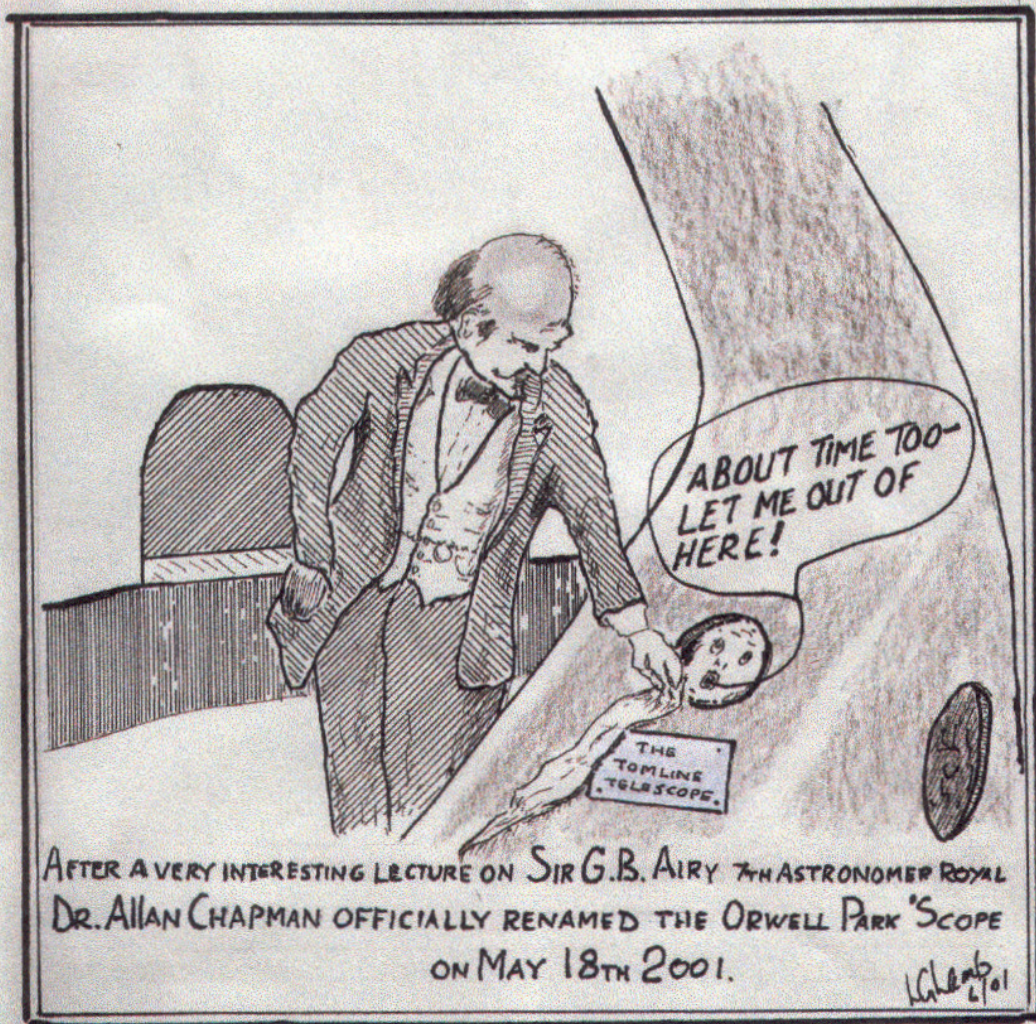


ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL

SOCIETY IPSWICH

Charity No 271313

JULY 2001



Society News

1 Next Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting will be held on Saturday 22nd September from 19:30 in the clubroom. This is an open meeting and any one who is interested is invited to attend.

