



The Newsletter

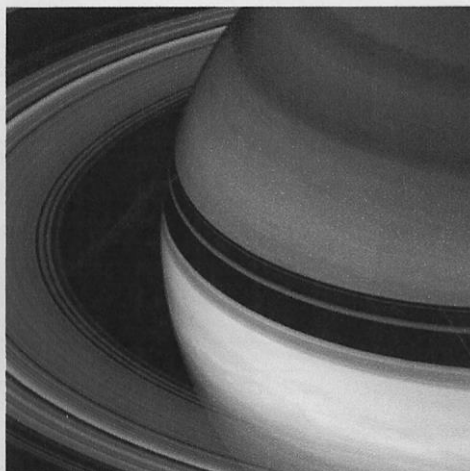


of the Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

Registered charity No 271313
www.oasi.org.uk

2008 February

No 427



Saturn will be at opposition on the 24th of this month and is easily observable below the body of Leo. Meanwhile, in orbit around the planet the Cassini spacecraft continues to send back superb images, including the above of the planet's equatorial region taken 2007 December 17th. The equatorial region is generally brighter than the rest of the planet in Cassini images, but the contrast is striking in this black and white view, taken in the infrared part of the spectrum at wavelengths sensitive to methane absorption in the planet's atmosphere. This view looks toward the unilluminated side of the rings from about 24 degrees above the ring plane.

The spacecraft's wide-angle camera was using a spectral filter sensitive to wavelengths of infrared light centered at 890 nanometers and the view was obtained at a distance of approx 668,000 miles.

Image and detail courtesy www.nasa/jpl.gov

Society News (Roy Gooding)

1 1st Brainstorm Meeting Tuesday 19th February

All interested members are invited to an initial Brainstorm session. This will be the first of a series of meetings, the aim of which will be to discuss the future direction of the society. If you have any ideas about how the society should develop, please come along.

Details

- Venue: Shepherd and Dog Public house
- Date Tuesday 19th February
- Time. 19:30 FOR 20:00

2 Events for 2008

This event list will be updated through out the year

Meeting	Venue	Date
Workshop Meeting The Lifecycle of a Star Paul Whiting	Nacton Village Hall	Wednesday 6 th February 19:30
Astro Fest	Kensington Conference & Events Centre London	8 th & 9 th February
Brainstorm Metering	Shepherd and Dog Public house	Tuesday 19 th February 20:00
Open Weekend		No date set yet
Excursion	A society excursion will be arranged if there is sufficient interest	No date set yet
Summer Barbecue	No venue fixed yet	No date set yet
Perseid Meteor watch	The "Dip" Felixstowe	Saturday 16 th August
Geminid Meteor watch	The "Dip" Felixstowe	Saturday 13 th December
Christmas Meal		Wednesday 11 th December?

3 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.

4 Welcome to New Members

5 Lecture Meeting Venue

Our town lecture venue is now at the Methodist Church, in Blackhorse Lane. The Church has a car park, can take 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 former 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

Night Sky (February)

All times GMT

Moon

New Moon	1 st Quarter	Full Moon	3 rd Quarter
7 th	14 th	21 st	29 th

Object	Date	Times		Mag.	Notes
		Rise	Set		
Sun	1	07:46	16:51		
	28	06:54	17:41		
Mercury	1	07:54	17:59	-0.8	Inferior occurs on the 6 th
	28	06:00	15:07		
Venus	1	06:06	14:01	-3.9	Venus s still visible low down in the pre-dawn twilight sky
	28	06:08	15:08		
Mars	1	12:08	05:41	1.1	Mars remains in Taurus, but is now fading as it moves away from the Earth
	28	10:45	04:11		
Jupiter	1	06:11	13:57	-1.8	Jupiter has now moved into Sagittarius, and remains very low down in the pre-dawn twilight sky
	28	04:45	12:37		
Saturn	1	18:57	08:58	0.5	Saturn is at opposition on the 24 th
	28	16:58	07:08		
Uranus	1	09:00	20:04	5.8	Uranus is lost in the evening twilight this month
	28	18:26	07:16		
Neptune	1	08:11	17:40	7.8	Neptune is at conjunction on the 11 th
	28	06:27	16:00		

Total Lunar Eclipse February 21st

Eclipse contacts:

P1: 00:36

U1: 01:43

U2: 03:01

U3: 03:50

U4: 05:08

P4: 06:15

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.

