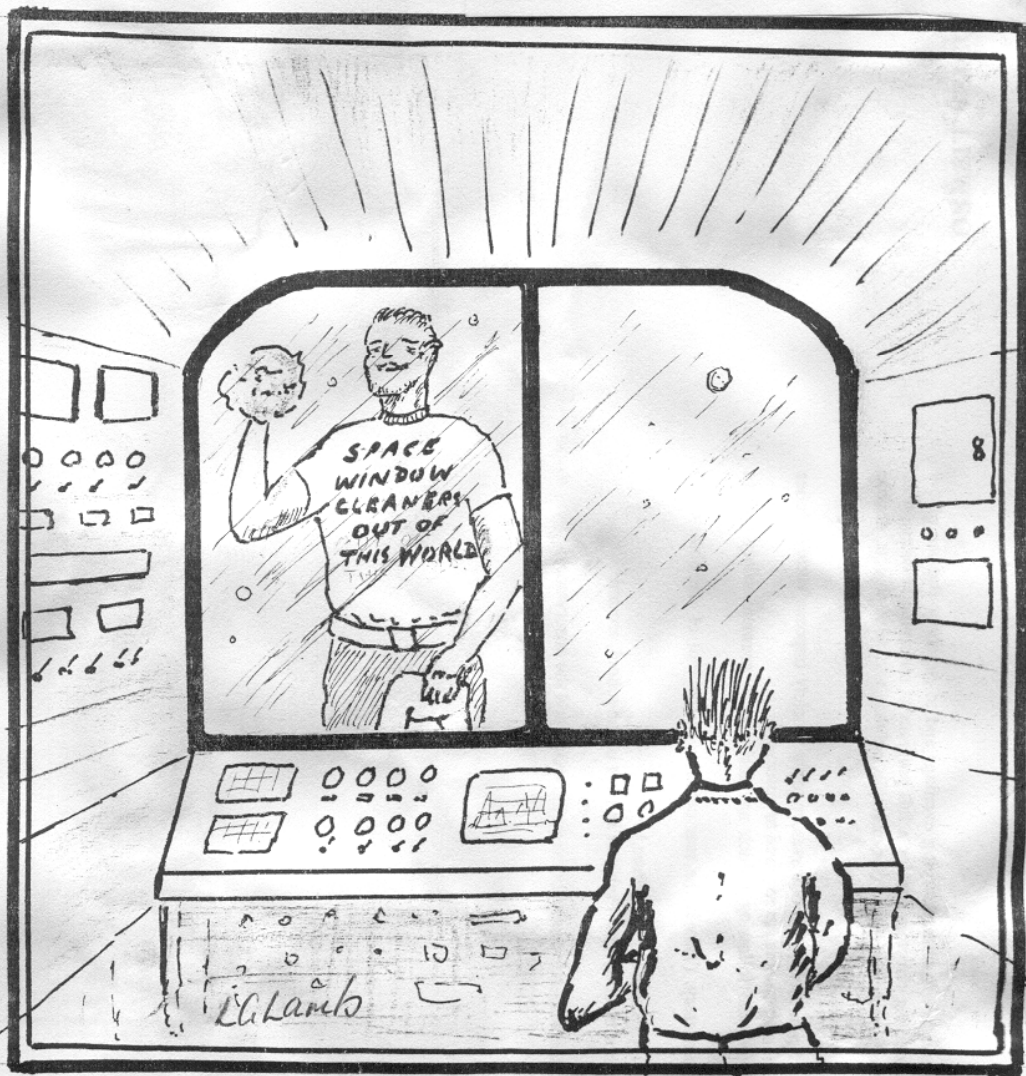


ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL

SOCIETY IPSWICH

Charity No 271313

MAY 1997



NIGHT SKY

All times GMT

SUN

Rises approximately between 04:20 to 03:50
Sets approximately between 19.30 to 20.00

Moon

New Moon 6th
First Quarter 14th
Full Moon 22th
Third Quarter 29th

MERCURY Mercury will be visible in the morning sky this month.
Mag. 0.6.

VENUS Venus reappears into the evening sky this month. Mag. -3.9

MARS Mars will be visible most of the night this month. By the end of the month it will be setting at about 01:45. Mag. -0.2

JUPITER Jupiter will be rising at about 01:20 in mid month. Mag. -2.3

SATURN Saturn will be in the morning twilight again this month. In mid month it will be rising about an hour before the sun. Mag. 0.8

URANUS Uranus will be rising at about 00:50, at mid month. Mag. 5.6.

