



# The Newsletter



of the

## Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

2012  
DECEMBER

Registered charity no. 271313

[www.oasi.org.uk](http://www.oasi.org.uk)

No 480



The observatory in winter

I think this was taken about February 2012 but it makes a nice christmas front cover.

# Society News (Roy Gooding)

## 1 Annual General Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> January 2013

All members are invited to attend the AGM . Start time 20:00 Venue:  
Methodist Church Hall

## 2 Access into the School Grounds and Observatory Tower

The code for the car park gate, is on the back of your membership card.

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.

## 3 Welcome to New and Re-joined Members

Mr. Joe Walsh Mr. Keith Cameron Mr. Martin Pakes  
Mr. Simon Myes

## 4 Events Programme for 2012

Event	Venue	Date
Christmas Meal	Lodge at Wherstead	5 <sup>th</sup> December 19:45

Meeting	Venue	Date
Geminids provisional meeting	Behind the refreshment hut at "The Dip" Felixstowe	15 <sup>th</sup> December

## 5 Events Programme for 2013

This provisional event list will be updated through out the year

Event	Venue	Date
AGM	Methodist Church Hall	Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> 20:00

Many events for 2013 are still in the planning stage. More details in January's newsletter

## Night Sky (December)

### Moon

New Moon	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	Full Moon	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
5 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>

Object	Date			Mag	Notes
		Rise	Set		
Sun	1	07:42	15:47		
	31	08:04	15:53		
Mercury	1	05:43	15:07	-0.5	Mercury is visible in the morning sky. It reaches greatest western elongation on the 4 <sup>th</sup>
	31	07:29	14:58		
Venus	1	05:00	14:42	-3.8	Venus is still a prominent object in the morning sky
	31	06:29	14:25		
Mars	1	10:16	17:45	1.2	Mars will be low down in the western sky after sunset.
	31	09:31	17:53		
Jupiter	1	15:47	07:59	-2.7	Jupiter will be at opposition on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> . It is well placed to observe all night
	31	13:37	05:42		
Saturn	1	04:31	14:35	0.6	Saturn will be visible low down in the pre-dawn sky.
	31	02:49	12:44		
Uranus	1	13:21	01:42	5.8	Uranus is near to the borders of Pisces and Cetus
	31	11:23	23:41		
Neptune	1	12:22	22:23	7.8	Neptune is in Aquarius
	31	10:25	20:29		

### Meteor Showers

Shower	Limits	Maximum	ZHR
Geminids	December 7 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup>	December 13 <sup>th</sup> 19 <sup>hr</sup>	100
Ursids	December 17 <sup>th</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup>	December 22 <sup>nd</sup> / 23 <sup>rd</sup>	10

Meteor source is the BAA Handbook

## **Two Public Autumn Meetings**

Roy Gooding

### **Chantry Park Star Party Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September**

After two cancelled attempts, due to bad weather in April, we finally had a clear evening in September. About 40 members of the public attended the star party. The event was well supported by many members, including several our newer ones.

Some of the members equipment in use included:

140mm Maksutov Cassegrain – Roy Gooding

150mm Refractor – Bill Barton

11x 80 binoculars- Roy Gooding

250mm Meade Schmidt Cassegrain -James Appleton

150mm Dobsonian reflector - New members scope

200mm Reflector – New members scope – Nigel ?

The skies were clear enough to see the moon, low down in the western sky. However there was a a thick haze over the whole sky which reduced the limiting magnitude to about 3, making it very difficult to see any deep sky objects. So much so that John Wainwright decided against assembling his 450 mm reflector.

I did not make a complete list of all members who attended, but as usual, I would like to thank all those who were able to help out.

### **Open Weekend October 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>**

Five weeks later we held our annual public Open Weekend event at Orwell Park. Several members arrived before 18:30, in order to set up the signs, telescopes and the reception desk. However, the first major problem was in finding the “Harry Potter” size key to open

the main school gate. We were told that the key would be left on a table in the staff room. This was not case, and after much frustration it was finally located in the pigeon hole of the school's caretaker. Another a local problem this year was the closure of the main street through the village due to the installation of a new mains sewer. I thought this might dissuade some potential visitors from reaching the observatory.

The sky on Saturday was clear, so we knew it would be a busy evening. As usual several parties arrived before the official opening time of 19:30. They had to wait until we had everything ready. As usual we had 3 observing sites, the Tomline refractor, small telescopes on the balconies and telescopes on the school playing field. Over 90 visitors arrived on the Saturday evening.

I spend most of Saturday evening out on the playing field,  
The usual telescopes were in use again:  
120 mm Refractor - Roy Gooding  
11x 80 binoculars - manned by Matthew Leeks  
250mm Meade Schmidt Cassegrain -James Appleton  
450mm Dobsonian Reflector - John Wainwright

The principle objects observed were the moon and Jupiter. Around 20:30 there was short period of rain. I immediately disassembled my telescope and took it in to the base of the observatory tower. When I next went outside again the skies were completely clear again.

Sunday was completely different, it was wet for much of the day, making it impossible to do any observing in the evening. Unperturbed about the weather, about a dozen hopeful visitors did turn up.

I would like to thank all the members who were able to give up their spare time for this year's Open Weekend

## Colonel George Tomline - Some Early Purchases

*by Tina Hammond*

In October I had the chance to go to Nottingham. As I had wanted to visit that part of the country for a long time, I jumped at the opportunity and spent two days at Lincoln Records Office.

It was most interesting! I uncovered a batch of letters from Colonel George Tomline to his solicitor and one time Mayor of Grimsby, W H Daubney.

It appears that Tomline used Daubney as an intermediary in his land purchases and other activities, some of which give a feeling of déjà vu; it is also clear that he cut his litigious teeth in Lincolnshire! His acquisitions were not always met with public approval, and it is reasonable to assume that the general consensus was that he owned too much land.

The letters are strangely formal, most starting '*Dear Sir*', even though it was clear that the two men knew one another well. Many end with '*Believe Me*', nowadays reserved for ambassadors. The content ranges from purely social, to pure business and a combination of the two, and it is clear that the two were great friends and that Tomline respected Daubney hugely, a rare accolade.

The railways came to Lincolnshire in 1848 and, by then, Grimsby, Beverley and Waltham all had stations. Tomline actually wrote a letter from Beverley around the time of the railway opening there in October 1846.

When he bought his ropery in Grimsby he wrote, '*Prepared to buy all that is to be bought in Grimsby and neighbourhoods*'. This was the first letter that was signed off with '*Believe Me*'.

The following year, the estate of George Milton was for sale. Daubney was instructed to purchase without delay and, '*You had better not appear to be acting for me.*'

After the purchase of the ropery, he was keen to buy land at Waltham and requested details and a map on 6 December 1846, whilst staying at Riby

Just two months later, Mr Harman was selling some land at Clixby. Tomline was very keen to buy this and any more that may be available. '*My name need not transpire at all.*'

A similar thing happened with the purchase of land at Scartho. '*My name, of course, is not to appear*'. Mr. Annington of the Waltham estate was offered £20,000 on 4 May 1852. Tomline referred to '*bargains*' as opposed to purchases at this period!

On 17 June 1853, whilst staying at the Great Northern Hotel, he offered a Mr. Birkett £65 per acre, including buildings. In his letter Tomline states that, '*There is apparently such a prospect of war, that the sooner I can complete the purchase the better.*' although it is not clear whether he

is referring to the imminent UK elections or the Crimean War.

He was curiously impulsive in some aspects of his character and, in 1854, he wrote to Daubney stating that just five minutes earlier he [Tomline] had learnt that Daubney loved shooting well as fishing, and must therefore join him in a shoot.

The next letter written to Daubney was an invitation to shoot all week at Orwell Park, from Monday 1 December 1854.

Several years later, on 19 April 1860, Tomline considers buying Mr Dawn's farm adjoining his Waltham land. Dawn wants £23,000 and Tomline offers £20,000. Four months later on 11 August 1860 Tomline makes a rare decision; he has resolved selling the parish of Newton to help finance it! Four days later it is clear that Dawn is not going to sell at the right price and so Tomline does not buy the farm, giving the lie to stories that say he buys all land at any price. He does not (albeit not often!).

The following year Tomline offers Mr Morton, a soap manufacturer, an acre at Waltham near the railway, or a small plot in Grimsby; Daubney also had to give his opinion as to whether or not he considered Morton able to make a go to it!

