



The Newsletter



of the

Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

Registered charity No 271313
www.oasi.org.uk

2007 June

No 420



Following his excellent 3rd OASI Presidential Lecture in this, our 40th Anniversary Year, Professor Allan Chapman poses with members and guests before the altar at the Ipswich town centre Methodist Church Friday 2007 May 4th.

See inside...

Photograph courtesy of John Wainwright

Society News (Roy Gooding)

1 Committee Meeting Saturday 21st July

The Methodist church hall is not available for this meeting. A new venue is being sort
Start time will be at 20:00. This is an open meeting and any member may attend if they wish

2 Events for 2007

This event list will be updated through out the year

Meeting	Venue	Date
BAA 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
Lecture meeting Exo Planets and their Aurora By Sam George	Methodist Church Hall	Friday 26 th October 20:00
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

Shirley Shelley

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 Balcony Door Opening problem

The opening mechanism of the central balcony door has become jammed. Martin Cook has planned to deal with this problem on the next suitable Wednesday. Until then ,please do not attempt to open it.

7 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 Ocultations

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

Venus	
Date	Time
18 th June	14:03

Meteor Watches

Shower	Maximum Date	Moon Age	Observing Date
Perseids	August 13 th	27 days	Saturday 11 th
Geminids	December 14 th	5 days	Saturday 15 th

Night Sky (May)

(Times GMT)

The Moon

Full	Last Quarter	New	First Quarter	Full
1 st	8 th	15 th	22 nd	30 th

Object	Date	Times		Mag.	Notes
		Rise	Set		
Sun	1	03:51	20:15		
	30	03:48	20:19		
Mercury	1	05:09	22:17	0.6	Mercury is at greatest eastern elongation on the 2 nd
	30	04:10	19:41		
Venus	1	06:58	23:40	-4.4	Venus will be at greatest eastern elongation on the 9 th
	30	07:44	22:32		
Mars	1	01:54	14:38	0.7	Mars remains badly placed for observation this month
	30	00:38	14:45		
Jupiter	1	20:22	04:25	-2.6	Jupiter is at opposition on the 5 th
	30	18:10	02:18		
Saturn	1	09:26	00:29	0.5	Saturn is approaching Venus in the evening sky. Closest encounter will be the end of the month
	30	07:47	22:37		
Uranus	1	01:10	12:22	5.7	Uranus remains in the Aquarius
	30	23:13	10:29		
Neptune	1	00:19	09:52	7.8	Neptune is in Capricornus
	30	22:20	07:56		

Meteor Showers

Shower	Limits	Maximum	ZHR
Ophiuchids	May 19 th to July	June 9 th June 19 th	5

Meteor source is the BAA Handbook

OCCULTATIONS DURING JUNE

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.

Date	UT	D R	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (d)	Star Alt (d)	Mag	Star
07 Jun	02:53:26	D	0.65-	-6	19	4.3	Iota Aqr
25 Jun	21:10:01	D	0.80+	-6	17	6.6	ZC 2066
26 Jun	22:40:40	D	0.87+	-13	10	7.3	6762-1235-1

There is also a lunar occultation of Venus during June. Conditions are not ideal, as the event occurs during the daytime and it will therefore present a challenge to locate Venus prior to the ingress event. 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
18 Jun	14:03:03	D	0.15+	53	54	-4.4	Venus
	15:23:48	R		41	57		

James Appleton

Something Old and Something New – Allan Chapman's welcome return to Suffolk

By Kenneth J. Goward FRAS

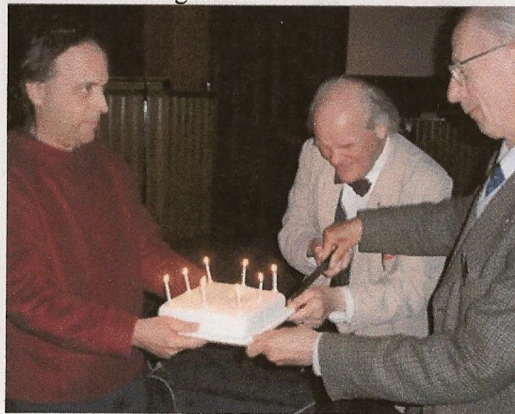
The latest (3rd) OASI Presidential Lecture on Friday 4th May from Professor Allan Chapman was, perhaps predictably, a resounding success and thoroughly enjoyed not least by Allan himself. Besides OASI members and their guests, also in attendance were a delegates from neighbouring Astronomical Societies along with local leading amateur Astronomers such as Tom Boles and Martin Mobberley. It was particularly gratifying to be blessed with the company of OASI members Garry and Jacqueline Coleman after Jacqueline's prolonged illness.