Neptune Neptune will be rising at about 00:20, in mid month. Mag. 8.0

R. Gooding

OCCULTATIONS DURING MAY 1997

No stellar occultations occur during the month under favourable observing circumstances.

James Appleton

SOCIETY NEWS

1 Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting will be held on Saturday 28th June at the observatory, from 19:30. This will be an open meeting and any member is welcome to attend.

This list of events was first presented at the AGM.
 Summer excursion No date fixed as yet
 BAA Exhibition Meeting 8th June
 Astro Camp 3rd to 17th Aug.
 FAS Cambridge Convention 4th Oct.
 Second Open Weekend ? No date fixed as yet
 Christmas Meal 10th Dec.

3 Summer Excursion

A possible society excursion trip could be to the science Park at Herstmonceux. If enough members were interested, together with their families and friends it may be possible to hire a bus. Please let me have your opinions about this.

4 New Evening Directories Required.

At present the observatory has only one regular meeting evening, on Wednesdays. If you would like to be trained to operate the observatory and would like to run an additional evening. please contact any committee member.

Committee Meeting 19-4-97

Summary of the last committee meeting:

1) Mr. Dave Gilkes, (he has only recently started working at as School's Business Manager), was invited to the meeting to discuss the renewal of the our Licence, to use the observatory. Many other out standing issues were also raised, the most sufficient was the proposal to carry out a survey of the observatory tower. A meeting with Charlie Paterson, who is in charge of the schools maintenance will be arranged.

2) It was decided to help the school make better use of the observatory facilities. Two members of the school staff could be trained to operate the observatory.

3) 1997 marks the 30th anniversary of the formation of the society. It was proposed to have a special event in the autumn to mark this. This could take the form of an open day. Nothing has yet been decided.

The public Open Weekend to observe comet Hale-Bopp was held between the 11th & 14th April. This comet had been given a lot of coverage during the preceding month, especially in the BBC TV weather reports. Hale-Bopp was so bright that people, who would not normally even notice a full moon, were able to find it.

All the usual publicity was in place: posters in libraries, tourist information offices, school's, chip shops. Adverts in the local press and an interview with BBC Radio Suffolk, concluded the preparation. The weather in the previous week had been very good especially the previous weekend. This did not bid well for the following weekend. Surely this spell of good weather could not last for another weekend.

Friday evening came, the skies stayed clear, and great hordes of visitors arrived. A least 300 visitors arrived on this first evening. Between 19:30 and the opening time of 20:00 several dozen early arrivals were waiting in the car park. At one stage the queue extended round the dome floor, down the stairs and round the club room and continued to the bottom of the spiral stair well, finishing nearly down to the first landing. Many had to wait on the stairs for up to 2 hours, before they were able to see the comet through the 10". Nothing quite like this had been experienced since the much reminisced evening, when Halley's comet was in view. The last visitor left at about 23:30

Saturday evening arrived, but where were the clouds, it was still clear! Saturday was a repeat of Friday, with the observatory full with activity to past 22:30. On Saturday all 5 balconies were in use, with binoculars and other small telescopes looking at the comet, the Moon and Mars. The observatory was so busy that I set up two pairs of binoculars with tripods on the grass at the front of the school as an extra viewing point.

The skies were generally clear on the Sunday and Monday evenings, with only occasional cloud intervening. This Open Weekend must rank as the most sucessfull we have staged. Not once was the back up program of slides and talks even considered.

The estimated attendance over the four evenings was between 600 to 700.

NEW LIBRARY BOOKS

The OASI library, housed next to the club room at the Orwell Park Observatory, holds a selection of astronomical books, videos and magazines. The librarian is also responsible for purchases of computer software for the society. All members of OASI are very welcome to use the library. Please contact the librarian with suggestions for purchases of books, videos and software.

The library has recently acquired the three following books:

***Longitude*, by Dava Sobel, Fourth Estate, 1996
(ISBN 1-85702-502-4)**

Determination of longitude at sea was a major problem for early mariners, and many lives were lost because of lack of a reliable method. In 1707, a tragedy at sea caused by poor positional navigation resulted in the loss of some 2000 lives. In 1714, in an effort to remedy matters, Parliament announced a "Longitude Prize" of £20,000 (a vast fortune in the money of the time) to anybody who could devise a reliable means of determining longitude at sea.