Date	Time (UT)	D R	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (d)	Star Alt (d)	Mag	Star
14 Feb	00:24:08	D	0.48+	-51	11	6.8	ZC 470
14 Feb	21:30:58	D	0.58+	-40	47	7.2	Hip 19341
15 Feb	20:26:31	D	0.69+	-31	63	7.0	ZC 773
16 Feb	22:23:51	D	0.80+	-45	57	6.7	ZC 958
17 Feb	00:59:18	D	0.80+	-49	35	7.4	Hip 30396
17 Feb	18:31:41	D	0.87+	-13	49	7.1	49 Gem
17 Feb	23:54:37	D	0.88+	-50	52	5.0	57 Gem,A Gem
21 Feb	02:07:22	D	1.00+	-42	41	9.9	Tyc 833-1091-1
	03:14:53	R		-34	33		
21 Feb	03:06:13	D	1.00+	-35	34	10.8	Tyc 837-0020-1
21 Feb	03:06:21	R	1.00+	-35	34	11.5	Tyc 830-0020-1
21 Feb	03:09:20	R	1.00+	-35	34	11.0	Tyc 830-0346-1
21 Feb	03:12:06	D	1.00+	-35	34	10.1	Tyc 837-0442-1
21 Feb	03:13:37	R	1.00+	-34	33	11.3	Tyc 830-0306-1
21 Feb	03:23:10	R	1.00+	-33	32	11.1	Tyc 830-0154-1
21 Feb	03:30:16	D	1.00+	-32	31	9.9	Hip 50054
	04:26:22	R		-24	23		
21 Feb	03:32:32	R	1.00+	-32	31	11.1	Tyc 833-0636-1
21 Feb	03:40:21	R	1.00+	-31	29	11.0	Tyc 830-0736-1
21 Feb	03:46:10	D	1.00+	-30	29	9.5	Tyc 837-0606-1
	04:39:47	R		-22	21		
21 Feb	04:09:55	D	1.00+	-27	26	9.9	Tyc 837-0040-1
	05:04:59	R		-18	17		
21 Feb	04:14:55	D	1.00+	-26	25	10.0	Tyc 837-0143-1
	04:56:36	R		-20	18		
21 Feb	04:48:50	D	1.00+	-21	19	7.9	Hip 50203
29 Feb	04:43:39	D	0.49-	-19	8	2.8	23 Sco,tau Sco
	05:52:51	R		-8	10		

On the evening of 21 February there is a total lunar eclipse. Times of umbral contact are as follows (UT): U1 – 01:43, U2 – 03:01, U3 – 03:51, U4 – 05:09. When the Moon is in umbral eclipse the glare which it produces is markedly reduced enabling observation of occultations of much fainter stars than would normally be possible.

MALLORCA OBSERVATORY

by Tina Hammond

Having booked to spend six days in Palma in July 2007, I was interested to meet some people from the Mallorca Planetarium (really an observatory) at an Astro Fest in Cambridge earlier that year. Armed with a brochure, I made arrangements, via email, to visit during our stay.

Visits are 8 pm on Saturday evenings by appointment. A simple email (or five, as occasionally you get a reply in Spanish!) is all that is needed to obtain the date you need.

After a meal at a Spanish Tapas bar run by English speaking Germans in nearby Inca, we made the 20 minute journey to the Observatory, leaving plenty of time in case we got lost on the back roads, which quickly turned into single file rural roads. We did not, and were there with half an hour to spare.

This gave us time to pay our admission fee of Euro 40 (for three) and examine the exhibits of (allegedly) 21 meteorites, tektites, etc. I could not see how they got 21: there were less than 21 cases, but as some stands contained more than one example, the total number well exceeded 21! Our early arrival also gave us an excellent opportunity to inspect a very fine gecko climbing the outside wall.

Opened on 4 April 2003, the Observatory is very new, and part of the University of Mallorca. The building, as much in Mallorca, is very modern art-ish, and extremely angular, albeit in a non-offensive fashion. In front of the main entrance is a paved line which they claimed indicated the meridian, but as Mallorca is not on GMT, clearly did not. In the area between the main building and the seven telescopes at the back, are poles bearing metal flags featuring several of the more well known constellations.