Intriguingly, whilst at Orwell Park on 4 October 1872, he invites Daubney to visit. *'I am making some alterations, and, as usual, my architect has deceived me'*. Although Tomline does not specify what or where the alterations are, it is not unreasonable to assume that they are part of the Orwell Park extensions - and possibly the Observatory - that were ongoing at that time.



London. 19. April. 1865

Dear Sir,

£23,000. is a large sum  
than I feel disposed to give  
for Mr. Dawn's Farm. but  
I will give £20,000. if the  
price will buy it -

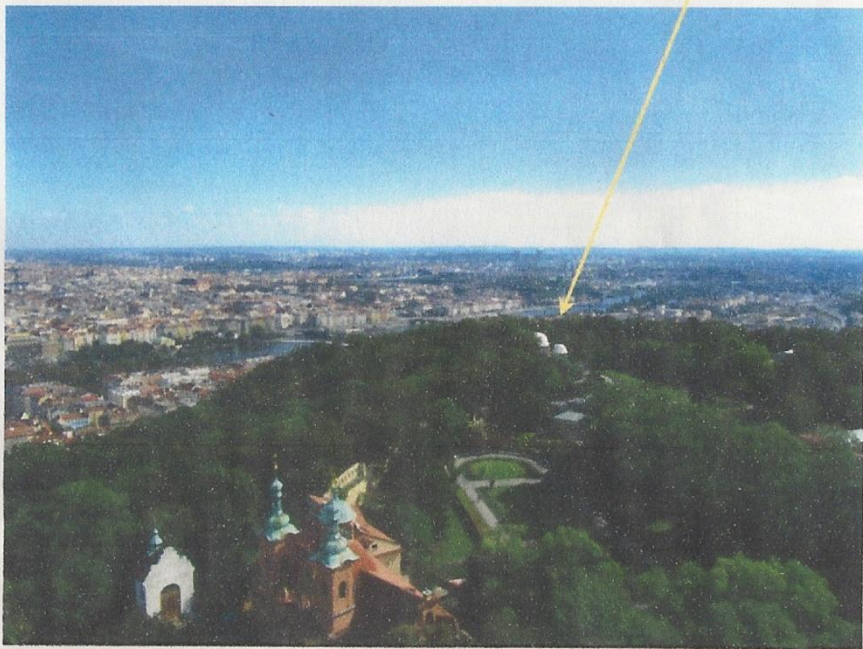
Yours truly  
Geo. Lubbock

**Letter offering £20,000 for Mr Dawn's farm at  
Waltham**

## Prague Observatory

<http://www.observatory.cz/english.html>

Whilst visiting Prague recently 13–16 September I stumbled across the The Štefánik<sup>1</sup> Observatory – located in the very heart of Prague, in Petřín's parks.



The observatory was opened on June 24th, 1928. In the middle of the 70s, a full-scale reconstruction gave the building its current appearance and it was reopened for the public in 1976. Since 1979, the Štefánik observatory has been a part of the Observatory and Planetarium of Prague.

The observatory has three domes and one observation lodge. The domes are named according to their approximate position in the building (Western, Main and Eastern).

In the Western Dome, the Maksutov - Cassegrain mirror telescope has been in place since 1976. The diameter of the main mirror is 370 mm. Its magnification power for observation varies from approx. 80 to 330 times. The total weight of the telescope is 2.5 tons.

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<sup>1</sup> Milan R. Štefánik, born 1880 in Slovakia, was a soldier, a general of the French army, a pilot, a diplomat and the co-founder of the Czechoslovakian state. He was also a scientist and an astronomer. Štefánik studied astronomy at Prague's Charles University, worked in the observatory in Meudon close to Paris, participated in many expeditions to solar eclipses all around the world, built an observatory in Tahiti and was awarded several scientific prizes. He died in an air crash in 1919.



The Main Dome hosts a double Zeiss astrograph, named after the Viennese selenographer Koenig. It was built in the years 1905 - 07 for this baron, who used it mainly for Moon mapping and sky photography. After Koenig's death in 1929 it was bought and placed here. The total weight of the telescope is 5.5 tons and the pillar of this instrument is 15 meters high, of which 7.5 meters are sunk in the ground.

The Eastern Dome is currently used only for scientific observation and since 1999 has been equipped with a 40 cm mirror telescope by Meade.

Nowadays the observatory specializes above all in popularization of astronomy and related natural sciences. Undoubtedly the most interesting thing the observatory can offer are public daytime and nighttime observations of the sky which are run whenever the weather is suitable during the whole year.