Appropriately in this, our 40th year, Allan's ninety plus minute lecture was entitled 'That Clubbable Passion, the Amateur Astronomical Society' in which he firstly set the socio-economic background to Astronomical endeavour across Europe from Georgian times through to now. The title, by the way, was taken from his ground breaking 1998 book 'The Victorian Amateur Astronomer', and a second edition is due to be re-printed later this year. Whilst science received funding through Government or Sovereign elsewhere in Europe, abstract astronomical research was the realm of the private individual in Gt Britain and it was not before Sir George Airy's appointment as Astronomer Royal in 1836 that salaried science began to be the norm on this side of the channel.¹ He detailed some amateur astronomers ranging from the 'Grand Amateurs' such as the 3rd Earl of Rosse, who had the time and financial resource to pursue their love of the night sky at rates of expenditure that stand close comparison with funding provided by modern governments. Lord Rosse, of course, built the world's largest telescope (for over 72 years) at his seat at Birr in Ireland, the instrument's power was mainly used to resolve the nature of Nebulae. William Lassell, who made a fortune selling beers to the dock workers of Liverpool and took early retirement to pursue astronomy full time – with his revolutionary equatorially mounted 24" Reflector he discovered Neptune's Moon Triton within a short period of the planet being discovered itself in 1846. The 'Grand Patrons' were touched upon, not least our own Colonel Tomline and his philanthropic approach to the science. Also the country Parson type middle class amateur – the likes of the Rev T W Webb of Hardwick, Herefordshire, whose 1859 publication 'Celestial Objects for Common Telescopes' was the first book of real use to the amateur, offering advice on celestial objects within range of the primary instruments of the day – the then ubiquitous 3" Brass tube Refractor. Right down to the so-called lower echelons of society and featuring dedicated amateurs of little education or wealth such as Roger Langdon, the Station Master of Silverton in Devon, who undertook serious astronomical research from his garden observatory at the side of the station between his many duties such as selling tickets, sweeping platforms and seeing the trains in and out.

Allan suggested that aside from the group of middle class gentlemen who first met in the Lincoln's Inn area of London in 1820 and whose burgeoning membership would within a few years become the Royal Astronomical Society, the first amateur grouping as we would understand it today was that of Admiral Smyth of Bedford and Dr John Lee of Hartwell House Mansion at Aylesbury, who held well-attended weekend observing parties at Hartwell House in the early Victorian era – the so-called Bedford/Aylesbury Axis.

From around 1859 informal astronomical groups were springing up in many towns and cities around Gt Britain, but the first truly recognisable Astronomical Society was that at Leeds, which had formed following a lecture there in 1858 by Sir John Herschel – son of Sir William Herschel. The society flourished for a few short years, but foundered some time before the first of the long-lasting groups formed at Liverpool. Thereafter, 'household name' astronomical groups began to appear in the major population points, notably Manchester, Leeds (again) and Cardiff. By 1890 the British Astronomical Association had been founded and the rest – as they say – is history!

After answering questions (not that Allan had left any ground uncovered!) a celebratory OASI Birthday Cake was brought to the front of the audience and Allan, along with long-serving OASI member (now Trustee) Roy Adams was invited to blow out the candles and cut the cake. Something that proved to be a repeat of the biblical feeding of the 5,000 given the excellent turnout! Light refreshments to wash down the cake were ably organised by Peter Richards and Nikky Gillard with assistance from Martin Cook, for which we are most grateful.



Allan and Roy cutting the cake, whilst Peter Richards gingerly holds it.

Photograph courtesy of Ken Goward

Before the main lecture began, I had set the scene by explaining the origins of OASI and touching upon our predecessors, the Ipswich & District Astronomical Association (IDAS) in the late 1940s/early 50s and before them the local branch of the Chaldean Society in the 1920s and early 30s.

Whilst we are able to say for sure that OASI first formed in 1967 to operate the Orwell Park Observatory, we cannot offer an exact date within that year. The cake, therefore, was something of a token for the year itself and Allan's lecture seemed the most appropriate point to celebrate. However, Allan's ever polished and flawless lecture performance left me feeling utterly inadequate after my inane introductory ramblings!

