ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, IPSWICH.

O.A.S.I.

SOCIETY NEWS

1. Open Weekend
   Our annual public open weekend will be on September 25th to 28th. As much help as possible will be required.
2. Boston Convention
   The Boston Society will be helding an astronomical convention on Saturday, 1st August. Tickets cost£3. Any interested members please contact R. Gooding.
3. 21st Anniversary Meeting
   An old style open day will be held on Saturday 9th July, 1988. More details as they are planned.
4. Committee Meeting
   To be held on Saturday, 11th July, at 7.30 p.m. at the Observatory. Open to all members.

NIGHT SKY

(all times G.M.T.)

Sun Rises approximately between 03.40 to 04.20.
Sets approximately between 20.20 to 20.00

Moon 4th 11th 17th 25th

Mercury will be at inferior conjunction on the 4th.
Greatest morning elongation on the 25th (20°)
Will be difficult to locate.

Venus Visible in twilight morning sky. Difficult to locate.

Mars Sets about 20 minutes after sun. Difficult to see in evening twilight sky.

Jupiter Rises at about 23.00 in mid month. Mag.-2.3

Saturn Sets at about 01.00 in mid month. Mag. 0.2

Uranus Sets at about 01.30 in mid month. Mag. 5.8.

Neptune Sets at about 02.30 in mid month. Mag. 7.7.

R. Gooding

GUILDFORD CONVENTION

On Saturday 13th June, 5 members left Ipswich, bound for Guildford. The journey took around 2¼ hours, arriving at The Guildford Technical College at 10.30 a.m. First call was to the college refectory for coffee, where we met Roy Cheesman, together with 2 other members from the Rayleigh A.S.

The first lecture was not scheduled to start until 11.30. The interum period was spent perusing the varioustrade stands. There were about a dozen commercial stands represented, ranging from book selling to mirror aluminising. Two items were on the society shopping list, an equatorial head and a micrometer. Various price lists were eagerly obtained.

The first lecture was given by Professor Stuart Malin on the Instruments of the Old Royal Observatory, Greenwich. The talk was interspersed with many outstanding anecdotal stories concerning the different astronomers who held the post of Astronomer Royal. After the lecture we all adjourned for lunch, on the grass near the main college entrance.

The first item of the afternoon was an astronomical 'Call my Bluff'. I am unable to comment on this item as I was not present, having taken a walk into Guildford town centre.

Professor Paul Murdin gave the second lecture, taking the 'Supernova in the large Magellanic Cloud' as the subject. This lecture gave an interesting insight into the interpretation of the results so far obtained from this subject, though some parts were quite technical.

The last lecture given by Dr. Victor Clube, was preceded by a refreshment break. Dr. Clube's lecture was entitled 'Giant Comets and Global Catastrophies Past and Future'. This subject at the present time is still highly controversial. Dr. Clube has been researching into ancient reports with the possible interpretation that many large objects from disrupted large comets are in earth crossing orbits. According to this hypothesis large objects are liable to hit the earth with a greater frequency than is at present currently believed.

At the conclusion of this lecture we re-grouped at the minibus for the journey home. The nearest fishand chip shop was discovered to be closed and a second establishment was sought. The weather had been sunny all day until the journey home was commenced, when it changed for the worse. Visibility was only a few hundred yards with torrential rain all along the M25.

With a final stop in a hotel bar, our small band of travellers arrived home around 11.30.

Members on this trip were:
Martin Cook, Alan Smith, David Payne, Darren Payne, Eric Sims, and Gary Marriott.

R. Gooding.

Θ.A.S.I. IN DOMESDAY BOOK

Future historians will note, with interest, that astrology was still being taken quite seriously in the late 20th century. This will be due not only because of the space taken up by the subject in the popular press of today but also because astrologers were, so the record says, operating at least one telescope for observational work. The telescope is that at Orwell Park near Ipswich and the record is the Domesday Disc, recently compiled by the BBC.

The information on the Domesday (community) Disc has been provided by various sources, mainly schools, and is intended to be a record of 20th century life and a number of libraries, museums, etc, have the disc and equipment for reading it. (A national archive disc recording socio-economic data has also been produced). The data is recorded using laser techniques and is retrieved using a BBC computer, disc reader and appropriate software. The data provided has, unfortunately been entered unedited and in addition to spelling mistakes at least one factual error has been incorporated, namely that the Orwell Park observatory is in the care of the Ipswich Astrological Society. Despite the error (or severe spelling mistake) it is pleasing to be included in the modern version of the Domesday Book and all that is needed now is the publication of a revised edition!

P RICHARDS

Messier Objects in Serpens

D B Payne

The constellation Serpens is broken into two parts separated by the constellation Ophiuchus. The western part known as Serpens Caput is also the more northerly, while the eastern and more southerly part is known as Serpens Cauda. Messier objects in this divided constellatrion are shared equally between the two parts, they both have one each. Serpens Caput contains the magnificent globular cluster M5 while Serpens Cauda has M16 a large scattered open cluster embedded in a huge diffuse nebula that Burnham of 'Celestial Handbook' fame has Christened **'The Star Queen Nebula'.**

The globular cluster M5 joins M13 and M3 as one of the three best globular clusters in the northern hemisphere and lies in Serpens Caput approximately 2° north of the celestial equator. It was discovered by German astronomer Gottfried Kirch on 5th May 1702 and then later rediscovered by Messier in May 1764. At magnitude 6.2 M5 is not visible to the naked eye but is easily found in binoculars as a fuzzy star. In a 3" telescope it is a bright round object about 5' in diameter but without resolution of the stars. At least a four inch telescope is required to begin to resolve it and a 6" aperture is preferable. In a ten inch telescope stars can be resolved right to the bright condensed center and it is a truly glorious sight. The nebula lies about 26,000 light years from the Earth and probably contains over half a million stars.