The evening was supposed to start with a familiarisation of the Mediterranean night skies in the Planetarium, but due to a technical hitch with the electricity supply to that room, this had to be delayed.

This meant that the normal itinerary had to be reversed and – even though it was not really dark enough – we had to go outside for a 45 minute potted history of the Observatory and its alignment, followed by spotting a few (very bright!) constellations in the twilight . We were also able to admire the exterior of the research block which is, alas, not open to visitors.

By the time we had done this, the Planetarium electricity supply was restored, and we adjourned back inside. An interesting 30 minute show was narrated by somebody who I swore was James Mason, but whom the end credits showed to be Spanish. The Balearic skies were shown, with seasons, star clusters, suns, the solar system planets, and other zodiacal objects identified. We did learn that Mars is an inferior planet!! And to think I was puzzling over the meridian and number of meteorites on display...

Back outside, and we were rewarded with a tour of the seven telescopes. Each named after somebody or something from the world of Astronomy, they bear the names of Galileo, Kepler, Tycho, Copernicus, Clavius, Mutus [Moon Mapper] and Schmidt, and we were able to view Venus through one of them. By the time we came to leave at 9.45 it was getting quite dark, enough so that Jupiter was easily visible with the naked eye. There is also a winter solstice viewing slit which we were able to see but not, at the that time of year, utilise. Shades of Giza...

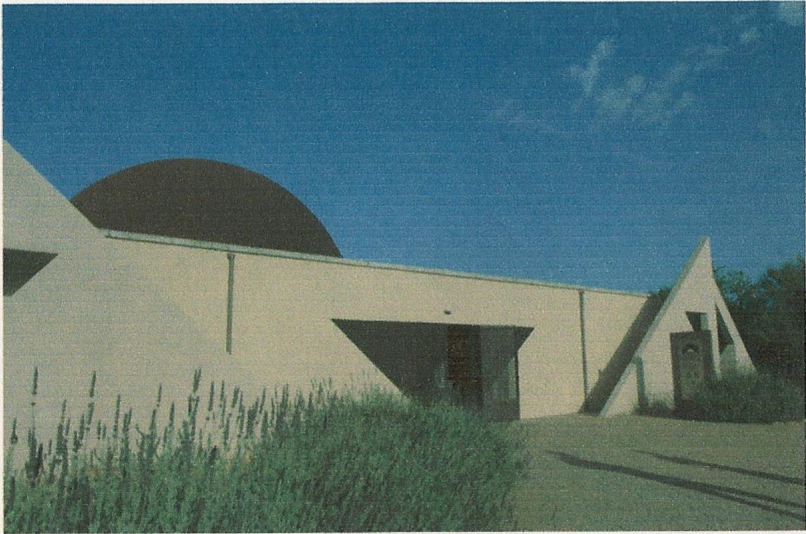
The 45 minute (30 km) drive back to Palma and our hotel was on good motorways (most of Mallorca's roads are excellent, contrary to what you may think) and the satisfaction of an enjoyable evening behind us.

Should anybody else feel the need to visit this hidden gem (even when just 1 km away, it is totally invisible!), you may contact them on:

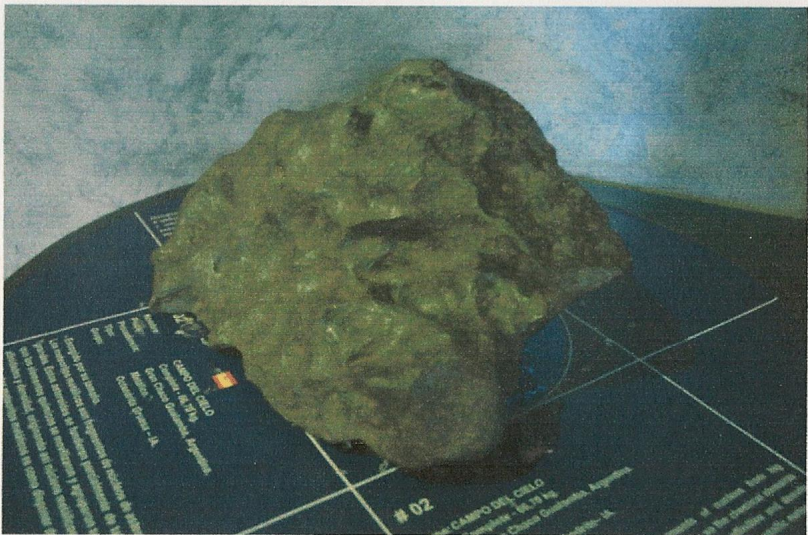
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Tel 971 51 33 44

