful all the Orwell folk were during the day and especially during the practical sessions.

I hope the book we presented to you will be a reminder of a wonderful day and mark the start of your 40th Year celebrations.

Thank you again for providing all the refreshments for the delegates as well as the wonderful lunch for the speakers and organisers.

Please can you also pass on my thanks to those folk providing the AV support and for bringing the back-up equipment.

Finally, will you please express our sincere thanks to Roy for bringing the telescopes along even though Bob Marriott did not actually use them on the day.

Thank you once again for helping to make Saturday a great success.

Hazel

40th Anniversary Year

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Charity No. 271313

PUBLIC OPEN WEEKEND

Visit One of the Few Remaining Operational Victorian Observatories
Located at Orwell Park School Nacton off the
A1156 between Ipswich and Felixstowe

THE ORWELL PARK OBSERVATORY WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ON

SATURDAY 24th March From 7:30pm to 10:00pm

SUNDAY 25th March From 7:30pm to 10:00pm

The weekends programme includes:

OBSERVATIONS OF THE MOON, SATURN and the NIGHT SKY

Observations will be undertaken: -

(Subject to favourable weather conditions)

- In the Observatory Tower, using the 10" Tomline Refractor and other telescopes
- Outside on the field, using naked eye and small telescopes
- If you have a pair of binoculars we recommend that you bring them with you.

Entrance by Donation

Child & Senior Citizen	£1.50
Adult	£3.00

Honorary Secretary
Roy Gooding
168 Ashcroft Road
Ipswich
IP1 6AE

OASI Observations Of Mercury, February 2007

Mercury is the most elusive of the classical planets due to the fact that it never ventures more than 27° 45' from the Sun. However, the planet presented a favourable apparition during early 2007 and was visible in the WSW up to 30 minutes after sunset during the period 04 - 10 February 2007. The planet was at greatest elongation east, furthest angular distance from the Sun, on 07 February. At this time, Venus was visible 7.5° further forward along the ecliptic, and Uranus was visible in binoculars between the other two planets.

Several members of OASI were encouraged by the favourable apparition of Mercury to make observations of Mercury, Venus and Uranus as follows. All times below are UT.

Date	Observer	Observations
02 Feb	James Appleton	Mercury first seen at 17:00 with 10*50 binoculars, then seen by naked eye at 17:07. Formed a nice grouping with Venus somewhat higher and further East. Colour contrast obvious: Venus pure white, Mercury cream colour.
06 Feb	Nigel Golfin	Mercury observed about 17:30 UT, naked eye just above WSW horizon about 1/3 way along a line from v. bright Venus (above left) and estimated position of Sun lower right (set for approx 30 mins).
	Nicky Gillard	Mercury observed by naked eye from Nacton village at 17.20 - still visible at around 18:00.
	Pete Richards	Mercury observed by naked eye at 17.35 from Martlesham Heath.
07 Feb	Christopher Gomm	Venus & Mercury clearly seen unaided from Brantham at 17.45.
	Raj Patel	Spotted both with naked eye, bins & 90mm Meade from the top floor of my house on Tuddenham Road, on 06 Feb and again 07 Feb at 17.30-17.45ish. Didn't see Uranus though.

...cont/

Date	Observer	Observations
07 Feb	Mike Harlow	Yes it's still there! Spotted Mercury with binoculars at 17.10 and then naked eye at 17.20. Colour contrast with Venus striking...pale orange of Mercury compared to dazzling white of Venus.
	Mike Nicholls	Observed both Venus and Mercury about 17.45 today with binoculars and naked eye. Also observed them with 8" reflector and noticed Mercury around 50% illuminated and Venus about 70% illuminated. Also observed Uranus, but rather faint in a slightly hazy twilight.
	Paul Whiting	Saw the trio (Venus, Mercury & Uranus) from Badingham, around 18:00 - Uranus gets harder to find as it moves away from Venus.
	Ted Sampson	Saw Venus and Mercury, but not yet Uranus, about 18:00 - naked eye and binoculars. Observed from Offton (near Needham Market).
08 Feb	Paul Whiting	Saw the trio (Venus, Mercury & Uranus) again last night from Badingham, around 18:00 - Uranus gets harder to find as it moves away from Venus.
11 Feb	James Appleton	Observed Venus and Mercury by naked eye at 17:50. Venus easily visible, but only just managed to glimpse Mercury briefly between clouds near the horizon.

James Appleton
16 February 2007

OASI Committee Contacts & Responsibilities

Kenneth J. Goward FRAS	Chairman	☎		Press & Publicity with Secretary.
Roy Gooding	Secretary	☎		MAIN POINT OF SOCIETY CONTACT Press Publicity with Chairman. Observatory Decoration. Visits by potential new members.
Mike Harlow	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.
Peter Richards	Committee	☎		Lecture Meetings. School Lighting liaison. Email Distribution Lists.
Eric Sims	Committee	☎		Newsletter.
Mike Whybray	Committee	☎		Librarian & Workshops.
Paul Whiting FRAS	Committee	☎		Visits by outside groups.
Bill Barton FRAS	Committee	☎		Safety & Security.

Diary for March

<p>Monday 12th & 19th FROM 8.30PM</p>	<p><u>SMALL TELESCOPES OBSERVING NIGHTS (STONS)</u> Target: Cancer & Monoceros ☎ Paddy O'Sullivan</p>
<p>Wednesday 7th 7.45PM Nacton Village Hall</p>	<p><u>ASTRONOMY WORKSHOP</u> <i>'USING THE MEADE ETX AND OTHER TELESCOPES'</i> Presented by Gerry Pilling The talk will be interactive with some useful advice for beginners who are thinking of buying a telescope. ☎ Mike Whybray</p>
<p>Wednesday 7th 14th 21st 28th FROM 8PM</p>	<p><u>OBSERVATORY CLUB NIGHTS</u> ☎ Martin Cook (mobile) ☎ Roy Gooding (mobile)</p>
<p>Thursday 7.45PM</p>	<p><u>VISIT BY OUTSIDE GROUP</u> 1st - RAFA 8th - Amberfield School ☎ Paul Whiting FRAS</p>
<p>Friday 2nd 8PM Methodist Halls Blackhorse Lane Ipswich</p>	<p><u>LECTURE MEETING</u> <i>'Image Processing'</i> Presented by Internationally renowned astro-imager, Nik Szymanek ☎ Peter Richards</p>
<p>Saturday 31st 8PM Methodist Halls Blackhorse Lane Ipswich</p>	<p><u>OASI COMMITTEE MEETING</u> Open to all members. ☎ Ken Goward FRAS</p>
<p>Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th From 7.30PM to 10PM</p>	<p><u>PUBLIC OPEN WEEKEND</u> <i>Volunteers are needed to assist with this, our main fund-raising event for 2007.</i> ☎ Roy Gooding (mobile)</p>

Society Primary Contacts

Chairman: Kenneth J. Goward FRAS ☎ (daytime & evenings)
Secretary: Roy Gooding ☎ (daytime) (evenings)
E-Mail queries Ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk

Society Trustees

Mr Roy Adams Mr David Brown Mr David Payne

Society Honorary President

Professor Allan Chapman D.Phil MA FRAS

Observatory Telephone Number

Meeting nights only

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