2 Events for 2001

Event	Details	Date
Clacton & District Astronomical Association	Summer Lectures See below	6 th July
BAA Exhibition Meeting	London Guildhall University	7 th July
Perseid Summer Barbecue	Alan Smith has volunteered the use of his garden again this year. Alan lives at [redacted] Grundisburgh	Saturday 11 th August 14:00 and onwards
Summer Excursion	National Space Centre Leicester	15 th September
Equinox Star Party	Thetford Organiser; Loughton A.S Contact Mike Cook [redacted]	14 th to 23 rd September
FAS Convention	Venue: Rutherford Appleton Laboratory Oxfordshire	13 th October
Visit to Cambridge AS and Braintree AS	These were proposed at the AGM	Nothing arranged yet
North Essex Astronomical Society	They have recently opened a new observatory. A visit will be arranged	Nothing arranged yet
Open Weekend	Members help will be needed again this year to prepare the displays	24 th and 25 th November
Christmas Meal		Provisional dates 12 th or 19 th December

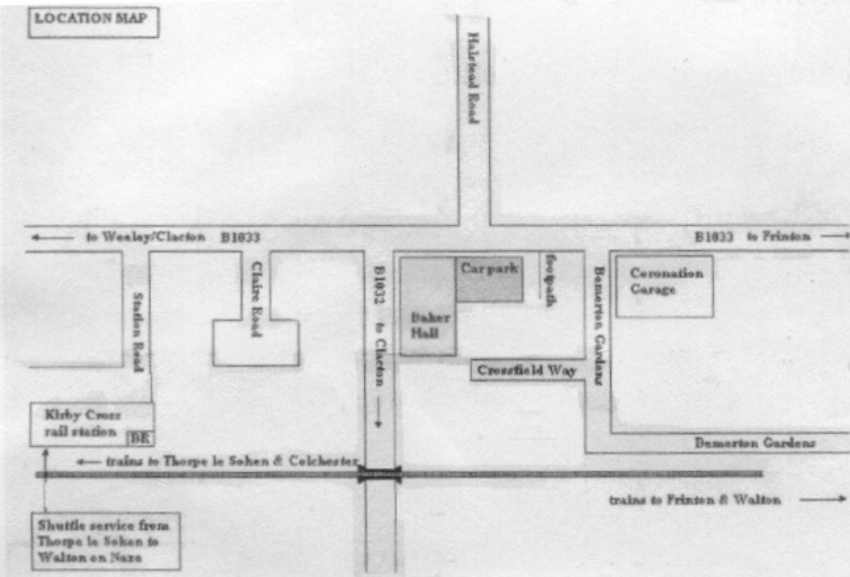
Additional events will be added through out the year

Clacton & District Astronomical Association



The Clacton society will be holding a series of summer lectures on Friday 6th July at the Baker Hall in Kirby Cross

There are 2 sessions 10:00 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 15:00 Both sessions are free to OASI members. If you are interested in attending please contact Brian Cottis on [redacted]



Summer Excursion



Date Saturday 15th September

The venue is at the National Space Centre Leicester.

Entrance cost will be £5.5 per person, (This price relates to a minimum group size of 20)

The coach hire will have to be added to the entrance fee. The more members, who attend, will reduce the unit cost per person.

If you are interested please contact Roy Gooding, or add your name to list on the observatory notice board

Night Sky

All times GMT

Sun

The sun will be rising approximately between 03:50 and 04:15

The sun will be setting approximately between 20:20 and 20:00

Moon

Full Moon	3 rd Quarter	New Moon	1 st Quarter
5 th	13 th	20 th	27 th

Mercury Mercury will be at greatest western elongation on the 9th (21°). The planet is low down in the morning twilight sky this month, making it a difficult object to observe.

Venus Venus is better placed this month to observe. Even through its elongation is decreasing it reaches a greater altitude this month. Magnitude -4.1

Mars Mars is well placed to observe this month if you have a clear southerly horizon. Its low altitude will hamper easy observations from our latitude. It will be culminating at about 21:00 in mid month. Magnitude -1.9

Jupiter Jupiter will be in close to the sun in the sky this month and will not be observable

Saturn Saturn starts to emerge from the morning twilight, but its low altitude will make it difficult to see. Magnitude 0.2

Uranus Uranus will be rising at about 21:20 in mid month. Magnitude 5.7

Neptune Neptune will be opposition on the 30th. Magnitude 7.8

Meteor Showers

Shower	Limits	Maximum	ZHR
Ophiuchids	May 19 th to July	June 9 th June 19 th	5
α Cygnids	July to August	July 21 st to Aug. 21 st	5
Capricornids	July to August	July 8 th July 15 th July 26 th	5
δ Aquadis	July 15 th to August 20 th	July 29 th Aug 6 th	20 10

Meteor source is the BAA Handbook

OCCULTATIONS DURING JULY

Only one stellar occultation occurs during the month under favourable circumstances. The table provides details for Orwell Park Observatory; these will be similar at nearby locations.

