

Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

Registered Charity No. 271313

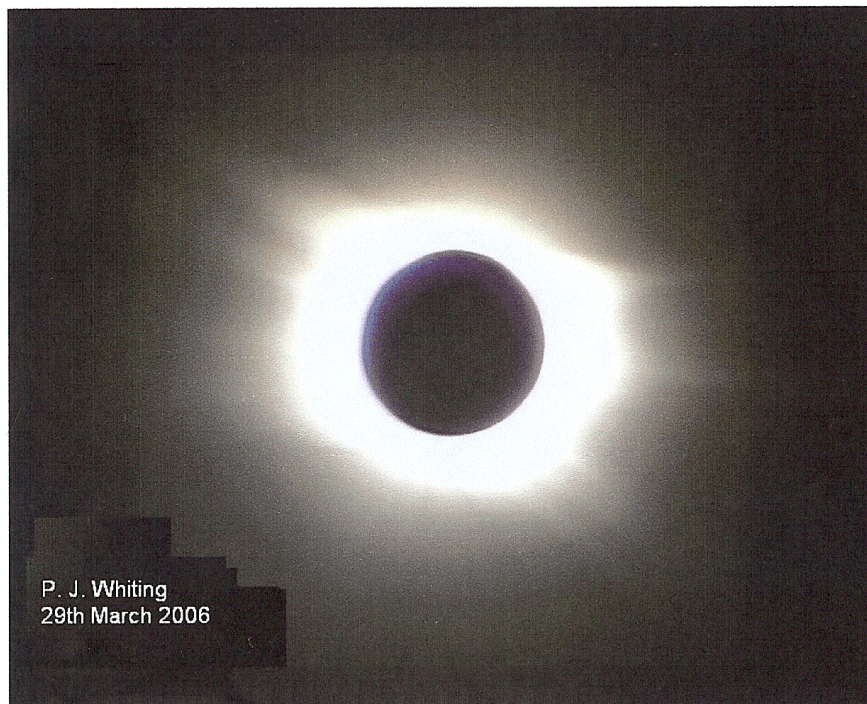
<http://www.oasi.org.uk>

ipswich:@ast.cam.ac.uk

NEWSLETTER MAY 2006

No.408

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P. J. Whiting
29th March 2006

Total Solar Eclipse Wednesday 29th March Paul Whiting

Society News (Roy Gooding)

1 Committee Meeting Saturday 17th June

The next Committee meeting will be held on Saturday 17th June, at the Methodist Church Hall, from 20:00. This is an open meeting and any one who is interested is invited to attend

2 Events for 2006

Meeting	Venue	Date
Norwich Observatory visit	Norwich AS observatory at Seething See below	Saturday 10 th June
BAA Exhibition Meeting	The Cavendish Laboratory Madingley Road Cambridge	Saturday 24 th June 11:00 to 18:00
Society Barbecue At Mike and Sue's garden	Newbourn Bucklesham Ipswich	Saturday 15 th July From around 14:00
Society Excursion to Herstmonceux	Excursion in May has been cancelled New date in September http://www.the-observatory.org/	New dates: Either Saturday 16 th or 23 rd September
Open Weekend		Provisional date Saturday and Sunday 30 th September, 1 st October
New series of Astronomy Workshop meetings	Not yet in the planning stage	
Christmas Meal	Levington Ship	Wednesday 13 th December

This event list will be updated through out the year

3 Access into the School Grounds an Observatory Tower

The gate code is [REDACTED]. If the Black door entrance at the base of the observatory tower is locked, you will have to phone someone in the observatory to let you in. My mobile number is [REDACTED]. (Roy Gooding)

4 2006 Excursion to Herstmonceux

I have cancelled the excursion for May due to insufficient support. I will try again with two new dates in September

- Either Saturday 16th or 23rd, depending on interest.

The excursion will be on the most popular date. As before the minimum number will be set to 30, however ideally this should be raised to between 40 and 50. Attendance is open to all and is not restricted to members only.