On the morning following Allan's lecture, I collected him from his hotel and we drove over to Playford so that he could see for himself the beautifully restored headstones in the Airy family burial plot in St Mary's churchyard. Allan placed some flowers on the graves and then we were off to Bury St Edmunds to honour a long-standing invitation for Allan to visit the rooftop observatory at the Athenaeum building on Angel Hill. After many months of research in collaboration with Martin Mobberley (the main driver in that endeavour) and with valued initial help from Garry Coleman, Martin and I co-authored a paper on this well preserved Victorian time capsule of an observatory which was published in the Journal of the British Astronomical Association (JBAA) in 2005 October². In many respects a classic example of the mid 19th century growth of interest in astronomy (see paragraph two) built in 1859 following a public lecture at the Athenaeum by Airy and the coincidental apparition of Donati's Comet in the autumn of 1858.



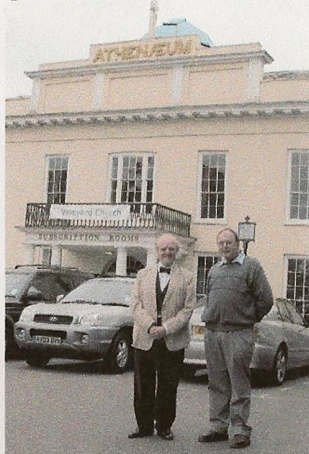
Donati's Comet as seen over the dome of the Northumberland Refractor at Cambridge, 1858 October 11th

From the Illustrated London News 1858 October 23rd
Collection of Ken Goward

The observatory was paid for by public donation and is today very much in original condition with its 4" OG Troughton & Simms Refractor, which Airy had negotiated directly from William Simms for £100. However, today the fabric of the building in the immediate area around the dome is in

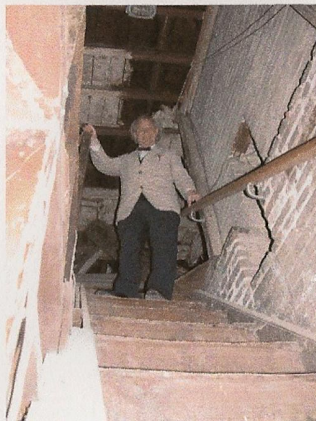
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need of major overhaul and a lack of even the most basic handrails and safety features render this area inaccessible to the public and very much the stuff of a Health & Safety Inspector's worst nightmare. Allan, Martin and I had exceptional special permission to visit the observatory.



Allan Chapman and Ken Goward pose outside the Athenaeum building. The observatory dome can be seen directly behind the Athenaeum sign and flagpole.

Photograph courtesy of Martin Moberley



Allan on the narrow access stairs to the observatory

Photograph courtesy of Martin Moberley

Astronomical pursuit has a broad spectrum and from the very old, our trio then went to the very new – to see Martin Moberley's own Observatory at Cockfield. As most will know, Martin is a former BAA President and an extremely active observer. His many articles in Astronomy Now, Sky at Night and JBAA bear testament to that. Martin's main interest is CCD Imaging of Comets and other Deep Sky objects and his main instrument for this is a magnificent Paramount ME/Celestron 14 telescope, which is housed in an adapted run off plastic shed (off-the shelf from B&Q) and the

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telescope is fully automated, allowing Martin to observe from the comfort of his study. He also has a 10" F6 Reflector in another shed, or dog kennel as he describes it – the telescope rolls out on its own rails - and various other telescopes dotted about his garden.³ Martin and his father have built some ingenious housing arrangements for his instruments and it was made clear to us that Arachnids getting inside the equipment are a major bugbear to him. Moreover, Martin is convinced that the local spider population is mutating into giant form and that some have the physical capability of running off with 2" eyepieces! We spent a fascinating half hour looking over the telescopes before adjourning for a most pleasant lunch at a nearby restaurant.



Martin Mobberley, Allan Chapman and Ken Goward pose in front of Martin's Paramount ME/Celestron 14 SCT in its run off shed housing.