D or R	Date & Time (UT)	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (°)	Star Alt (°)	Min Dist (rad)	Star	Mag
D	26 Jul 21:38	0.44+	-12	10	0.58N	ZC 1976	7.0

James Appleton

NEW LIBRARY BOOK

I recently purchased the following book for the OASI library following a request from Society member Paddy O'Sullivan. It should appeal to active visual or CCD observers looking for new observational targets.

***Observing the Caldwell Objects*, by David Ratledge, Springer-Verlag Ltd, 2000.**

Patrick Moore created the Caldwell catalogue. His surname is actually Caldwell-Moore, and he applied the name Caldwell rather than Moore to the catalogue in order that the objects would be listed as C-objects rather than M-objects – the latter designation would have caused endless confusion with the Messier objects!

Amateur astronomers widely rely on the Messier catalogue to provide observing targets. To some extent, the Messier objects have been a victim of their own success, and they are now widely known and thoroughly observed and photographed. Although the Messier catalogue has stood the test of time, it was compiled originally as a listing of objects which could be mistaken for comets, and it does not include objects more southerly than 34°S. It therefore omits many splendid objects!

The Caldwell catalogue represents Patrick Moore's effort to complement the Messier catalogue and provide an up-to-date source of deep sky observing targets for the modern amateur astronomer. It contains 109 celestial objects, omitting objects which are in the Messier catalogue, and covers the whole sky; some 67 entries are visible from the British Isles. Many of the objects are visible with binoculars or a small telescope, although many will benefit also from observation via larger instruments.

Ratledge's book lists the entire Caldwell catalogue. For each of the 109 objects, it provides a photograph (most taken by amateurs using CCDs), a database of key information, a finder chart, a description of the visual appearance of the object and a description of the object itself.

The library is housed in the Orwell Park Observatory. It holds a selection of astronomy books, videos and magazines. All members of OASI are welcome to use the library. Please contact me with requests for purchases of books, videos and software, or if you would like to donate any good-quality astronomy material to the library.

James Appleton

5

AN HISTORIC DAY

By Ken Goward

Almost two years ago, our Lecture Co-ordinator, Peter Richards, managed to corner Dr Allan Chapman at an FAS convention in Sidmouth and persuade him to lecture to our society upon the life of Sir G B Airy, 7th Astronomer Royal. That was something of a coup for us as Allan is certainly the most popular and in demand figure on the lecture circuit and his diary is always full. News of Peter's coup aroused the interest of Andrew Auster, the Headmaster, who generously agreed to fund Allan's lecture for the school and society and to accommodate a large audience by utilising the Orangery.

Over the last couple of years I have been privileged to make Allan's personal acquaintance through research into the history of our observatory and its links to the Airy family via Wilfrid Airy, the designing engineer. Through Allan I have also been privileged to make friends with members of the Airy family and just after New Year we were together at a two-day seminar at Greenwich to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Airy's Ipswich built Transit Instrument – the instrument that defines the zero meridian of the world. It was there during a coffee break that the subject of the 10" Refractor at Orwell Park came up and Allan's surprise at the instrument not having a name was obvious. Travelling back with fellow society member and attendee, William Barton, the germ of an idea came to us that we had a unique opportunity to combine Allan's visit to Ipswich with a naming of the telescope and to invite the Airy family along to Playford with Allan to see where the great man grew up and was eventually laid to rest. Allan had wanted to visit Playford for some time to further his research towards writing a definitive biography on Airy, which has the close interest of at least two major publishers and which is expected to be on the bookshelves within the next 18 months or so¹. Our AGM was just a few days after the seminar and a proposal to name the 10" Refractor after its original sponsor as 'THE TOMLINE REFRACTOR', was accepted with great enthusiasm by those attending. In private conversation with Allan he had already indicated to me that he would make that dedication if invited and the stage was set...