I have scraped the old list, and will be compiled a new one for these dates. If you would like to come on please contact me. As before, I will only book a coach if there is sufficient interest. Entrance payment will be left to individual members upon our arrival

5 Society's 40th Anniversary Year 2007
Some random thoughts open for discussion.

2007 will be the 40th anniversary year for the Orwell Astronomical Society. A number of events will be held throughout the year to celebrate this. At present, any plans are at a very preliminary stage

- Since the last Newsletter, a joint meeting with the BAA in January is in the preliminary planning stage.
- All events could be prefixed with "40th Anniversary"
- A society meal could be held during the year.
- A formal Astronomical Convention could be held.
- A more informal exhibition meeting could be held that is aimed more for the general public.

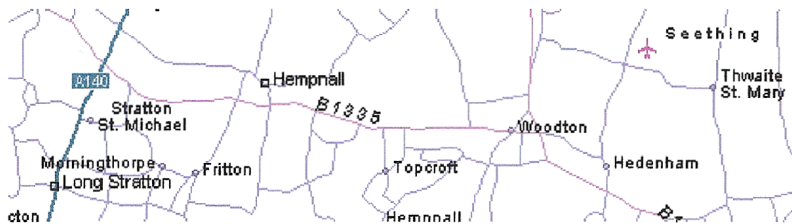
If you have any ideas that can be considered please contact me.

6 Visit to Norwich Astronomical Society's Observatory at Seething

Directions to the Observatory

- Leaving Ipswich along the A140
- Turn left on the B1135 for Bungay
- Turn right at Woodton to the B1332
- Turn 1st right
- Turn 1st right again. This lane should be Harveys Lane. It is sign posted to SEETHING OBSERVATORY, SEETHING INDUSTRIAL ESTATE.
- Continue down this twisty and rather narrow road for just over 1 mile. You come to a cross roads. Go straight over, into Toad Lane.

You will pass the old USAF Airfield control tower on the left. The observatory is about 200 yards further on the left.



The visit will be on Saturday 10th June. Paul Whiting is organising this visit to the Norwich AS observatory. Please contact Paul for more information.

7 Society Email Distribution list

Society information is often distributed at an earlier date than can be achieved by the monthly Newsletter. If you would like to be received society emails, please forward your name and email address to

8 Welcome to New Members

No new members have joined last month

9 Observing Projects form 2006

Many years ago meteor watching field trips were very popular. After a recent Wednesday evening discussion, it was decided to reintroduce a meteor watch later this year. One of the best Meteor displays to watch are the December Geminids

Night Sky (May)

All times GMT

Sun

The sun will be rising approximately between 04:30 to 03:40
 The sun will be setting approximately between 19:30 to 20:10

Moon

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

Mercury Mercury will be at superior conjunction on the 18th. In late May it will be visible for a short time in the North West sky after sunset It will be setting at about 21:00. Magnitude -10.

Venus Venus remains a prominent object, low down, in the pre-sunrise morning sky. Magnitude -4.0

Mars Mars moves in to Cancer this month, and will be setting at about 00:00 towards the end of the month. Magnitude is 1.6

Jupiter Jupiter is in Libra where it will be at opposition on the 4th. Magnitude -2.5

Saturn Saturn will be visible all night, setting at about 00:00 at the end of the month. Saturn is in Cancer at magnitude 0.3

Uranus Uranus is on Aquarius, and will be rising at about 01:00 at the end of the month. Magnitude 5.7

Neptune Neptune is in Capricornus, and will be rising at about 00:00 at the end of the month. Magnitude 7.8

Meteor Showers

Shower	Limits	Maximum	ZHR
η Aquarids	April 24 th to May 20 th	May 4 th	40
α Scorpids	April 20 th to May 19 th	April 27 th & May 12 th	5

Meteor source is the BAA Handbook

OCCULTATIONS DURING MAY

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.