info@mallorcaplanetarium.com

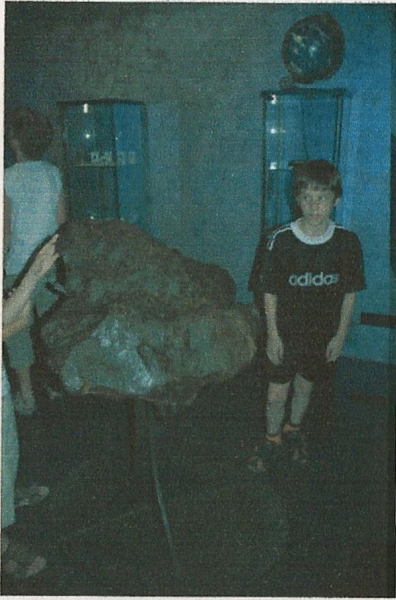
www.mallorcaplanetarium.com



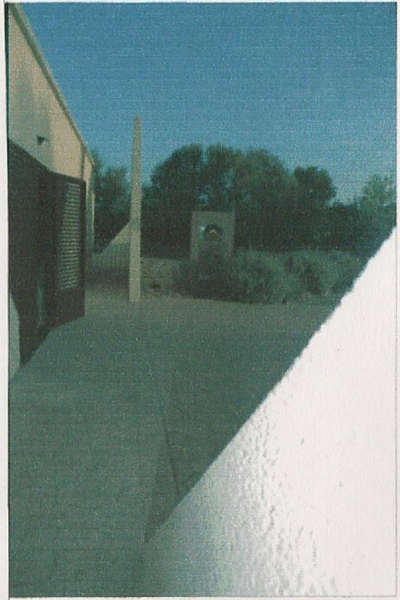
Entrance to Planetarium



66.7 Kg meteorite



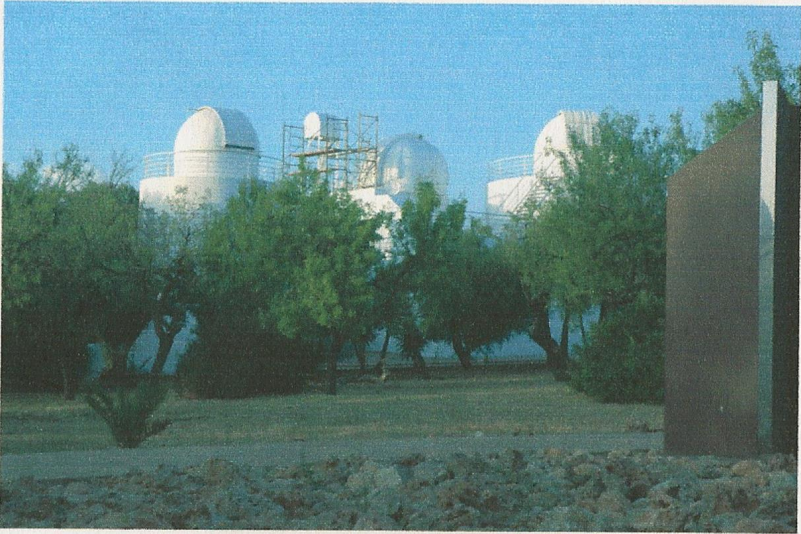
Another meteorite with Lindsay alongside for scale!



Research Telescopes (off limits)



Representations of Constellations



Meridian Line



Telescopes (general purpose), one of which we looked through

A SUCCESSFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE AGM

OASI's 2008 Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 12th January at the Methodist Halls, Ipswich was well attended and it was gratifying to see all three of the Society Trustees amongst the delegates.