Photograph courtesy of Martin Mobberley

Following lunch and returning to local astronomical history and before driving Allan back to Oxford we visited Cockfield's nearby church to see the bricked up remains of a transit instrument slot in the church tower. During the 18th century the Revd William Ludlam (1716-1788) had the living at Cockfield and adapted the top of the tower for his own astronomical observations. With a minute amount of assistance from me, Martin has researched Ludlam's Observatory and had a paper published in JBAA 2006 June⁴

During the long drive back over to Oxford, Allan reflected on our mini history tour of southern Suffolk and the fascinating juxtaposition of old and

new we had observed. It is self evident that he enjoys his trips to OASI and is looking forward to his next sojourn to what he refers to as 'Airy Country'

¹ Hitherto British Government funding had only been available for the Royal Observatory at Greenwich (established 1675) via the Board of Admiralty, the object of Greenwich's work was to accurately chart the night sky to aid navigation at sea.

² JBAA Vol 115,5 pp251-261 2005 'The Bury St Edmunds Athenaeum Observatory

³ For more details on Martin's Observatory, see his web site

<http://uk.geocities.com/martinmobberley/>

⁴ JBAA Vol 116 No 3 pp 119-126 'The Rev William Ludlam and the Cockfield Tower Observatory'.

Waiter, There's a Fly in my Soup...

By Kenneth J. Goward FRAS

The butt of many a musical hall joke, but not quite so amusing for the children of Orwell Park's former Astronomer, it would seem...

Members who don't get out much may recall my article in the 2005 November edition of this organ, detailing John Isaac Plummer's frosty relationship with Dr William Doberck at the Hong Kong Observatory after Plummer had taken up a post there in 1891. Professor Kevin MacKeown of the University of Hong Kong had been researching a biographical paper on Doberck and, in short, the two men hit it off about as well Messrs Brown and Blair – if the Westminster rumours are to be believed. In particular Kevin had sent us details of a note from Plummer to Doberck explaining why he'd been late for duty one morning – as his "*Cook and houseboy had been arrested for attempted murder, or something very like it*".

I am grateful to Kevin for his latest communication – three press cuttings – which throw more light on the matter:

According to the Hong Kong Telegraph and the China Mail – 1891 December 29th – the story was that J I Plummer and his wife had gone out to dine with friends on Boxing Day evening 1891, leaving their children in the care of domestic staff. Soup was served to his son and daughter and almost immediately afterwards they fell violently ill. The allegation was made that the cook and houseboy had introduced some noxious powder to the soup for reasons unknown but, happily, both victims survived the ordeal. The suspects were later charged with 'Administering Poison with intent to do Grievous Bodily Harm' and a quantity of 'powder' was recovered from a fireplace in the house. No further reports appeared in the press and we may assume the case was abandoned thereafter – possibly a negative result upon forensic analysis of the soup? Charmingly, the press cuttings assert that the sudden illness was not thought to be the result of the previous day's '*MORTAL GORGE*' – so at least on that latter point nothing changes a century on, it would appear!

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Anyone fancy a Chinese Takeaway?

Summary of Committee Meeting Held 31 March 2007

Present: Ken Goward, Roy Gooding, James Appleton, Martin Cook, Nicky Gillard, Pete Richards, Paul Whiting, Mike Harlow, Gerry Pilling, Sue Brown

1. Apologies

Bill Barton, Eric Sims, Neil Morley, Mike Whybray

2. Chairman's Report – Ken Goward

Ken had represented OASI at a ceremony at Playford to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery.

Ken had made the arrangements for Allan Chapman's next Presidential Lecture to OASI on 04 May 2007.

3. Licence Renewal

James Appleton, Martin Cook and Ken Goward had drafted a "plain English" version of a new license covering OASI's access to Orwell Park Observatory. The Committee reviewed the draft and proposed several changes. Once finalised, Ken will forward the draft to Orwell Park School for consideration at the next Governors' meeting. Note: a copy of the draft Licence is available in the club room for inspection by any member of OASI - any comments on the draft are welcome.

4. Secretary's Report – Roy Gooding

Since the last committee meeting, Roy had received 21 enquiries from people interested in joining OASI.

Roy has provided information on OASI to Suffolk Library.

Roy is handling the annual return to the Charities Commission.

5. Review of 2007 Open Weekend

The Open Weekend held Saturday 24 – Sunday 25 March 2007 had been very successful, and the Committee expressed thanks to Roy for organising it. Roughly 20 visitors attended on Saturday, and 65 on Sunday. The Open Weekend raised £209.