In 1760, the clockmaker John Harrison eventually succeeded in perfecting a chronometer which kept time accurate to a few seconds each day. This allowed estimation of longitude by comparing the chronometer's time with local time (obtained by observing the sun).

The book *Longitude* recounts the story behind the development of accurate positioning techniques at sea, concentrating on Harrison and his contemporaries. All human life is in the tale - devotion, brilliance, stupidity and animosity! The book is fascinating and very readable.

***Astrophotography For The Amateur*, by Michael Covington,
Cambridge University Press, 1995 (ISBN 0 521 40984 5)**

This slim volume provides a comprehensive guide to astrophotography. It is aimed at the astronomer who has only a rudimentary knowledge of photography. The author is an enthusiastic amateur astrophotographer, and succeeds in conveying both his skill and enthusiasm for the subject matter.

The book is structured in three parts. Part I covers elementary techniques, describing simple methods for photographing relatively easy subjects, such as star trails, the moon, bright planets, eclipses, comets, meteors, etc. Part II covers advanced techniques based on coupling cameras to telescopes, and using special

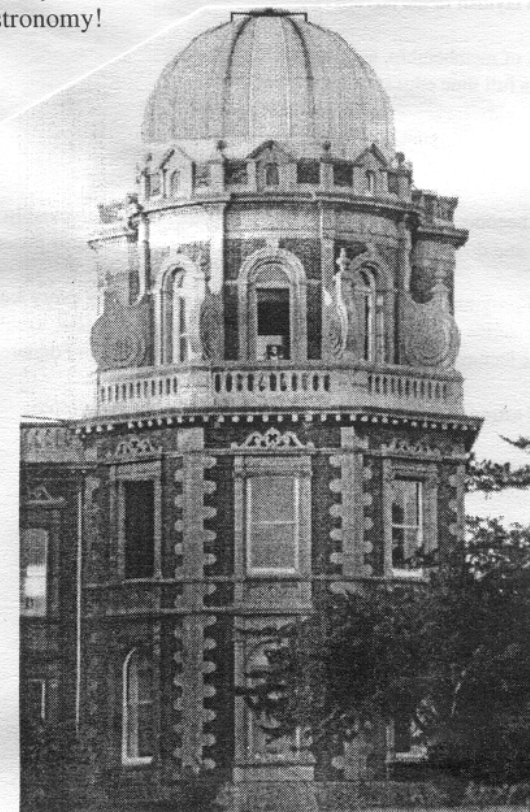
films and filters. Part III provides reference material on cameras, telescopes, lenses, films and film processing techniques.

The book is very helpfully illustrated with numerous astrophotographs which illustrate the results obtained from the various techniques described in the text. These considerably enhance the textual descriptions.