The meeting was notable for its generally constructive tone and some excellent ideas were aired, some of which will be taken forward for action by the Committee. Not least that we ought to have an informal meeting to 'Brainstorm' for ideas on where/what direction OASI may be going – the much-vaunted 'blank sheet of paper' with nothing ruled in or out. We will have that meeting at the **SHEPHERD & DOG PUB/CARVERY** in Felixstowe Road from 7.30(ish) **TUESDAY 19th** of this month. Come along for a chinwag if you can make it, Bar or Carvery Meals are available (should you fancy one – and not everyone will take that option) without any need to pre book.

It has also been suggested that we look to resurrect our annual coach outings to venues of Astronomical interest. **Herstmonceux Observatory Science Centre** has been provisionally picked for its annual Open Weekend, which this year would be **Saturday 7th September** (subject to Confirmation). Such family trips were very much looked forward to and enjoyed by society members but on the last occasion we tried to organise one it didn't come off because of a general lack of support. As with everything these days – you need to use it or lose it! We settled upon the open weekend at Herstmonceux because in addition to the usual exhibits there will be a large number of additional displays from other astronomical groups and trade stands to browse. Tina Hammond recently took her family down to Herstmonceux and wrote favourably of the venue in OASI Newsletter No 418 (2007 April).

Inevitably the state of play regarding our licence to operate the Orwell Park Observatory came up and all I can tell you is that things are going through, albeit delayed for final detailed agreements due to a recent fall at home putting me out of action for a few weeks. Hopefully we'll have something positive to announce in the near future.

Mike Harlow stood down as Treasurer after his second spell in the office and for a while it looked forebodingly as though we would not have anyone for this important post this year. However, Paul Whiting graciously stepped forward to 'volunteer' and a much-relieved room full of members quickly voted him into office! We owe Paul a great deal, given that not only does he now have the above mentioned duties to undertake, but he retains management of visits by local community groups AND is acting as OASI's coordinator for IYA2009 (International Year of Astronomy).

That just about covers the main points I'd like to highlight – let us all look forward to an active and successful 2008...

Kenneth J. Goward FRAS
Chairman

OASI Committee Contacts & Responsibilities

Kenneth J. Goward FRAS	Chairman	☎	
Roy Gooding	Secretary	☎	MAIN POINT OF SOCIETY CONTACT Press Publicity with Chairman. Observatory Decoration. Visits by potential new members.
Paul Whiting FRAS	Treasurer	☎	Finance. Supervision of Grant Applications. Visits by outside groups. IYA 2009 Coordinator
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.
Bill Barton FRAS	Committee	☎	Safety & Security.
1 VACANT POST			

MEMBER'S BRAINSTORMING SESSION – SHEPHERD & DOG PUB/CARVERY – TUESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY FROM 7.30(ish)
What do you think the future should be for OASI? Don't just stew on it – come along and air your ideas informally over a pint or even a meal, if you fancy one...

Diary for February

Monday 4th & 18th FROM 8PM	<u>SMALL TELESCOPE OBSERVING SESSIONS (STONS)</u> Observing Target: Constellation GEMINI ☎ Paddy O'Sullivan [redacted] ☎ Gerry Pilling [redacted]
Tuesday 19th FROM 7.30PM SHEPHERD & DOG PUB & CARVERY Felixstowe Road	<u>BRAINSTORMING SESSION</u> <i>Meet up for an <u>informal</u> chat about OASl and how the society might go forward in the coming years. Nothing ruled in or out – <u>YOUR</u> chance to have an input.</i> <i>Have a Bar or Carvery Meal if you want – it's up to you. No need to book a meal place.</i> ☎ Roy Gooding [redacted] (mobile) [redacted]
Wednesdays FROM 8PM	<u>MAIN OBSERVATORY CLUB NIGHTS</u> Primary Observational targets: Nebulae and faint objects. ☎ Martin Cook [redacted] (mobile) [redacted] ☎ Roy Gooding [redacted] (mobile) [redacted]
Wednesday 6th FROM 7.30PM Nacton village Hall	<u>MONTHLY WORKSHOP</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>International Year of Astronomy 2009</i> (a 15 minute presentation) AND <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Lifecycle of a Star</i> (main workshop subject) Presented by Paul Whiting FRAS ☎ Mike Whybray [redacted]

Society Primary Contacts

Chairman: Kenneth J. Goward FRAS ☎ [redacted] (daytime & evenings)
Secretary: Roy Gooding ☎ [redacted] (daytime) [redacted] (evenings)
E-Mail queries: lpw@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]