In the late afternoon of Friday 18th May I collected Allan Chapman and members of the Airy family² from Ipswich Station. After a short detour³ we were welcomed at Playford churchyard by our Secretary, Roy Gooding, Peter Richards and Garry Coleman from the society and by local Playford historian Mr Brian Seward. Brian showed the party around the interior of St Mary's church and the many plaques etc dedicated to the Airy family. Allan was obviously in his element by then and embarked upon a long and fascinating discourse to our small assembly upon church history and Sir G B Airy's love of Playford/St Mary's in particular. Allan was delighted to be presented, on loan, a bundle of original letters from Airy, which belong to the church archive. As a mark of respect, Allan placed a floral tribute from our society at the Airy family tomb and Nicole placed another on Wilfrid Airy's grave.

6

We then visited Airy's former country cottage, which is adjacent to the church and which I have previously written of in this oracle. The current owners, the Lillywhite family, generously allowed a number of us to tour the rooms and Elizabeth had brought along a number of old photographs from the family archives⁴ which gave the party and the Lillywhites a fascinating then and now comparison.

The final port of call on our visit to Playford and, perhaps, the highlight was the chance to visit Hill Farm, the former home of Arthur Biddell, Airy's uncle and 'role model' and the house in which Airy largely grew up. The house, owned and occupied since 1946 by Mr Charles Lofts, is in largely original condition and contains many things that would have been familiar to Airy, including a meat smoking room and baking oven, various out houses/servants sections and a magnificent cellar. Charles was the most delightful of hosts and took great pride in showing us around the house. He has a number of paintings by the renowned artist Anna Airy (Sir G B Airy's granddaughter/Wilfrid Airy's daughter) on display, which were of particular interest to the Airy family.



Dr Allan Chapman placing flowers upon the Airy family tomb.
Video still by Garry Coleman



Arthur Biddell seated in the porch at Hill Farm House
Photo from the collection of Ken Goward

Allan launched into another of his 'discourses' and time was dragging on – we were already late for supper, which the school had kindly laid on and for the lecture at Orwell Park. There was simply too much to see and insufficient time to do the house and Charles justice. I finally got Allan away from the premises by offering to put him up at my house in nearby Tuddenham for a weekend so that he can continue to 'cross examine' the house and Charles! Towards Allan's research, I have recently sourced an original photograph of Arthur Biddell seated in the porch of Hill Farm House and it was a delight to see that the porch still stands at the entrance and is completely unchanged since that photograph was taken around 150 years ago!! It was a beautiful spring evening and Hill Farm is in the most delightful setting, so it was with reluctance tempered with a promise to return that we headed – very late – for Orwell Park.

On arriving at the school, our party was enthusiastically met by the Headmaster and by our chairman, David Payne. Following a somewhat bolted supper and the inevitable gallon of tea for Allan, it was time for the long looked forward to lecture – and what a warm reception Allan received from the audience, which included a large number of OASI members along with guests from neighbouring astronomical societies, school staff and senior pupils. Allan, as many will have appreciated, is the most gifted of speakers – not once having to refer to notes or repeating himself. For almost two hours he held the audience spellbound by his profound knowledge of the subject and his singular wit. Who could forget the lively questions session at the conclusion of the lecture or, indeed, Allan's hilarious description/metaphorical sketch of the controversial Victorian scientist, Sir James South, posing for a photograph with a stuffed dog on his knee! The lecture was followed by a superb cheese and wine reception, again generously provided by the school.



Dr Allan Chapman lecturing to a full house, in the delightful setting of the Orangery.
Video still by Garry Coleman

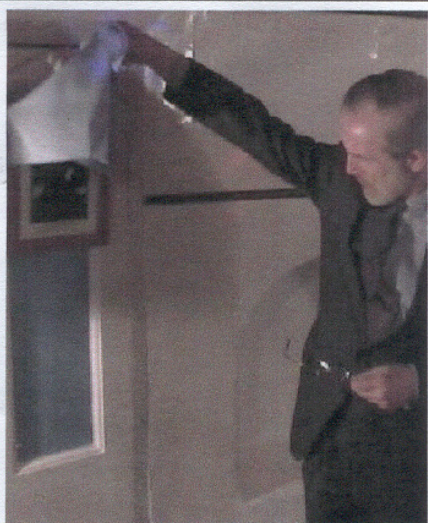


Dr Allan Chapman unveils the name plaque on the 'Tomline Refractor'
Photo by Ken Goward

The day's finale came in the shape of a naming and dedication of the Orwell Park Observatory 10" Refractor in honour of its original sponsor, Colonel George Tomline. Regrettably, owing to the large number of people anticipated in the observatory, for safety reasons the actual naming ceremony had to be restricted to our invited guests, the OASI Committee and representatives from the school. However, the equatorial room was opened to the remainder of our members and guests directly afterwards. Following an introduction from society Chairman, Dave Payne, Dr Chapman was invited to make the dedication and he said that he felt honoured to do so as he unveiled the brass name plaque, which has been affixed to the telescope mount.

