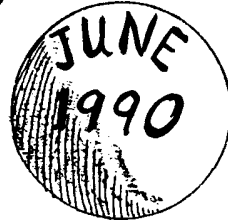


NIGHT SKY

All times GMT

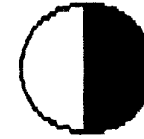


SUN Rises approximately 03.50
Sets approximately 20.20

MOON



8th



16th



22nd



29th

MERCURY Mercury is a morning object all month, but it is unlikely to be seen as it rises less than an hour before sunrise.

VENUS Venus will remain visible low down in the morning twilight sky before sunrise. Mag. -3.8

MARS Mars will also be visible in the morning sky. It will be rising at about 00.30 in mid month. Mag. 0.4

JUPITER Jupiter will be setting by 21.30 by mid month Mag. -1.8

SATURN Saturn will be rising at about 21.30 in the middle of the month. Mag. 0.1

URANUS Uranus is at opposition on the 29th. Rises about 21.00 in mid month. Mag. 5.6

NEPTUNE Rises a little after Uranus. Mag 7.7.

R. Gooding

SOCIETY NEWS

1 COMMITTEE MEETING

The next committee meeting will be Saturday 7th July at the observatory, starting at 19.30. As usual this will be an open meeting and any member may attend if they wish.



2 OPEN DAY AT CAMBRIDGE

As most members will know the Royal Greenwich Observatory has recently moved from Herstmonceux to Cambridge. On June the 15,16,17 there will be an open day at their new premises. Any interested member please contact Roy Gooding

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

All paid up members are entitled to participate in all society activities. These include all of the following:-

- 1) Every member is invited to attend ALL society meetings without having to ask permission.
- 2) Every member receives a monthly newsletter, where details of society meetings can be found and to which they are invited to attend.
- 3) Every member is invited to attend society excursions.
- 4) Every member is able to borrow society library books.
- 5) Every member is able to borrow society video tapes.
- 6) The society receives the following journals, all of which are kept at the observatory.

Journal of the British Astronomical Association plus their newsletters and circulars.

Journal of the Junior Astronomical Society plus their circulars.

Newsletters of the Federation of Astronomical Societies.

The Astronomer and their circulars.

Astronomy Now

Astronomy

Sky & Telescope.

Journal of the British Meteor Society

Previous years of these publications can be borrowed from the library.

The Rayleigh Astronomical Society 21st Anniversary Convention

David Payne

On Sunday 6th May 1990 the Rayleigh Astronomical Society held their 21st anniversary celebration at Mill Hall, Rayleigh. Being a 'local' society (only about 1½ hours drive away) it had been decided that this event would be worthy of an OASI trip. Usually for such an event we hire a mini bus, if numbers make it worth while. In this case eleven people had said they would come and Alan Smith was therefore asked (again) to volunteer to arrange a mini bus. Unfortunately all mini buses in Ipswich were away for the day (something to do with a bank holiday). This meant last minute arrangements to take a fleet of cars (actually two) from Ipswich to Rayleigh.

We arranged to meet at Alan's house between 8:30 and 9:00am (this trip was an exercise in precise timing). I had volunteered to drive half the party and Eric Sims the other half. I arrived early (about 8:30) with my two sons Darren and Martin and immediately discovered that our packed lunch had been left at home. Seconds after this discovery was made two further members arrived Garry Marriot and Pete Richards. James Appleton and Alan were already waiting when I arrived. I decided to rapidly return home to collect our lunch and took Pete, Garry and James with me, making arrangements that Alan, Eric and Roy Gooding would carry on to Rayleigh if we got back after 9:00am. In the event we arrived back at Alan's before they had left and decided to travel together with Eric leading the way. About 200 yards down the road we came to the first traffic island on our route, got separated and didn't meet up again until we got to Rayleigh!

Using the map provided by the Rayleigh organisers we made our way to Mill Hall. This part of the journey was amazingly successful only going round the one way system one more time than necessary before we found the correct turn off. Having

arrived at the Mill we found the car park had been commandeered for some fete that was to take place the following day. Once more round the one way system to find a car park!

We had arrived, and in time for a quick look round before the first lecture by Harry Ford of the Royal Observatory Greenwich. About this time Joe Walsh arrived accompanied by his wife and daughter bringing the grand total of OASI members at the event to thirteen including Roy Cheesman who is a committee member for the Rayleigh AS and also a Trustee and member of the OASI.

The Rayleigh Society had put on a very high quality display of astronomical pictures and notes, trade stands: Earth and Sky - Rosemary Naylor, Broadhurst Clarkson and Fuller, Ian Poyser and A. W. R. Technology, games and quizzes one of which Joe's daughter won!