Access to future Open Events could be improved by better signage on the gates of Orwell Park School, at the crossroads and at the end of the lanes leading to Orwell Park. Martin Cook took an action to investigate availability and prices of new signs.

6. Treasurer's Report – Mike Harlow

The Committee welcomed Mike to the post of OASI Treasurer for the second time! Mike thanked the previous Treasurer, Garry Coleman, for handing over the accounts in such a well organised state and for his help during the handover.

In broad terms, OASI's finances are relatively healthy.

Mike requested that people paying subscriptions send him cheques rather than cash, to ease paying-in of funds to the bank account.

7. Membership – Martin Cook

OASI currently has 91 members. Seven members from last year have not renewed their membership for 2007.

8. Workshops & Library – Mike Whybray

Mike was not present at the meeting but had sent a report in advance by email. Mike will create some space in the library by archiving less frequently used books in storage boxes. Mike will update the library stock list.

Ken Goward reported that he had received a donation of three astronomy titles from the BAA via the RAS librarian, Peter Hingley.

The Astronomy Workshops continue to run very nicely at Nacton Village Hall.

9. Web Site – James Appleton

Nothing significant to report about the Web site - as always, James welcomes fresh material for the Web site from members of OASI.

10. Security & Safety – Bill Barton

Bill was not present at the meeting. Ken Goward had contacted Bill in advance: Bill had no issues to raise.

11. Equipment & Maintenance – Neil Morley

Neil was not present at the meeting but had sent a report in advance by email.

Neil had purchased a laser collimator for OASI.

Neil had moved the OASI Millennium Telescope to Orwell Park Observatory for storage in the space below the Observatory stairs. He had found it difficult to manoeuvre the telescope to/from under the stairs, so Ken will include a request for a more accessible storage space in negotiations with the School over a new license

Paul Whiting had purchased Bader 1.25 inch Hydrogen- α and O-III filters. The Committee authorised Paul to purchase a 1.25 inch Hydrogen- β filter and a 2 inch 2x Barlow lens.

12. Visits – Paul Whiting

The 2006-07 visits season is now complete. Recent visits had been lucrative. The Committee unanimously passed a vote of thanks to Paul for running the visits so effectively.

13. Lectures – Pete Richards

Nik Szymanek's talk on image processing, 02 March 2007, had been very successful.

Forthcoming lectures:

- Presidential Lecture by Allan Chapman, 04 May, in the Methodist Church.
- Lecture by David Whitehouse, BBC Science Correspondent, 16 November 2007 at Orwell Park School.
- Sam George (FAS Secretary), October 2007, *Aurora On Exoplanets*.
- Dr Brian Warner from the Department of Astronomy, University of Cape Town, is visiting the UK for several months during 2007. He is willing to talk to a small number of astronomy societies. Ken Goward will contact Peter Hingley (RAS Librarian) to begin making the necessary arrangements to invite Brian to lecture to OASI.

14. Events

Xmas Meal: Wednesday 12 December 2007.

15. Observing Projects During 2007

21 Apr: Lyrids Meteor Count, Felixstowe.

22 May: Saturn occultation, 19:10 UT

18 Jun: daylight occultation of Venus, 14:03 UT

06 Aug: Pleiades occultation, 23:30 uT

13 Aug: Perseids maximum, 02:00 UT
02 Oct: grazing occultation of ZC979, 01:44 UT
27 Oct: Pleiades occultation, 22:30 UT
01 Nov: grazing occultation of 9 Cnc, 02:06 UT
18 Nov: Leonids maximum, 05:00 UT
21 Dec: Pleiades occultation, 21:00 UT
30 Dec: grazing occultation of Ups Leo, 03:17 UT

16. International Year of Astronomy, 2009

The FAS sits on the UK Steering Group of IYA2009. The Committee brainstormed possible activities in support of IYA, 2009:

- “Sidewalk astronomy” – telescopes in Ipswich town centre, to show the night sky to the public.
- Astronomy outreach packages for local schools.
- Open Weekend at Orwell Park School, with an exhibition. Could be extended to last for up to four days or a week.

Ken Goward will put a piece in the Newsletter to ask the membership of OASI for further suggestions and will appraise the FAS of the outcome of discussions.

17. AOB

The Committee will mark the forthcoming retirement of Andrew Auster as Headmaster of Orwell Park School with a gift.