Date	Time (UT)	D /R	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (d)	Star Alt (d)	Mag	Star
01 May	22:17:53	D	0.19+	-20	15	8.3	Hip 29628
01 May	22:29:08	D	0.19+	-20	14	8.0	ZC 952
02 May	21:40:36 22:37:28	D R	0.28+	-17 -21	27 19	5.8	47 Gem
02 May	22:24:27	D	0.28+	-20	21	7.4	Hip 34830
03 May	20:51:56	D	0.37+	-12	41	8.2	1930-1206-1
03 May	21:21:32	D	0.37+	-15	36	8.4	Hip 39528
03 May	22:58:37	D	0.38+	-21	21	8.1	ZC 1225
06 May	21:27:37	D	0.66+	-15	43	7.8	841-1345-1
06 May	23:28:34	D	0.66+	-21	27	8.3	ZC 1542
08 May	21:07:29	D	0.82+	-12	38	6.3	ZC 1716
09 May	23:58:13	D	0.89+	-20	23	6.7	ZC 1817
12 May	21:39:43	D	1.00+	-14	13	5.7	ZC 2134
29 May	20:39:38	D	0.08+	-5	17	8.4	1901-1419-1
29 May	21:18:34	D	0.08+	-9	12	6.7	ZC 1042
29 May	21:43:50	D	0.08+	-11	9	8.3	Hip 32777

James Appleton

5

The Libyan Eclipse, 29th March 2006

Paul Whiting *FRAS*

Once again Explorers did us proud, mounting a trip for 780 people to arrive at the same spot in the middle of the Libyan Sahara desert, some 500 km south east of Benghazi, in time for the eclipse. Travelling in convoy, 15 coaches, a petrol tanker, 2 ambulances and full police escort, we set off at 2am allowing ample time for the journey. We hadn't allowed for the time to fill each coach at the one petrol pump open at that time of the morning nor the numerous stops to allow slow coaches (!) to catch up. Ten hours later we arrived at the appointed desert site, but so had a large number of locals, so we travelled on another few kilometres, resulting in a mutiny – as there was only 10 minutes before first contact, not half enough time for the serious photographers amongst us to set up their equipment.

However the site was excellent, one infinite expanse of light coloured sand. So we set up our instruments, I was using the usual ancient but good Hi8 video camera with suitable lens modifications. Up came second contact. We had been briefed to look out for shadow bands (ripple shadow effects thought to be produced by differing air densities brought about by rapid temperature differentials just before and just after totality) and especially nice Bailey's Bead effects due to well placed deep valleys on the point of second and third contact. Sure enough the shadow band effects were spectacular. Better than I have ever seen before, although I did forget to look out for them after the total phase, many people saw them then too.

As we were very close to the centre line of eclipse, we actually had about 4 minutes and 2 seconds of totality. A nice length of time to look about you at other things happening, such as the level of darkness immediately above us but the bright ring of sky around the horizon. More importantly there was plenty of time to study the Sun's corona with binoculars, which can be a dodgy occupation when, like in Australia, there was only 27 seconds safe time. There were some really nice little flares visible during the first and last moments of eclipse. The chromosphere was also clearly visible. This is the outer layer of the sun's surface, not usually visible because of the much brighter, underlying photosphere.

There were large numbers of locals wandering around the site (and more annoyingly driving – causing dust clouds), they were being very friendly – chatting and taking photographs of us. Unfortunately this included flash photography during the total phase which impaired many people's shots.

6

Various planets were plain to see during the eclipse: Mercury (difficult), Venus (blindingly obvious) and Mars. Also earlier that morning, when we set off, Jupiter and Saturn were clearly visible.

All too soon the spectacular was over, and we were taken to the support site, where some groups even had a tent city set up in the desert. However there was a toilet block and some enterprising person had transported a lorry load of camels for us. Whether we were meant to ride them or eat them was unclear, but they did look cute all sat in the back of this open top truck.

Then came the trip home back to the boat. The words "never ending journey" spring to mind. 10 more hours in a coach totally devoid of any legroom whatsoever. I had difficulty walking for the rest of the trip.

The open-air facilities were also marvellous (you had to be there!), but who did take that photograph?

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Summary of Committee Meeting Held 25 March 2006

Present: Roy Gooding, Ted Sampson, James Appleton, Martin Cook, Neil Morley, Bill Barton, Eric Sims Garry Coleman

Apologies: Ken Goward, Paul Whiting, Mike Whybray, Pete Richards, Nicky Gillard

As Ken was in hospital, Roy Gooding chaired the meeting.

1. Chairman's Report – Roy Gooding

The Committee wished Ken a speedy and complete recovery.

The Committee decided that the matter of renewing the licence with Orwell Park School, which has been outstanding for some years, did not require urgent attention. The situation is covered by an agreement with the School to extend the previous licence until a new one is agreed. The Committee therefore put the matter on hold until later in the year, when it is expected that a major overhaul of the licence will need to be negotiated with the School to reflect all the changes of recent years.

2. Secretary's Report – Roy Gooding

Since the last committee meeting, Roy has received seven enquiries from people interested in joining OASI.

Roy has prepared the annual Charities Commission report. Following signature by a Society trustee he will forward the report to the Charities Commission.

3. Treasurer's Report – Garry Coleman

During 2006, OASI may be in a position to spend a small amount of money on equipment for use by its members. Anyone with suggestions/requests for purchases should contact any Committee member.

4. Membership – Martin Cook

Currently 102 members in total. 83 members from 2005 have renewed, and 19 are about to lapse their membership

5. Training and Workshops – Mike Whbray

The current series of Astronomy Workshops is going well. There is one more to come in the present season.

There is no programme of training in use of the Tomline Refractor at present, as there does not appear to be any demand.

6. Web Site – James Appleton

The Web site continues to act as a useful external “shop window” for OASI, generating a handful of enquiries about membership every month.

As always, James welcomes fresh material for the Web site from any members of OASI. Any photographs or reports of the recent solar eclipse would be most welcome (and thanks to those who have already provided their reports).

7. Equipment & Maintenance – Neil Morley

Neil is progressing with installation of an eyepiece cupboard in the OASI library. The cupboard will have a solid door and four adjustable shelves.

Members of OASI have reported a problem with the drive slipping on the Meade ETX. Neil will investigate whether any remedial action is required.

Neil is updating the OASI equipment list.

Work on the Millennium Telescope is currently on hold. Some minor work is required before Neil will organise a *first light* for the Society.

8. Security & Safety – Bill Barton

The clock driving the School’s security system appears to be running slow: the gates typically can be opened at 7:45pm rather than 7:30pm as specified. Bill will discuss with Orwell Park School.

Bill has arranged with the School for the Observatory to open for the partial solar eclipse on Wednesday 29 March.

9. Observing Projects

Potential observing projects for 2006:

- Solar eclipse on Wednesday 29 March (contact times at Orwell Park are 10:45 am – 12:25 pm; 27% obscuration).
- Meteor watch. (Subsequent to the Committee meeting, tentative arrangements have been made to observe the Geminids at their peak on the evening of 13-14 December. Details TBC.)
- Porrima (Gamma Virginis) periastron.
- Lunar occultation of the Pleiades, early hours of the morning on 04 December 2006.

10. Events

The Committee agreed to offer to host a BAA *Back to Basics* Workshop in January 2007. This would likely comprise talks and workshops during the day and a visit to Orwell Park Observatory during the evening. The event could be tied in to OASI’s 40th anniversary celebrations.

Mike Harlow has kindly offered to host the Summer BBQ again.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Saturday 17 June 2006, starting 8:00pm, in the Methodist Church Hall. As always, all members of OASI are welcome to attend.

More Information

Please contact any member of the committee if you would like any more information on the above committee meeting or any other aspect of the running of OASI.

James Appleton
15 April 2006

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. Social Activities.
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 School Lighting Liaison Email Distribution Lists

Diary for May

Monday	Small Telescope Observing Evenings Further meetings by arrangement only ☎ Paddy O'Sullivan		
Wednesday	Observatory Club Nights (Nebulae & Faint Objects Section) 3 rd , 10 th , 17 th , 24 th		
	☎	Home	Mobile
	Martin Cook Roy Gooding		

Society Primary Contacts				
	☎	Day	Evening	Mobile
Chairman	Kenneth Goward FRAS			
Secretary	Roy Gooding			
Email Queries Ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk				
Contact details for the full Committee may be found on the inside back cover				

Society Trustees

Roy Adams David Brown David Payne

Hon. President

Professor Alan Chapman D.Phil MA FRAS

☎ Observatory Meeting evenings only