In the first lecture Harry Ford gave an entertaining and fascinating account of his work and experiences at the Royal Observatory Greenwich including descriptions of the instruments and the characters of the famous astronomers that used them. He also gave some humorous accounts of letters written to the observatory over the years by various august bodies.

Lunch followed Harry's lecture and several of us decided to enjoy the hot sunny weather and went to the mound adjacent to Mill Hall which was the site of Rayleigh Castle.

After lunch the second lecture was given by Neil Bone. He presented some beautiful pictures of the spectacular auroral display that occurred on the 13th March 89. Some observers obviously had much clearer skies that night than we did in the Ipswich area!

A short break followed for refreshments and further time to look round the exhibits. Of note were some ex government finder scopes on Ian Poyser's stand. These were very high quality optical instruments about 10x magnification that

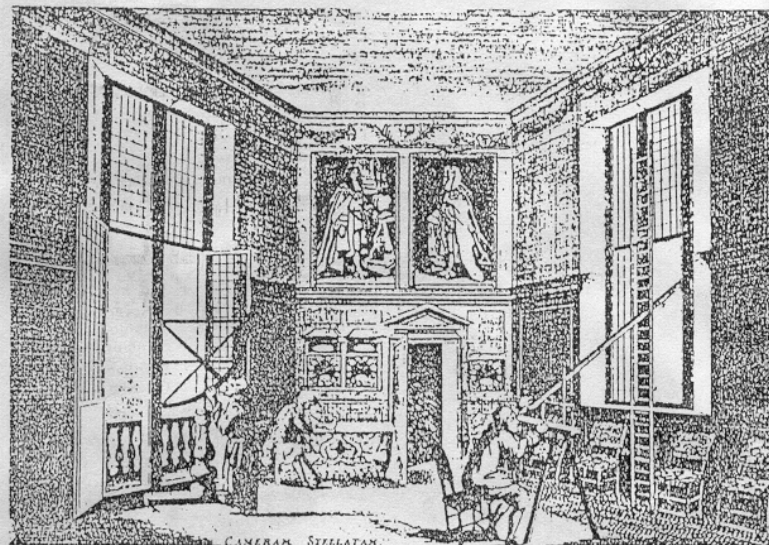
had the interesting feature of tilting the magnified image downwards enabling visual alignment of the target object using sites along the top of the instrument.

The final lecture was by Victor Clube and had the interesting title 'Catastrophism'. Victor gave a brief overview of the accumulating evidence to support his theories of large scale catastrophes that have occurred in the past by the collision of large meteoroidal or cometary fragments with the Earth. This is the second time I have heard Victor talk on this subject and although the first time I thought that much of the evidence was circumstantial and coincidental I am now beginning to think the mounting evidence may well prove him correct. In which case we should be keeping a much more careful look at the sky in the future!

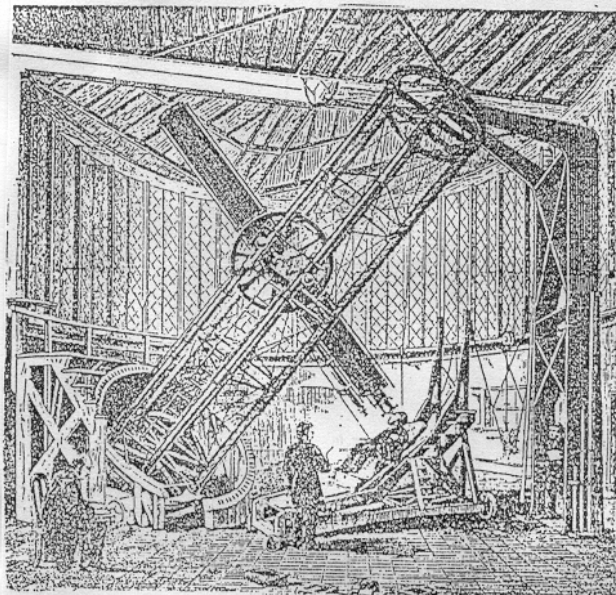
A final look round the displays and trade stands concluded the event and just after 5:00pm we headed for home.

THE OLD ROYAL OBSERVATORY AT GREENWICH CONTINUED.

THOMAS TOMPION'S CLOCKS IN THE OCTAGON ROOM



THE GREAT EQUATORIAL TELESCOPE AND THE "ONION" DOME



This illustration shows the original telescope made in 1855 by MERTZ in Germany with a 12 3/4 inch objective lens. It was mounted on ENGLISH mounting designed by the then Astronomer Royal Sir George Airy and built by the Ipswich firm of RANSOME & SIMS, who were agricultural engineers. Airy was related to Ransome by marriage.

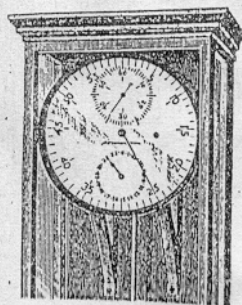
Since it often puts the eyepiece of a refractor at an awkward angle for the observer eye, the ENGLISH EQUATORIAL is usually seen in support of giant reflecting telescopes like the 400 inch at Mount Wilson, California. Nevertheless the mounting is so stable that when a much larger telescope with a 28 inch lens was made by GRUBB in 1893, it was fitted in the same mounting. This GREENWICH REFRACTOR is still the seventh largest in the World and largest in Britain.

The north pier of this mounting was the largest single iron casting ever attempted up to that date.

The telescope in its mounting must be movable on two axes at right angles to one another in order that it may be pointed at all parts of the sky. The POLAR AXIS is tilted towards the CELESTIAL POLE in the sky. The DECLINATION AXIS allows the telescope to be raised or lowered. A synchronous electric motor drives the instrument and corrects for the spin of the Earth's axis. So in effect it "follows" the stars across the sky from east to west. There are silver engraved circles for setting. They are marked in HOURS and MINUTES of RIGHT ASCENSION, and DEGREES of distance from the Polar Point.

Hand controls on long leads at the eyepiece enable the observer to operate not just the telescope but also the dome rotation and lighting.

The telescope is set in RIGHT ASCENSION with the aid of a SIDEREAL CLOCK made by HORNE & THORNWAITE. The Celestial Sphere rotates in 23 hours 56 mins, so this clock gains four minutes each day on a normal clock. By the end of a year it will have gained one complete day.



Many other details of the operation and the history of the telescopes are displayed on illustrated panels in the dome.

More next month if space is available.

PROGRAMME FOR JUNE

DAY	DIRECTORS	SECTION	PHONE No.s
Mondays from 8.00pm			
4-11	Mr R Newman	GENERAL OBSERVATION SECTION	
		[Redacted], Felixstowe, IP11 9DY.	Tel. Fel. [Redacted]
18-25	Mr J King	GENERAL OBSERVATION SECTION	
		[Redacted], Felixstowe, IP11 9LQ.	Tel. Fel. [Redacted]
Tuesdays from 8.00pm			
5-12	Mr R Newman	GENERAL OBSERVATION SECTION	
		[Address above.]	Tel. Fel. [Redacted]
19-26	Mr J King	GENERAL OBSERVATION SECTION	
		[Address above.]	Tel. Fel. [Redacted]
Wednesdays from 8.00pm			
6-13	Mr M Cook	NEBULA AND FAINT OBJECTS SECTION	
		[Redacted], Ipswich, IP4 5PZ.	Tel. Ips. [Redacted]
20-27	Mr D Payne	NEBULA AND FAINT OBJECTS SECTION	
		[Redacted], Wickham Market, IP13 0SD.	Tel. W.M. [Redacted]
Fridays from 8.00pm			
8-15	Mr P Richards	PLANETARY AND LUNAR SECTION	
		[Redacted], Ipswich, IP4 1QB.	Tel. Ips. [Redacted]
22-29	Mr R A Lobbett	PLANETARY AND LUNAR SECTION	
		[Redacted], Felixstowe, IP11 8UJ.	Tel. Fel. [Redacted]
	Mr G Marriott	PLANETARY AND LUNAR SECTION	
		[Redacted], Ipswich, IP4 4JB.	Tel. Ips. [Redacted]
		[Assistant Director]	

All nights are open to all members, but, on nights other than Wednesdays, ring directors to confirm. Directors will also be able to tell you if a group visit is taking place. All sections observe anything of interest, but the title indicates the main specialism.

Lectures and other events :

1990 COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN	D Payne	[Address above.]	Home: [Redacted]
			Work: [Redacted]
VICE CHAIRMAN /VISITS CO-ORD	D Barnard	[Redacted], Ipswich, IP4 5PP.	Home: [Redacted]
			Work: [Redacted]
SECRETARY	R Gooding	[Redacted], Ipswich, IP1 6AE.	Home: [Redacted]
			Work: [Redacted]
TREASURER	M Nicholls	[Redacted], Cape St Mary, Ipswich, IP9 2EX.	Home: [Redacted]
			Work: [Redacted]
MAINTENANCE CO-ORD	M Cook	[Address above.]	Home: [Redacted]
JOURNAL CO-ORD	E Sims	[Redacted], Ipswich, IP1 4HA.	Work: [Redacted]
LIBRARIAN	P Richards	[Address above.]	Home: [Redacted]
			Work: [Redacted]
EQUIPMENT CURATOR	J King	[Address above.]	Home: [Redacted]
SPECIAL EVENTS CO-ORD	A Smith	[Redacted], Ipswich, IP4 5RZ.	Home: [Redacted]
			Work: [Redacted]