18. Date of Next Meeting

21 July 2007. As usual, all members of OASI are invited to attend.

James Appleton
04 May 2007

More Information On IDAS

The Ipswich and District Astronomical Society (IDAS) occasionally used Orwell Park Observatory during the period 1950 – 1957, and in that sense was a precursor to OASI. IDAS grew out of the Ipswich and District National History Society (IDNHS) in 1950.

In the February 2007 OASI Newsletter I gave details of information on IDAS provided by OASI member John Barbrook, a former member of IDAS. Recently, John has undertaken further research at the Suffolk Record Office into the formation of IDAS. I have compiled the following chronology of the foundation of IDAS from the material which John has recently uncovered. All the material is archived on CD-ROM in the OASI library and is available for loan to members.

Date	Summary
09 Oct 1948	Approximately 25 members of IDNHS spent an evening at Orwell Park Observatory. Mr N H Wilkinson, Mr R L T Clarkson, FRAS and Mr D J Fulcher guided the party. The party observed Jupiter, its cloud belts and the Galileans, the Moon, star clusters and a double star with contrasting gold and blue colours (Albirio?). (Wilkinson was headmaster of Orwell Park School; Clarkson was later to become first president of IDAS and Fulcher its first honorary secretary.)
19 Oct 1948	At a Committee Meeting of IDNHS at Ipswich Museum, Mr J L Chumley (Honorary Secretary) read a letter from Clarkson with a proposal to establish an Astronomical Section. The Committee instructed Chumley to call a public meeting to ascertain the level of support for an Astronomical Section, and further specified that the meeting was to be in Ipswich Museum Lecture Room, to be advertised in the <i>EADT</i> and <i>Evening Star</i> and that people unable to attend should be asked to present their views in writing.
13 Nov 1948	At a Committee Meeting of IDNHS Chumley reported that he had arranged a public meeting to ascertain whether an Astronomical Section could be viable and that notices of the meeting had appeared in the <i>EADT</i> and <i>Evening Star</i> .
20 Nov 1948	The public meeting was held in Ipswich Museum Lecture Room, chaired by Clarkson. Thirty people expressed an interest in joining an Astronomical Section if one were formed. The meeting unanimously decided to ask IDNHS to form an Astronomical Section and elected Fulcher leader of the new section. Officers of IDNHS present at the meeting agreed that members who wished to enrol in the new Section should do so subject to confirmation at the next IDNHS Annual Meeting. The meeting agreed the following in regard of the

	<p>Astronomical Section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its main aim should be to spread general knowledge of astronomy. • It would hold monthly meetings to give news of what could be seen in the night sky and would give special attention to eclipses and other naked-eye phenomena. • It would arrange talks, and if there were sufficient demand, full scale lectures. • From time to time the Section would visit members who owned telescopes. • The subscription would be 3/6 annually.
29 Nov 1948	Fulcher attended the first Committee Meeting of IDNHS following the public meeting on 20 Nov 1948. Chumley read a lengthy report on the meeting from Clarkson. The Committee agreed to form an Astronomical Section subject to approval at the next Annual Meeting and suggested that Fulcher, as Honorary Secretary of the Astronomical Section, be coopted onto the IDNHS Committee. Motion proposed by Mr H E J Spencer, seconded by Chumley.
15 Jan 1949	The IDNHS 25 th Annual Meeting, chaired by Mr D Beaufoy, retiring president, approved the formation of the Astronomical Section. Motion proposed by Spencer, seconded by Mr D G Porter. The meeting confirmed Fulcher as Honorary Secretary of the Astronomical Section.
14 Dec 1949	At a Committee Meeting of IDNHS, Fulcher gave his views on the Astronomical Section and Mr Spencer dealt with finances of the Section. The meeting requested Fulcher to determine whether members of the Astronomical Section wished the Section to separate from IDNHS (the Committee would accept the results of a postal ballot). Motion Proposed by Spencer, seconded by Mr Brinkley.
14 Jan 1950	At the 26 th Annual Meeting of IDNHS, at Ipswich Museum Lecture Room, Fulcher reported the results of a postal ballot to ascertain the view of the membership of the Astronomical Section on forming a separate society. Forty members were in favour and three against. The Committee agreed that the Astronomical Section be wound up. Motion proposed by Mr Hervey and seconded by Spencer. The President of IDNHS, Mr S C Porter, wished every success to the new Astronomical Society which would be formed on 21 January 1950.
21 Jan 1950	Formation of IDAS as an independent society.