***The Mapping Of The Heavens*, by Peter Whitfield, The British
Library, 1995 (ISBN 0-7123-0402-9)**

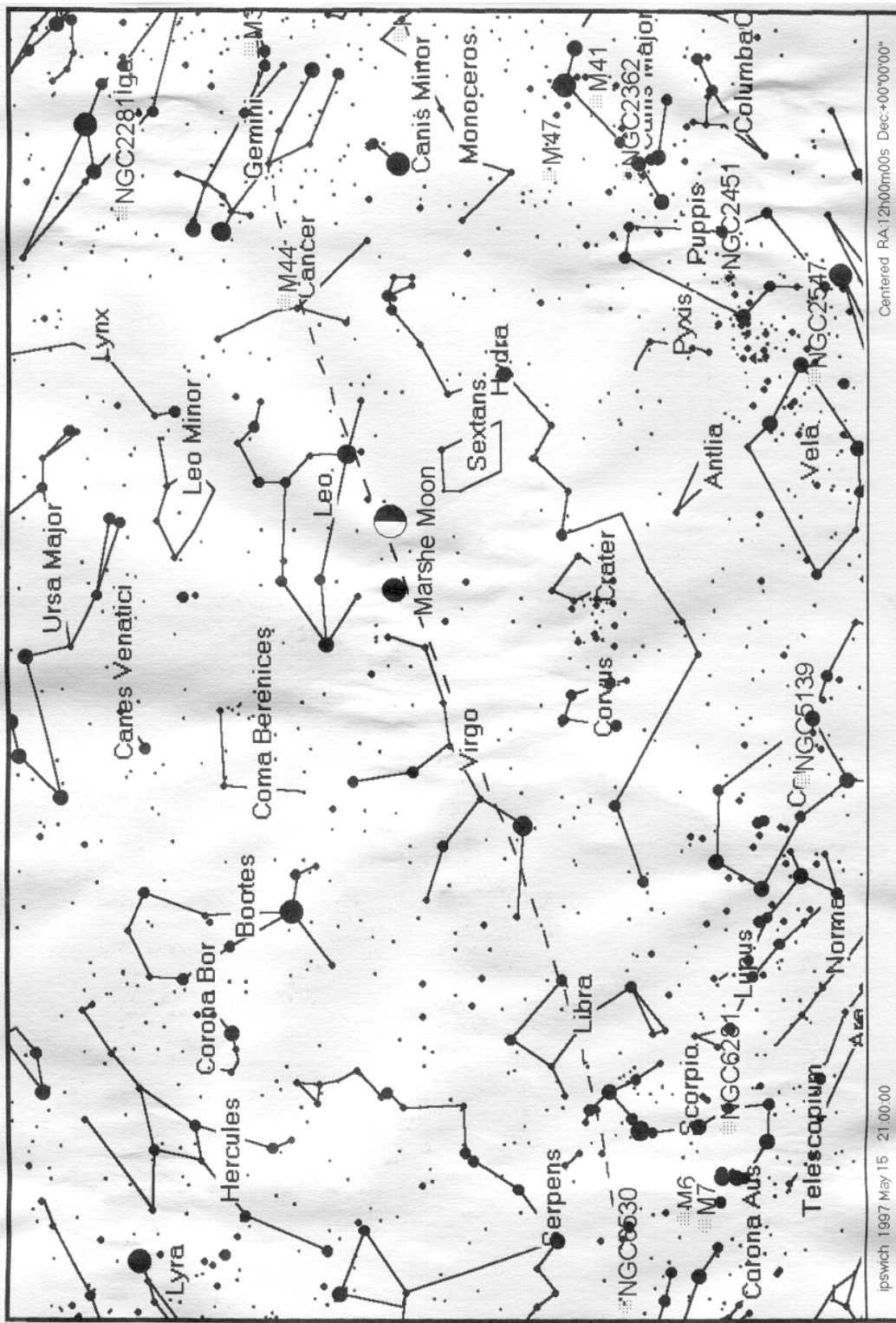
Until the advent of widespread street lighting, humankind had a personal knowledge of the pattern of stars in the night sky that was much more important to daily life than is the case today. This book traces the evolution of maps of the night sky from the earliest Egyptian constellation system of circa 2500BC up to the present day maps of the cosmic background radiation produced by the COBE (Cosmic Background Explorer) satellite. Throughout, the book is lavishly illustrated with reproductions of original prints held by the British Library and sister institutions: a real treat for the fan of historical astronomy!

James Appleton



Orwell Park Observatory

PROGRAMME FOR MAY



Centered RA:12h00m00s Dec:+00°00'00"

Ipswich 1997 May 15 21:00:00

Mondays from 7.30pm <i>No Directors available for this night</i>	GENERAL OBSERVATION SECTION
Tuesdays from 7.30pm <i>Mr P Richards</i>	OBSERVATORY VISITS FROM OUTSIDE GROUPS
Wednesdays from 7.45pm <i>Mr M Cook</i>	NEBULA & FAINT OBJECTS SECTION <i>Mr D Payne</i>
Thursdays from 7.30pm <i>Mr P Richards</i>	OBSERVATORY VISITS FROM OUTSIDE GROUPS
Fridays from 7.30pm 9th - 23rd <i>Mr J Hood</i>	DOUBLE STARS

All members are welcome on any night, but on nights other than Wednesday please check with the director of the night that the observatory will be open.

Lectures and other events:
Committee Meeting -----On Saturday 21st June at 7.30pm in the club room at the observatory. All members are welcome to attend.

e-mail enquires to oasieng@btbcs.bt.co.uk
 WWW url <http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk:80/~ipswich/>

1997 COMMITTEE		Home Phone	Work Phone
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TREASURER	M Nicholls		
MAINTENANCE CO-ORD	M Cook		
JOURNAL CO-ORDINATOR	E Sims		
PUBLICITY & VISIT CO-ORD	P Richards		
EQUIPMENT CURATOR	M Harlow		
SPECIAL EVENTS CO-ORD	J Appleton		
LIBRARIAN & COMP SOFTWARE	E Sims		
JOURNAL ARTICLES TO	R Gooding		
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