The plaque is engraved;
The Tomline Refractor

David then invited the Airy family to unveil portrait pictures of the Observatory's Architect, John MacVicar Anderson and it's Designing Engineer, Wilfrid Airy⁵.



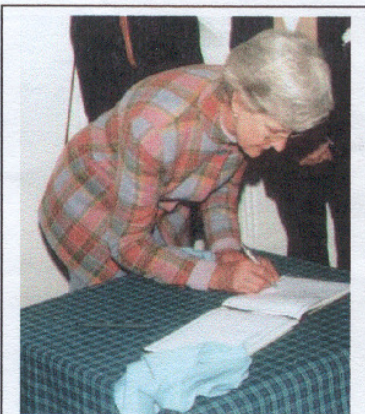
James Airy unveils the portrait picture of Observatory Architect, John MacVicar Anderson
Video still by Garry Coleman

The Airy's expressed their delight at having been invited to 'such a wonderful event' and went on to say that they were proud of their family connection to the Orwell Park Observatory, which was 'most impressive'.

The final part of the dedication ceremony came when David invited all those present to sign specially printed pages in the Observatory Visitors Book. Allan signed first and it says much for all the hard work by many members over the thirty plus years of OASI's existence that he endorsed the book with these few words;

'A splendidly restored Victorian Observatory'

The equatorial room was then opened for all to come up to see the plaque and sign the visitor's book and, judging by the glowing comments recorded, everybody seemed to have greatly enjoyed the occasion. For some while our guests circulated around the dome and the club room, even watching a wonderfully well timed firework display on the opposite bank of the Orwell which, one feels sure, several of those present thought had also been organised by us! Allan, typically, spent much of the time 'holding court' with his knowledge of Victorian astronomers and observatories. He was most impressed with our Troughton & Simms Transit Instrument, which did 'look the part', having recently been cleaned and polished by Martin Cook, of whom Allan expressed particular praise for his restoration skills.



Elizabeth Amati-Airy signing the visitor's book
Photo by Ken Goward

9

5



Dr Allan Chapman in 'full flow' examining our Troughton & Simms Transit Instrument
Video still by Garry Coleman

Alas, all good things come to an end and not much before midnight we finally left the school premises, albeit in a somewhat euphoric state. Even at this late hour, Allan's main concern when I dropped him at his hotel, was to have the room service people lay on a large pot of tea...

Before dropping our honoured guests off for their train at Ipswich Station the following morning, they asked for one last look around Orwell Park. It was clear that they were deeply impressed with the views and Allan thought it no wonder that Sir G B Airy had such a life long passion for the beauty, peace and tranquillity of Suffolk. They all vowed that they would return whenever they could and it would not, perhaps, be overstating it to say that the society and the school have gained new devotees.

Letters have since been received from all our guests in praise of the event and of our society and I shall close this narrative by quoting passages from a letter sent to us by James Airy;

'Your observatory is impressive and fascinating. I do most heartily congratulate you and your⁶ colleagues on the remarkable restoration you have brought about through much hard work'

'It was a pleasure to meet so many of your friends and colleagues of the OAS; please pass on my thanks to them also for their part in all that they

10

have done, and all they did on the 18th to create such an enjoyable occasion. Happy returns are anticipated!

Our grateful thanks go to all those who have so freely given of their time to restore and prepare the observatory, to the Orwell Park School for their wonderful hospitality, to our honoured guests and, not least, to Peter for his coup two years ago at Sidmouth!

This month (July 27th) marks the bi-centenary of Sir G B Airy's birth and we are justly proud of our Observatory and of its connection to the family of the 7th Astronomer Royal.

2001 FRIDAY 18TH MAY CERTAINLY WAS AN HISTORIC DAY FOR THE ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.

K.G.