JODRELL BANK OBSERVATORY

by Tina Hammond

*Jaudrell – one of the families who owned the land it was built on
Bank – a small river valley*

Had Bernard Lovell not studied physics at Manchester University before the second world war (during which time he was hauled away from his studies to work on radar systems to assist the war), and had he not found the noise from the trams in Manchester's busy Oxford Road too disruptive for his study of cosmic rays post-war, we may never have had the Jodrell Bank telescope complex.

His pleas to the University reached the Botany Department who had some land at Macclesfield in Cheshire, just 20 miles south of Manchester. Lovell started doing basic research there in 1945, and by Christmas had detected faint echoes which turned out to be from meteors. By 1947 he had managed to build a 218'/66m parabolic reflector, then the largest in the world, but with the distinct disadvantage of only being able to observe that part of the sky directly overhead. It did, however, pick up the first radio waves from the Andromeda Galaxy, and also confirmed that meteor showers were active during the day as well as night, and that meteors are indeed part of our Solar System. Alas, no cosmic rays were detected.

Something better and more versatile was needed, and by 1957 Lovell and Charles Husband – a consulting engineer from Sheffield - had managed to overcome vast problems regarding plans and funding to get a fully steerable 250'/76m radio telescope constructed. It rapidly became known as the Mark I. Timing, as in so many things, was vital, as Sputnik I was only months away from being launched, and the Mk I was the only telescope in the western world able to track the rocket carrier by radar.

In 1960 Lord Nuffield and his Nuffield Foundation cleared all debts associated with the Mk I, and the Jodrell Bank Experimental Station became officially – although most definitely not generally - known as the Nuffield Radio Astronomy Laboratories.

What were to be know as quasars were first identified by Jodrell Bank in 1962, and in 1966, it was able to bring us pictures of the first moon landing from Lunar 9.



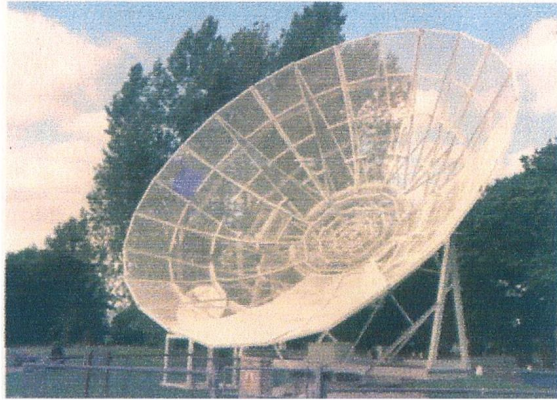
Then as now, breakthroughs in science were rapidly being made, and in 1970/1971, a huge maintenance and upgrading project was carried out on the Mk I, giving it a vastly enhanced capability and from thence onward it has been known as the Mk IA.

On the 30th anniversary of the Mk I, in 1987, it was renamed the Lovell Telescope in honour of its founder, by then Professor Sir Bernard Lovell, just one year after it had identified the first pulsars form a globular cluster.