We arrived just after 2pm when the observatory was open. Entry costs about £2. There is a small geological display in the entrance hall, featuring a large meteorite.

Upstairs there is a long corridor with displays of aspects of the solar system, galaxies, electromagnetic radiation, optics, relativity and the Standard Model. There are two huge illuminated sky maps of the southern and northern hemispheres. Pick a constellation and it will be illuminated.

There are a few examples of antique instruments, shown in the following two photographs.



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In the central dome, the three refracting telescopes were being used to display images of the sun:

1. by projection
2. Simple yellow filter
3.  $H\alpha$

Several sunspots and a solar prominence were observed, the few clouds having obligingly parted for us.

The picture required a bit of stitching to get the whole scope in view.



In the Western Dome, the Maksutov - Cassegrain mirror telescope showed us a view of the gibbous Venus - at 3pm!



I thoroughly recommend a visit to Prague, and the climb up through Petřín Park (pronounced Petrzhin) is rewarded by a visit to the Observatory (check opening times!) and spectacular views over the city from the Petřín Tower.

Martin Richmond-Hardy

## Newbourne Observing Group

We meet at The Newbourne Village Hall, Newbourne, IP12 4NP Start 7pm

### **November Meeting**

G & S might have thought that 'A Policeman's lot was not a happy one' but they knew nothing of the trials of us poor amateur astronomers!

Again the seeing at Newbourne on Tuesday 13th was just awful with only Jupiter putting in a very brief appearance. Even 'Quick on his feet David Murton' was only able to snatch a brief glance of it through his binoculars. However with the help of Mike Whybray Caroline's Newtonian was put to rights and Mike N's Meade ETX125 was sent whizzing around the hall giving a chance for a 'Which Star is it pointing at' quiz.

Nevertheless it was a convivial evening with time to pour over charts and books that only broke up at 11pm when the last slice of passion fruit Swiss roll disappeared.

Our next meeting at Newbourne is on Monday December 10th starting at 7pm. If the seeing is again against us we will be holding a Webcam Imaging Workshop and to provide a little Christmas cheer mince pies will be on the menu.

Our future dates & Programme into 2013.

Monday 10th December	- Webcam Imaging Workshop
Monday 14th January	- What Telescope Should I Buy?
Monday 11th February	- To be advised
Monday 11th March	- To be advised

You can keep in touch with either Mike as below to check out the programme as this is agreed.

Mike N. & Mike O.

# Astronomy Workshops

**Doors open at 7:30pm.**

**Workshops START at 7:45pm**

**Venue: NACTON VILLAGE HALL IP10 0EU**

If you are a new OASI member, or haven't been to one of these workshops before – they are a mixture of events of different characters including beginners talks, interactive workshops, hands-on observing sessions, films etc., suitable for all. They are also a chance to chat with other members over a cup of tea and a biscuit, in a venue rather warmer than the observatory dome on a winter's night!

Date	Event	Run by...
<b>12<sup>th</sup> December</b> (Assuming this doesn't end up as a clash with the OASI Christmas Meal!)	<b>One small step for [a] man...</b> Sadly Neil Armstrong died this year, and to remember how great his small step was, I'll be dusting off the canisters of 16mm NASA film that OASI were bequeathed a few years ago, and firing up our 70's vintage film projector, to show the official NASA film of the Apollo 11 flight. Also, I'll gather together some background material about that most modest hero.	<b>Mike Whybray</b>
	<b>More to follow in the new year....</b>	

Mike Whybray Workshops organiser  
[REDACTED] (Mobile) [REDACTED] (Home)

Workshops venue: NACTON VILLAGE HALL IP10 0EU (next to the small village school, just below and left of the N in Nacton on the map). Please park on the same side of the road as the hall, but avoid parking on the white lines which mark clear spaces for various driveways and passing places. The police do occasionally check up on this!

**Note that Mains Sewerage is coming to Nacton village, which will result in access problems for the next few months – you may need to get to the village hall and the observatory by alternative routes. More detailed information here:** <http://nacton.onesuffolk.net/news/anglian-water-provides-mains-sewerage-for-nacton/>





### Newsletter Articles

Our Society is always on the lookout for newsletter articles! If you would like to submit an article, please email it in Microsoft word format <e.g.A5 landscape 10 point font> to the editor, Eric Sims at [REDACTED] by the third Wednesday of each month to ensure it appears in the next month's newsletter. If you don't have access to a computer, please phone me at the number published inside the back page of the newsletter.