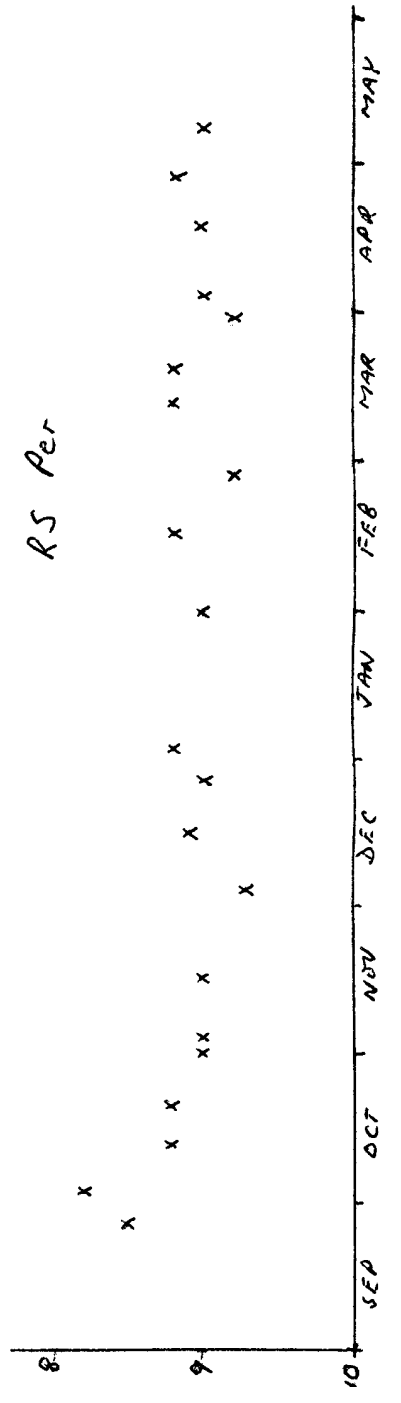
The other Messier object M16 lies at the southeast corner of Serpens Cauda. This unfortunately puts the object a little far south which combined with light summer skies means that it is rarely seen at it's best from the British Isles. In small telescopes (and large ones under the typical seeing conditions from Britain) only the stars of the embedded cluster are visible. The surrounding nebula which is truly spectacular in time exposure photographs can be seen with a 6" telescope under good conditions while a 10" will show a dark triangular wedge protruding from the north into the bright nebulosity.
The nebula is estimated to lie at a distance of 8000 light years and with an angular diameter of about 28' it must be some 70,000 light years across. Like the Orion nebula this huge cloud of gas is the birth place of new stars, some of the members of the cluster might have been shining for as little as 50,000 years.

On a good clear night during July try to search out these two objects they lie in an interesting region of sky with several other Messier objects nearby such as M10, M12, M14, M17 & M18.

VARIABLE STAR OBSERVATIONS

by Mike Nicholls

The light curve shown is that of RS Persei from September 1986 to May 1987. This variable is a member of the semi-regular class. The curve shows that the variation is not very large, which is a characteristic of the class. The accepted light range for this star is from magnitude 7.9 to 10.2. A very rough period of 152 days has been worked out although there is no sign of that on this curve. RS Per is a member of the sword handle cluster in Perseus, and is an old red giant star like most of the class. It is a difficult star to observe, being in a cluster with so many others. This probably accounts for some of the small fluctuations in the light curve.
All the observations here were made using the 8" reflector.



PROGRAMME FOR JULY

MONDAYS from 8pm
6, 13, 20, 27,

DOUBLE STAR & PLANETS SECTION

Mr N Taylor [redacted], Farmlands, Trimley. Tel: Fel.
Mr T Gillan [redacted], Bardwell, Bury St. Edmunds. Tel: 0359
Miss M Edwards [redacted], Felixstowe Tel: Fel.

TUESDAYS from 8pm
7, 14, 21, 28

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS SECTION

Mr N Gage [redacted], Trimley Tel: Fel.
Mr R Newman [redacted], Felixstowe Tel: Fel.
Mr J King [redacted], Felixstowe. Tel: Fel.

WEDNESDAYS from 8pm
1, 8, 15, 22, 29

NEBULEA & FAINT OBJECTS SECTION

Mr M Cook [redacted], Ipswich. Tel: Ips.
Mr D Payne [redacted], Wickham Market. Tel: W.Mkt

FRIDAYS from 8pm
10, 24

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS SECTION

Mr R Lobbett [redacted], Felixstowe. Tel: Fel.
Mr J Hood [redacted], Ipswich. Tel: Ips.
Mr M Harlow [redacted], Felixstowe. Tel: Fel.

On nights other than Wednesdays please contact directors to confirm dates

1987 COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN — Payne [redacted], Wickham Market, IP13 0SD — Work: Home:
VICE CHAIRMAN — Barnard [redacted], Ipswich, IP4 5PP — Work: Home:
P.R.O.
SECRETARY — Gooding [redacted], Ipswich, IP1 6AE — Home:
TREASURER — Nicholls [redacted], Capel St. Mary, Ipswich, IP9 2EX — Work: Home:
MAINTENANCE — Cook [redacted], Ipswich, IP4 5PZ — Work: Home:
JOURNAL CO-ORD. — Sims [redacted], Ipswich, IP1 4HA — Home:
LIBRARIAN — Lobbett [redacted], Felixstowe. — Work: Home:
EQUIP. CURATOR — Harlow [redacted], Felixstowe. — Home:
SOCIETY EVENTS — Richards c/o [redacted], Rushmere. — Home: