



**ORWELL ASTRONOMICAL  
SOCIETY (IPSWICH)**  
Registered Charity No 271313  
www.oasi.org.uk

**NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2005**



Orwell Park Observatory

**Society News**

**1 Next Committee Meeting Saturday 19th November 2005**

**NOTE CHANGE of DATE**

The next committee meeting will be held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 20:00 at the observatory. This is an open meeting and any one who is interested is invited to attend. If there is any problem with this date please contact me.

**2 Events for 2005**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Date</b>
11 <sup>th</sup> Autumn Equinox Sky Camp Hosted by Loughton AS in association with the SPA	Kelling Heath, Holt Norfolk for more information call Andrew Robertson, [redacted] or <a href="http://www.starparty.org">http://www.starparty.org</a>	Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> September to Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> October
FAS Convention	Institute of Astronomy Cambridge Madingley Road Cambridge	Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> October
Norwich Astronomical Society 60th Anniversary Astronomy Conference	In Norwich	Saturday 8th October
Astronomy workshop Building and equipping a back garden observatory Presented by Dave Standley	Venue: the class room under the fire escape in the small car park area ( School side entrance )	Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> October 20:00
SPA Convention This meeting is free	Institute of Astronomy Cambridge The Hoyle Building Madingley Road Cambridge	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> October 10:00 to 18:00
Winter lectures	Two lectures are in the planning stage. Possibly on Large Telescopes and the Cassini –Huygens mission Society members short talks may also be arranged	To be fixed
Astronomy workshop Design, construction and use of the 19" Millennium Telescope. Neil Morley Paddy O'Sullivan	Venue: the class room under the fire escape in the small car park area ( School side entrance )	Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> November 20:00

Martin Cook Mike Harlow		
Astronomy Workshop Filter sfor Astronomy Presented by Pete richards	Venue: the class room under the fire escape in the small car park area ( School side entrance )	Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> December 20:00
Christmas Meal	Venue to be fixed <b>See Below</b>	Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> December

### 3 Events for 2006

Meeting	Venue	Date
AGM	To be fixed	To be fixed
Astronomy Workshop Elementary Imaging Processing ( No hard sums) Presented by Nigel Stubbington	Venue: the class room under the fire escape in the small car park area ( School side entrance )	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> February 20:00

### 4 Society Equipment Inventory

I would like to compile an inventory of society member's astronomical equipment. If you would like to participate please supply me with a list of what observational equipment you have. This inventory list with the relevant names will remain with in the society. Though the total numbers of each class of instrument maybe added to the Society Web site.

### 5 Welcome to New Members

Yvonne and Keith Everett have recently joined

### 6 Astronomy Workshops 2005 / 2006 Season

The new season of workshop meetings is in the planning stage. Ted Sampson has handed over the co-ordination of these meetings to Mick Whybray. Any questions you may have about the new season please contact Mick. If you would like to volunteer to be a principle speaker for any of these meetings please also contact Mike

### 7 Norwich Astronomical Society's 60th Anniversary Astronomy Conference

Date Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October

Venue John Innes Centre Norwich

Admission £15 per person which includes refreshments

Buffet lunch £5.50 extra  
Opening times 09:30 to 16:30

#### Programme

Dr. Robin Catchpole "From the Solar System to the edge of the Universe"  
Dr. David Whitehouse "Astronomy in the Media"  
Prof. Paul Murdin "The Reality of Black Holes"  
Final lecturer TBC  
Trade Stands will be present.

### 8 New Session of Night Sky Section Meetings



If there is sufficient interest again I will restart meetings of the Night Sky Section this autumn. These will follow the same format as last year. The venue will again be on Nacton shores. No formal dates will be set, as meetings will take place on an ad hoc basis on Wednesdays. All you have to do is to ask me, and we can go down to Nacton shores for an observing session.

I would recommend bringing along a pair of binoculars, a torch and suitable footwear for walking down a potentially muddy path.

For those who are new to the society, here is a little background for the reason I implemented these meetings last year.

New members have often mentioned that they are interested in Astronomy, but being beginners, they have only limited knowledge. One of their reasons to join us was to find like-minded people, with a greater knowledge than they have. Finding their way around the night sky held a high priority.

At our public Open Weekends I usually take visitors outside to show them the night sky, and identifying the principle constellations. All that is required for this is the naked eye and binoculars.

If any one is interested in doing this, please contact me (Roy Gooding)

## 9 Christmas Meal

Date: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December  
 Venue: Oyster Reach Wherstead Hill Ipswich  
 Time: 20:00

Cost: £17.95  
 Deposit: £5 To be given Roy Gooding before the end of October  
 The restaurant requires the deposit before the end of October

### Starters

Prawn Cocktail  
 Soup of the Day  
 Breaded Mushrooms  
 Melon

### Main

Turkey with all the Trimmings  
 Beefeater Sirloin Steak  
 Duck with Cumberland Sauce  
 Nut Roast

### Desserts

Christmas Pudding  
 Profiteroles  
 Horn of Plenty with Mulled Fruits  
 Ice Cream Desserts

## Night Sky (October)

All times GMT

### Sun

The sun will be rising approximately between 06:10 and 07:00  
 The sun will be setting approximately between 17:50 and 16:30

### Moon

New Moon	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	Full Moon	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>

- Mercury** Mercury is back in the evening sky this month. It will not be observable as it will be setting to near sunset.
- Venus** Venus remains a prominent evening object, setting about 2 hours after sunset at the end of the month. Magnitude -4.4
- Mars** Mars will be rising at about sunset at the end of the month. Magnitude -2.2
- Jupiter** Jupiter will be in conjunction with the sun on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and will not be observable this month.
- Saturn** Saturn has moved into Cancer and will be rising at about 22:30 by the end of the month. Magnitude 0.3
- Uranus** Uranus is presently in Aquarius. It will be setting at about 01:00 at the end of the month. Magnitude 5.7
- Neptune** Neptune is presently in Capricornus. It will be setting at about 23:00 at the end of the month. Magnitude 7.8

### Meteor Showers

Shower	Maximum	Limits	ZHR
Piscids	October 13 <sup>th</sup>	September to October	?
Orionids	October 20 <sup>th</sup>	October 16 <sup>th</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup>	25

Meteor source is the BAA Handbook

### Partial Eclipse of the Sun

There will be a partial eclipse of the Sun of October 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
 The partial phase begin at 07:35 and ends at 13:28

# ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

by James Appleton

August 2005 marked a significant anniversary for OASI: the 400<sup>th</sup> edition of the Society's Newsletter. OASI published the first edition of its newsletter in February 1972, approximately five years after the formation of the Society. Through the commitment and dedication of a small band of newsletter editors, publishers, coordinators and helpers OASI has published an edition every month since February 1972, with the exceptions of the years 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 for which there were combined August/September editions. You are currently reading edition 401 of the newsletter!

The newsletters provide a fascinating insight into the history of OASI and the activities of its members. However, despite the historical significance of the newsletters, OASI did not have a newsletter archive available to its members.

By way of marking the 400<sup>th</sup> edition of the Newsletter, I have corrected the lack of a newsletter archive by compiling an electronic newsletter archive, which is available on DVD-ROM for loan to members of the Society.

## CREATION OF THE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

I electronically scanned newsletters from edition 1 to edition 400 (February 1972 to August/September 2005). The set of scans is complete with the exception of edition 24 (January 1974) which was not available. I scanned editions from 1 to 148 (February 1972 to October 1983) from Roy Gooding's personal collection of newsletters and editions from 149 to 400 (November 1983 to August/September 2005) from the paper masters stored in Orwell Park Observatory. (Many thanks are due to Roy for making his newsletter collection available.) Note that I scanned only non-blank pages and corrected page sequencing errors where possible, so the pagination in the electronic archive is not identical with that in the paper newsletters. I stored most of the scanned pages as *.gif* files, but in order to retain acceptable rendition for a few greyscale or colour images I used some *.bmp* files.

As scanning proceeded it quickly became apparent that the newsletters contained an enormous number of items of information and I found it necessary to compile an index enabling easy location and cross-referencing of facts and articles.

The electronic newsletter archive is stored on a DVD-ROM, in a folder named *Newsletters* containing the following files:

- the Microsoft Word master file for this Newsletter article (*.doc*),
- a brief text file providing an introduction to the archive (*.txt*),
- the scanned newsletter pages (*.gif* and *.bmp* files),

- the index, a Microsoft Excel file (*.xls*).

The scanned pages are structured in the most direct, obvious fashion: a folder for each year, each containing a folder for each month, each containing the relevant individual scanned image files for the newsletter pages. The files are named according to an obvious convention: for example, the scanned image for page 3 of the October 1987 newsletter is stored in the following file – *Newsletters/1987/10/1987\_10\_page\_03.gif*.

The index is in the form of an Excel spreadsheet containing one or more clickable hyperlinks for each item indexed – clicking on a hyperlink will automatically open (using whatever imaging software the computer uses by default) the appropriate scanned page file. The use of Excel for the index enables easy searching, filtering, and cross-referencing of items. I have also printed a paper copy of the index file: user not confident in Excel can identify items of interest in the paper index and then manually access the appropriate scanned page files. The paper index runs to 186 A4 pages!

Key statistics of the archive are as follows:

Newsletters archived:	editions #1 through to #400, excluding #24
Period:	February 1972 – August/September 2005
Number of scanned pages:	4041
Size of archive on DVD-ROM:	1.6 GB
Number of items indexed:	8863

The OASI library holds the electronic newsletter archive, both the DVD-ROM and the paper listing of the index file. Any member of OASI may borrow the archive from the library. To access the information in the archive simply copy the entire folder *Newsletters* from the DVD-ROM onto the computer's hard disc and then access individual scanned pages either via the Excel index file or directly via a graphics package.

Please advise any errors in the archive. Any other feedback would also be welcome. Also, please advise if you have a copy of the newsletter for January 1974 (edition 24) to hand – I should like to scan it so that the archive can be completed.

## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NEWSLETTER

The newsletter provides a fascinating glimpse into activities of OASI and its members. My own personal *Top Ten* highlights from the newsletters are as follows (very much a personal selection) – further detail on each of them is contained in the electronic newsletter archive.

Date	Event	Newsletter Reports
February 1972	<p>First issue of OASI newsletter. The very first article is an editorial requesting material for the newsletter. The request is equally valid today, and material for the newsletter is always welcome!</p> <p>The first edition of the newsletter details weekly meetings of OASI at the time as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Planetary Section</i> - Director David Bearcroft</li> <li>• <i>Lunar Section</i> - Director Royston M Cheesman</li> <li>• <i>Stars And Nebulae Section</i> - Director Richard Hazelwood</li> <li>• <i>Weekly Club Night</i> - Fridays.</li> <li>• <i>Beginners Tuition And Learners' Section</i> - meet as arranged.</li> </ul>	February 1972
07 December 1974	BAA Lunar Section meeting at Orwell Park School. Meeting is run by Patrick Moore, Henry Hatfield and Roy Cheesman. Charles Radley inadvertently locks an unfortunate individual in the Observatory Tower for the duration of the meeting!	January 1975
25 May 1980	OASI attempts to use a large ball covered in symbols, placed in a distant field, as an observing target to calibrate a telescope in Orwell Park Observatory. The attempt fails when cows in the field become fascinated by the ball and surround it for several hours!	June 1980
October 1982	After being unable to obtain a good view of Comet Austin due to smoke haze from burning stubble, Roy Adams launches a campaign to persuade farmers to abandon the practice in favour of more ecologically sound and less disruptive practices.	October 1982
09 April 1983	OASI fireball camera records a comet-like object with a companion. Image defies explanation and is sent to the British Meteor Society and then on to the Data Anomaly Research Centre in Maryland, USA for investigation. No explanation is forthcoming!	June 1983

Date	Event	Newsletter Reports
02 January 1984	Members of OASI employ a professional bee-keeper to evict some 30,000 bees which had nested in the observatory dome. The episode is famously recorded in the newsletter under the title <i>Search for the Beehive!</i>	February 1984
Early October 1985	Members of OASI record their first sightings of Halley's Comet: Alan Smith photographically 05 October; Mike Barriskill visually 12 October; David Payne visually 13 October. Members of OASI continued observations of the comet until April 1986. Alan Smith and Roy Cheesman travelled to the Australian Outback to observe the Comet under southern skies.	September 1985 – July 1986 and April 1987
19 May 1992	First use of the Tomline Refractor with a CCD camera. The camera was attached by means of sticky tape (!) and produced an image of Jupiter and its Galilean satellites.	June 1992
14-15 May 2004	Peter Hingley (RAS Librarian) delivers a lecture entitled <i>Astronomers and Oddities: The Treasures of the Royal Astronomical Society Library</i> to members of OASI and then formally opens the new OASI library, located in the former lift-shaft of Orwell Park Observatory. The formal opening marks the fruition of three years of hard labour by members of OASI to construct the library.	June 2004
08 June 2004	Members of OASI observe the long-awaited transit of Venus using the Tomline Refractor and other instruments at Orwell Park Observatory and elsewhere. The day is a huge success and members' observations are later compiled into a 57 page report which Ken Goward presented to Sir Patrick Moore on 02 April 2005.	October, November, December 2004; January, February, May 2005

James Appleton  
28 August 2005

## DAVID BARNARD, 1958 - 2005

It is with great sadness that OASI reports the untimely death of David Barnard, former long-time member and vice president of the Society.



David was born in September 1958 in Ipswich. He attended local schools and Suffolk College. He initially worked for the Meteorological Office returning to the Ipswich area with Fisons and latterly British Telecom.

It was whilst at primary school that his interest in astronomy began after attending an open day at the observatory. David joined OASI in November 1973, bringing the Society's total membership at the time to 99. On joining OASI, David regularly attended the Double Stars Section meetings run by David Bearcroft. One amusing incident occurred in 1975 when, as is so often the case, rather than observing stars, the astronomers in the Dome were engaged in maintenance tasks, in this case attempting repairs to the original mechanical drive system of the Tomline Refractor (this was before OASI fitted an electric drive). In order to investigate the load on drive shaft, David had to enter the space under the floor of the Dome, entering via one of the air vents in the floor. Although ingress to the under-floor space proved unremarkable, egress was not so, and it was only after much pulling and pushing, and threats to amputate limbs to ease the task, that three colleagues managed to pull David free!

David had an interest in meteor observing which he developed after joining OASI. He attended OASI meteor watches and in mid-July 1974 began to assist Steve Flory, then director of the OASI Meteor Section, to organise meteor counts. In

September 1975, David took over from Steve as Director of the OASI Meteor Section. In this role he organised meteor counts for the next ten years, the last one being on 21 April 1984. The most successful meteor count during this period was on 13 December 1980, when David plus five other observers counted 281 Geminids including two spectacular fireballs of magnitude  $-5$ . Most meteor counts were held at Foxhall Heath or on the Orwell foreshore. As usual in the UK, the weather caused some problems, and records of the Perseids meteor count on 14 August 1982 show that the observers were clouded out and instead of counting meteors organised an impromptu barbeque on the Orwell foreshore!

As part of his meteor work, from the late 1970s David collated reports of fireballs. There were many interesting observations during this period. One particularly interesting incident occurred on 07 January 1977 when two boys in south-east Ipswich observed a very bright fireball moving southwards. The Ipswich *Evening Star* and Radio Orwell reported the fireball, describing it as red and yellow, moving steadily towards the River Orwell leaving a train of about one minute duration and emitting two loud bangs and a hissing sound. David received several subsequent reports, stimulated no doubt by the media interest in the fireball, although none appeared to confirm the fireball and in fact most appeared to relate to aircraft! However, in a triumph of optimism over experience, David, the two boys who observed the fireball, Roy Cheesman and his two sons hunted for possible meteorite debris left by the fireball along the foreshore of the River Orwell, but without success!

On 17 November 1979, David was invited to give a ten minute talk on Astronomy on the Patrick Eade programme on Radio Orwell. David's talk was a great success and he subsequently gave a brief talk on astronomy on Radio Orwell every Wednesday following the 5pm news.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, David was one of a small band of members of OASI who undertook annual trips to the North of Scotland to enjoy the dark skies there and to undertake observations of meteors and aurorae. The travellers' destinations were generally Durness on the north-west coast of Scotland or Orkney. Many of the trips were epic adventures, involving overnight drives of some 19 hours duration, spectacular scenery, tents blown away in gales of 30 hours' duration, minibus crashes, and some of the clearest and darkest skies that the observers had ever witnessed. (David remarked in his report on the August-September 1981 trip to Durness that the *coal sacks* in the Milky Way in Cygnus were easily visible.) It was during these trips that David developed a love of the remote wilderness of the north of Scotland, inspired largely by the spectacular scenery of the region.

David was elected to the OASI committee in 1977. He held the role of Public Relations Officer for several years, until in 1987 he was elected vice chairman. He remained vice chairman until the post was abolished in 1994.

In the mid-1990s, family responsibilities and other interests left David little time for Astronomy, and in 1995 he left OASI. Tragedy arrived in early 2004, when David was diagnosed with cancer. Investigations in Ipswich hospital indicated that the cancer was at an advanced stage. Later that year, perhaps inspired by memories of his trips to the north of Scotland in the 1970s and 1980s, David moved with his family to the remote village of Shawbost, on the west coast of the isle of Lewis.

On 28 August 2005, David lost his fight against cancer at home in Shawbost. He is survived by wife Elaine and son Scott.

James Appleton  
 Martin Cook  
 Roy Gooding

### OCCULTATIONS DURING OCTOBER

The table lists stellar occultations which occur during the month under favourable circumstances. The data relates to Orwell Park Observatory, but will be similar at nearby locations.

D	Date & Time		Lunar	Sun	Star	Star	Mag
R	(UT)		Phase	Alt (°)	Alt (°)		
D	12 Oct	19:45	0.72+	-25	17	Hip 105410	7.2
D	12 Oct	20:43	0.73+	-33	16	33 Cap	5.4
D	14 Oct	22:56	0.91+	-46	28	92 Aqr	4.9
D	24 Oct	23:46	0.50-	-50	16	19 Cnc	5.9
R		00:37		-48	24		

On 23 October, the track of a grazing occultation crosses East Anglia. The following table summarises the circumstances.

Date & Time	Lunar	Sun	Star	Star	Limb	Star	Mag
(UT)	Phase	Alt (°)	Alt (°)	Azi (°)			
23 Oct 03:27	0.68-	-29	64	149	N	54 Aur (double)	6.0

The graze track crosses East Anglia from North of Cambridge, South of Thetford, through Diss, South of Harleston, North of Halesworth and out to sea two kilometres South of Kessingland. The event will be seen (weather permitting!) as a total occultation from Orwell Park Observatory, with event times as follows: D 03:18, R 03:34 UT.

The following map illustrates the graze track over East Anglia.



James Appleton

## OASI COMMITTEE CONTACTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Kenneth J Goward FRAS	Chairman	☎	Press Publicity with the Secretary. Open Weekend.
Roy Gooding	Secretary	☎	Main point of Society Contact. Press Publicity with the Chairman. Observatory Decoration. Visits by potential new members.
Garry Coleman	Treasurer	☎	Finance. Supervision of Grant Applications.
James Appleton	Committee	☎	Committee Meeting Minutes. Web site.
Martin Cook	Committee	☎	Membership. Tomline Refractor Maintenance.
Neil Morley	Committee	☎	Equipment Curator.
Ted Sampson	Committee	☎	Tomline Refractor tutoring.
Eric Sims	Committee	☎	Newsletter
Mike Whybray	Committee	☎	Librarian. Workshops
Paul Whiting FRAS	Committee	☎	Visits by outside groups.
Bill Barton FRAS	Committee	☎	Safety & Security
Peter Richards	Co-opted		Lecture Meetings Email Distribution Lists

## DIARY FOR OCTOBER

MONDAY 3 <sup>rd</sup> October	SMALL TELESCOPE NIGHT PEGASUS Paddy O'Suliivan
WEDNESDAY 12 <sup>TH</sup> October	ASTRONOMY WORKSHIP From 7.45pm –Building and equipping a back garden observatory Mike Whybray
WEDNESDAY	OBSERVATORY CLUB NIGHTS August- 5 <sup>th</sup> 12 <sup>th</sup> 19 <sup>th</sup> 26 <sup>th</sup> Martin Cook
THURSDAY 13 <sup>TH</sup> October	OBSERVATORY VISIT BY OUTSIDE GROUP From 8pm – Time out for Men Paul Whiting FRAS
SATURDAY 19 <sup>th</sup> November	OASI COMMITTEE MEETING School classroom at base of the Observatory Tower From 8pm – ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND Ken Goward FRAS

### SOCIETY PRIMARY CONTACTS

CHAIRMAN Kenneth J Goward FRAS ☎ (daytime & evenings)  
 SECRETARY Roy Gooding ☎ (daytime) (evenings)  
 E-MAIL QUERIES [ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk)  
 Contact details for the full Committee may be found on the inside back page

Society Trustees  
 Roy Adams David Brown David Payne  
 Hon President  
 Professor Allan Chapman D.Phil MA FRAS