Eric Sims












## OCCULTATIONS DURING DECEMBER

The table lists lunar 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
18 Dec	20:32:57	D	0.35+	-43	17	6.3	ZC 3326
18 Dec	21:17:08	D	0.36+	-49	11	7.2	Hip 112079
19 Dec	19:30:18	D	0.45+	-33	33	6.3	9 Psc
21 Dec	22:58:00	D	0.66+	-60	26	6.7	ZC 166
22 Dec	00:43:02	D	0.67+	-60	11	6.5	ZC 173
22 Dec	22:44:31	D	0.75+	-58	37	7.4	ZC 285
26 Dec	18:23:13	D	0.98+	-22	32	5.3	106 Tau
27 Dec	21:24:00	D	1.00+	-49	49	4.6	$\chi^2$ Ori
28 Dec	02:26:13	D	1.00+	-50	44	5.8	68 Ori

James Appleton

## OASI Committee Contacts & Responsibilities

Neil Morley	Chairman		[REDACTED]	Chair committee meetings. Represent OASI to external bodies.
Roy Gooding	Secretary			Respond to enquiries. Press & publicity. Out Reach Meetings Open days.
Paul Whiting FRAS	Treasurer			Finance. Visits by outside groups.
James Appleton	Committee			Minutes of committee meetings. Web site.
Bill Barton FRAS	Committee			Safety & security.
Martin Cook	Committee			Membership. Tomline Refractor maintenance.
Tina Hammond	Committee			Librarian.
Peter Richards	Committee			Lecture meetings. Email distribution lists.
Eric Sims	Committee			Newsletter.
John Wainwright	Committee			Equipment curator.
Mike Whybray	Committee			Workshops.

**To subscribe to the mailing list**



### Trustees

Mr Roy Adams  
Mr David Brown  
Mr David Payne

### Honorary President

Dr Allan Chapman D.Phil MA FRAS

## DIARY for DECEMBER

<b>STONS</b> <b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup></b> <b>From 8:00pm</b>	<b>SMALL TELESCOPES OBSERVING NIGHTS AT THE OBSERVATORY</b> <b>Main observing targets: Cassiopeia and Perseus</b> ☎ Paddy O'Sullivan [REDACTED] ☎ Gerry Pilling [REDACTED] Dave Robinson [REDACTED]
<b>Wednesdays</b> <b>From 8.00pm</b>	<b>OBSERVATORY CLUB NIGHTS</b> Observing with the Tomline Refractor and other telescopes if skies are clear.  ☎ Martin Cook [REDACTED], mobile [REDACTED] ☎ Roy Gooding [REDACTED], mobile [REDACTED]
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>12<sup>th</sup> December</b> <b>Doors open 7:30pm</b> <b>Start 7:45pm</b>	<b>OASI WORKSHOP</b> <b>At Nacton Village Hall</b>  <b>One small step for (a) man... By Mike Whybray</b> ☎ Mike Whybray [REDACTED]
<b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>OBSERVATORY VISITS BY LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS</b> <b>Taster evening</b>  ☎ Paul Whiting FRAS [REDACTED]
<b>AGM January 19<sup>th</sup></b> <b>8:00pm start</b>	<b>NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING</b> <b>Venue: The Methodist Church Hall</b> <b>Blackhorse Lane Ipswich</b>

### OASI Members Group Observing Evenings.

**Monday 10th December.**

The venue is Newbourne Village Hall which will be available to us from 7pm until 11pm.

Address Mill Road, Newbourne

Location map [www.newbourne.org.uk](http://www.newbourne.org.uk)

### **Society Contact Details**

Observatory tel. no. (meeting nights only): [REDACTED]

Secretary: Roy Gooding [REDACTED] (day) [REDACTED] (evening)

Web-site. James Appleton: e-mail [REDACTED]

E-mail queries: [info@oasi.org.uk](mailto:info@oasi.org.uk)

Facebook.com/orwell astronomical

Chairman: Neil Morley [REDACTED] / e-mail [REDACTED]

Please send material for the OASI web site (e.g. observations, notices of events, general interest articles) to [info@oasi.org.uk](mailto:info@oasi.org.uk)