¹ Give or take a month or several – Many of the snippets of information gleaned by Allan have blossomed into 'mega bites' of info. For instance, just after Christmas 2000 the long lost Greenwich Observatory files on the 1846 discovery of Neptune came to light in, of all places, South America. Airy has long been the subject of miss placed criticism over his handling of the prediction by John Couch Adams of the planet's existence and position and Allan has been able to pour over those documents in just the last few weeks.

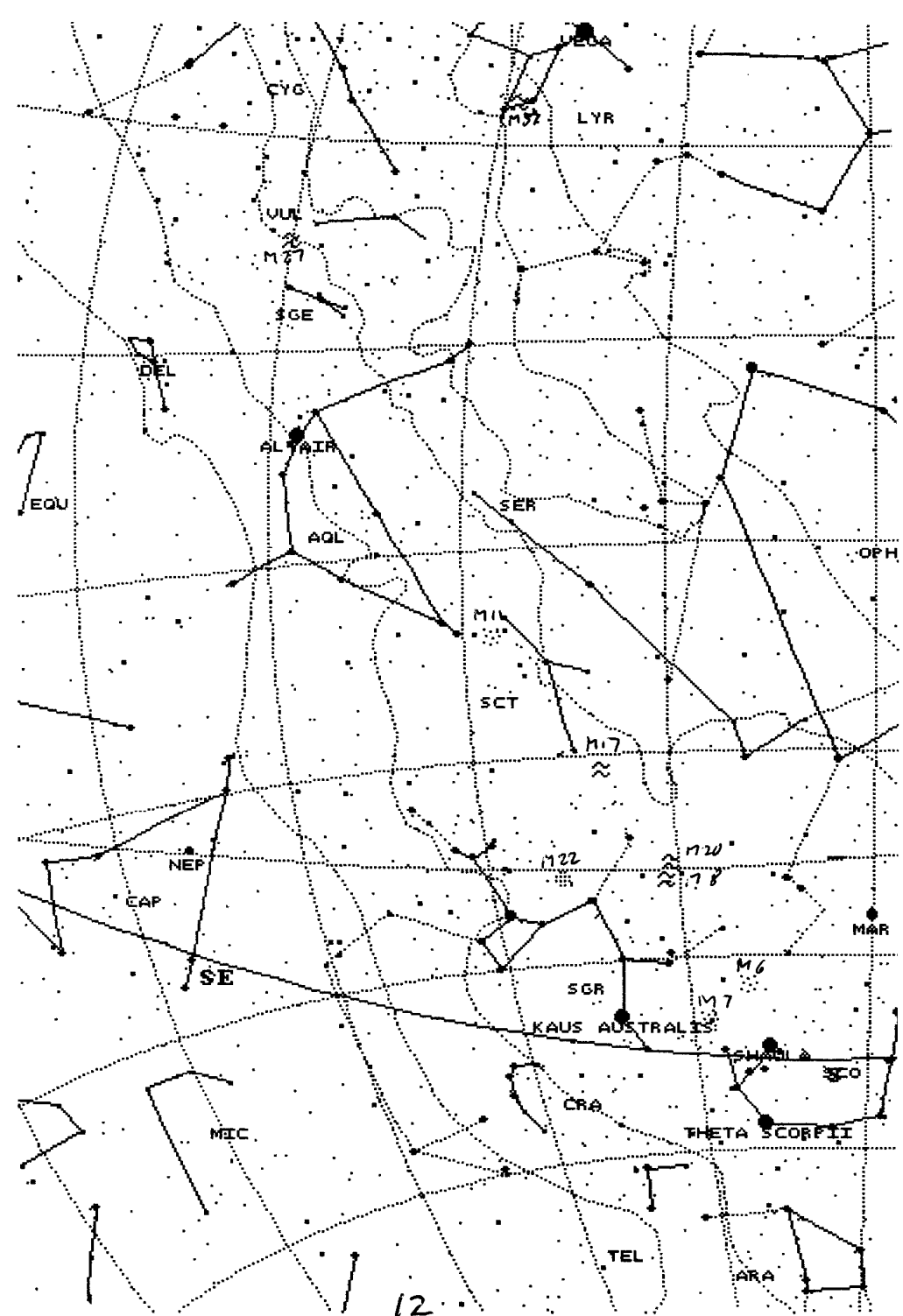
² James Airy and Elizabeth Amati-Airy, brother & sister and, respectively, nephew/niece of Wilfrid Airy. Nicole Swengley, Sir G B Airy's Gt Gt Granddaughter.