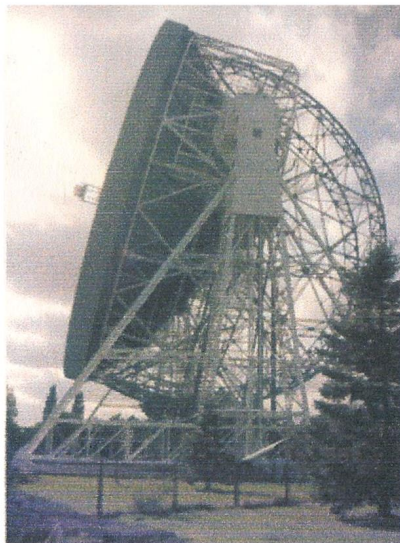


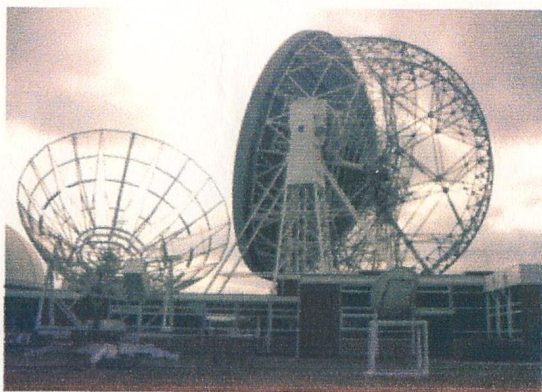
I visited Jodrell Bank as part of a mini-tour of north east England, which included several days in Derby and Manchester, and indulging another interest by squeezing in a visit to the highest pub in Great Britain (the Tan Hill in Richmond, North Yorkshire, part of lucky William Hague's constituency, if you fancy a pint!), way back in 1990/91, and was vastly impressed by its size even when miles away – it is huge, and certainly lives up to its reputation as a world class radio telescope. Even today, it remains one of the largest top three fully steerable radio telescopes in the world, the only larger ones being near Bonn in Germany and West Virginia, USA.

Once inside, there is a small exhibition area which does not do justice to the size and importance of this facility, and also a 3D Theatre. One memorable display when I visited was a hologram of Sir Isaac Newton - speaking! I realise this is not much to get excited about now, but nearly 20 years ago, a moving hologram, combined with a audio device, was something rarely seen.



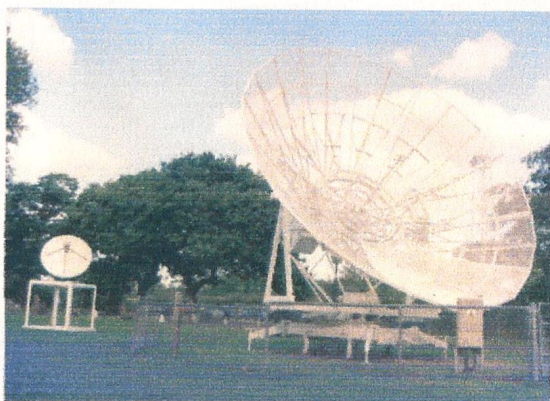
Paying dues to its heritage of being built on land owned by the Botany Department of Manchester University, Jodrell Bank benefits by being set in 35 glorious acres of trees, presumably still used by the university for study and research. It certainly makes a change from the more normal windy radio telescopes perched on top of hills and mountains!





As expected, there is a souvenir shop and – oddly bearing in mind its official name is the Nuffield Radio Astronomy Laboratories, and had been for over 30 years - I purchased two small plates, one saying Jodrell Bank and the other Jodrell Bank Science Centre, but no mention of poor Lord Nuffield and his generous donations to release the place from its debts!!

A major restoration and upgrading project is currently ongoing to bring Jodrell Bank into the 21st century, so it can continue to give us much more valuable data and discoveries for many years to come.



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.

NATIONAL SPACE CENTRE, LEICESTER

For anyone who had their appetite whetted to see this fascinating Astronomy/Space attraction by Tina Hammond's excellent article in the May edition of this newsletter (*we're sorry about the pagination faux pas Tina!*) – there is a double bonus there on Saturday 30th June in the guise of the annual BAA Exhibition Meeting and visitors will (at usual admission prices) have the additional opportunity to visit the BAA Exhibition with its attendant section displays and others including the Society for the History of Astronomy stand, along with some excellent talks...

Diary for June

Wednesdays

FROM 8PM

6th 13th 20th 27th

MAIN OBSERVATORY CLUB

NIGHTS

Primary Observational targets: Nebulae and faint objects.

☎ Martin Cook [redacted] (mobile) [redacted]

☎ Roy Gooding [redacted] (mobile) [redacted]

Society Primary Contacts

Chairman: Kenneth J. Goward FRAS ☎ [redacted] (daytime & evenings)

Secretary: Roy Gooding ☎ [redacted] (daytime) [redacted] (evenings)

E-Mail queries lpswich@ast.cam.ac.uk

Society Trustees

Mr Roy Adams Mr David Brown Mr David Payne

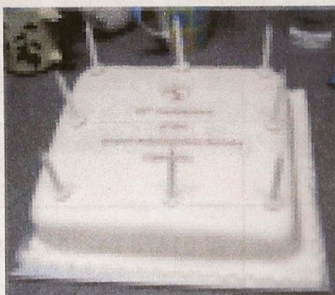
Society Honorary President

Professor Allan Chapman D.Phil MA FRAS

Observatory Telephone Number

Meeting nights only

[redacted]



And finally, to mark our 40th – an appropriately worded birthday cake was provided at the Presidential Lecture for Allan Chapman and OASI Trustee Roy Adams to cut and our guests to scoff!

Photograph courtesy of Ken Goward