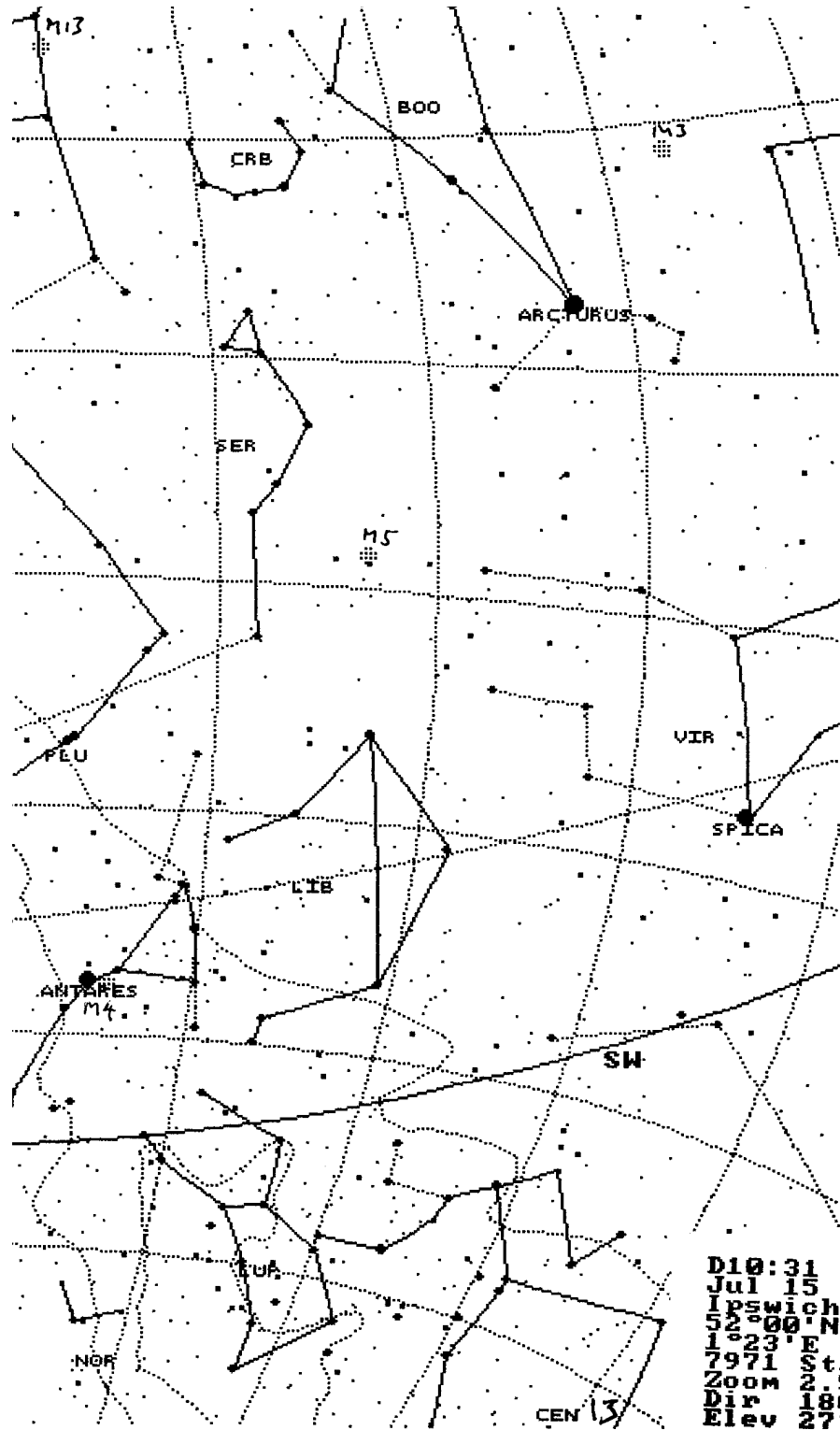
³ A tea break! Having served for a quarter of a century in one of the emergency services, I had plenty of practice and thought myself a champion tea drinker until I met Dr Chapman. Allan has the most voracious appetite for the beverage and I soon realised I was in the presence of – 'The Master' – he told me that the only persons who can best him at tea consumption are Sir Patrick Moore and Tony Benn!!

⁴ Elizabeth Amati-Airy inherited Sir B G Airy's private papers, which have proved to be a rich seam of information for Allan.

⁵ Those portraits were unveiled in a temporary position in the equatorial room and have since been placed in their permanent position on the wall of the spiral stairs.

⁶ As something of a 'Johnny come lately' in this regard, I have pointed out to James that the work has been done by others over many years, entirely without my help!





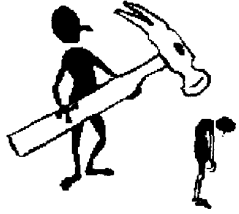
Y E L L A H U B B L E O N N M
 P H O B O S U N G Y C O N O L
 C S C O M E T E O R I T E O B
 A O T Z P N R U N T T J B M E
 U R A S L U E R A T S R A M D
 R E L J A T F L V N L E L C U
 A T U P N P L C O C O F O D T
 N I B U E E E R N H S R R R I
 U P E L T N C Y R R K A T I N
 S U N S P O T S E A U C S S G
 O J N A P I O H P S N T A E A
 W O S R V I R T U A E O A L M
 C Q R A N U L J S U J R I S B
 M I R A N D A C E Q T Z E R T
 M G A L A X Y T E H E A Z C O

Some words are backwards and diagonal

Astrolabe	Hubble	Planet
Astronaut	Io	Pulsar
Aura	Jupiter	Quasar
Blackhole	Lunar	Reflector
Ceres	Magnitude	Refractor
Comet	Mars	Saturn
Constellation	Meteorite	Solstice
Cygnus	Mira	Star
Earth	Miranda	Sun
Eclipse	Moon	Sunspots
Eros	Nebula	Supernova
Galaxy	Neptune	Uranus
Gravity	Orion	
Halley	Phobos	

Its! Observatory Maintenance Time Again

Its that time of year again when the observatory is closed for observing, and all hands are requested to man (or woman) the power tools, hammers, and paint brushes.



During the next few weeks the equipment storage floor above the library is be extended and re-floored.

The lift shaft at the bottom of the stair well is to be floored across.

The library floor will be lowered, thus removing the step.

I will be resuming the observatory painting in July, after some of the above work has been completed.

Anyone who dares to show their face, will be press-ganged into helping. If you intend to come along to the observatory during July and August please come in old clothes.

2001 COMMITTEE

		Home Phone	Work Phone
CHAIRMAN	D Payne		
SECRETARY & WORK PARTY ORGANISER	R Gooding		
TREASURER & PUBLICITY	K Goward		
MECHANICS	M Cook		
NEWSLETTER CO-ORDINATOR	E Sims		
BEGINNERS MEETING CO-ORD & VISIT CO-ORD	T Sampson		
EQUIPMENT CURATOR	G Coleman		
LIBRARIAN	J Walsh		
	J Appleton		
CO-OPTED MEMBER			
LECTURE CO-ORDINATOR & DARK SKIES	P Richards		
JOURNAL ARTICLES TO CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS	E Sims		Ipswich Suffolk IP1 4HA
	R Gooding		OASI Secretary Ipswich Suffolk IP1 6AE
MEMBERSHIP	M. Cook		Ipswich IP4 5PZ

15

Observing Programme For July

Dates	Observing Director	Activities
Monday		Nothing Booked
Tuesday		Nothing Booked
Wednesdays 4th 11th 18th 25th from 8.00pm	M Cook D Payne	Nebular & Faint Objects
Thursday	Nothing Booked	Group Visit
Fridays		Nothing Booked

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

Special Events

1. COMMITTEE MEETING September 22nd

The next committee meeting is to be held on Saturday 22nd of September at 7.30pm in the club room at the observatory. All members are welcome to attend.

2. LECTURE MEETING

Nothing organised for this month

3. ASTRONOMY WORKSHOP

Nothing organised for this month but will be resumed again in October.

Society Contact Details

	Home Phone	Work Phone
Chairman	D Payne	
Secretary	R Gooding	
Contact details for the full committee are inside the back page.		

e-mail queries: ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk
 WWW address: <http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~ipswich/>