



The Newsletter

of the
Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

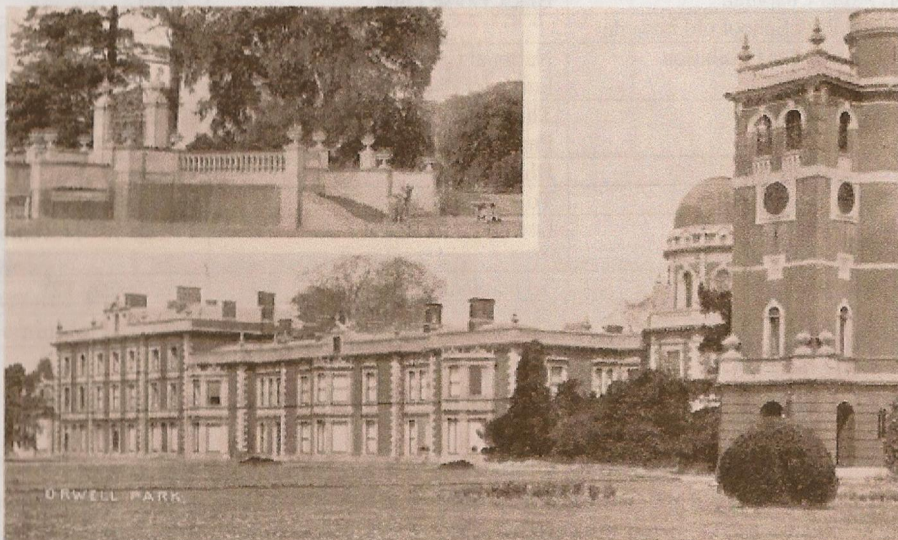


Registered charity No 271313

www.oasi.org.uk

2007 May

No 419



NOTHING CHANGES

The above postcard scene, so familiar to us all, can be dated with certainty to no later than June 1905. A colour tinted version of the card appeared circa 1915. All that has visually changed in the intervening 102 years is the disappearance of most of the shrubbery in front of the Observatory Tower and the gravel terrace adjacent to the main building is not yet installed, although there does appear to be a wide gravel path across the centre of the main lawn to the folly..

We are keen to discover more historic images of the Observatory – our 'Holy Grail' was once an image of Col George Tomline and John Isaac Plummer. We've moved on a little since discovering those and today's grail would be an image - or two - of the edifice under construction. Ken Goward recently obtained the postcard via eBay – and you never know what treasures may come to light in the future...

Society News (Roy Gooding)

1 Committee Meeting Saturday 21st July

The next Committee meeting will be held on Saturday 21st July, 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 2007

This event list will be updated through out the year

Meeting	Venue	Date
Lecture Meeting Dr. Allan Chapman	Methodist Church Hall Black Horse Lane	Friday 4 th May 20:00
Orwell Park School old boys day		Saturday 12 th 14:00
NSC Leicester Exhibition Meeting	National Space Centre Leicester	30 th June 11:00 to 18:00
Summer Barbecue	This event may be held at Orwell Park School	To be decided
FAS Convention	Birmingham	October
Autumn Workshop	To be planned	To be planned
Lecture Meeting Dr. David Whitehouse	Orwell Park School	Friday 16 th November
Christmas Meal	To be planned	Wednesday 12 th

3 Welcome to New Members

Vincent Maude

4 Access into the School Grounds and Observatory Tower

Please use the third gate into the school grounds, this is the gate behind the Gym. 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) alternatively the Observatory mobile is [REDACTED] during meeting hours.

5 Lecture Meeting Venue

Our town lecture venue is now at the Methodist Church, in Blackhorse Lane. The Church's car park in Black Horse Lane can accommodate about 30 cars. Alternatively there is a Park & Display car park at the top of Lane, next too the old Town Council Offices. This is about 100 yards form the church. Black Horse Lane has only one entrance, which is from Elm Street. This is just past the Police Station, if you are arriving from Civic Drive. The church car park is on the right, just past the Black Horse pub.

Meeting starts at 20:00, doors open at 19:30

6 Observing Projects for 2007

Graze Occultation's

Date	Star	Track Time
Tuesday 2 nd October	ZC797	01:34:12
Thursday 1 st November	ZC1221	01:53:24
Sunday 30 th December	μ Leo	03:04:37

Other Occultations

Pleiades	
Date	Time
6 th August	23:30
27 th October	23:30
21 st December	21:00

Venus	
Date	Time
18 th June	14:03

Meteor Watches

Shower	Maximum Date	Moon Age	Observing Date
Perseids	August 13 th	1 day	Saturday 11 th
Geminids	December 14 th	5 days	Saturday 15 th

7 Observing Proposals for Wednesday Evenings

This idea came about after a discussion with Martin Cook. The Small Telescope meeting evenings, for several years, have used a theme of observing a specific constellation. The Wednesday evening meetings, in recent years, have become mostly general observing sessions. In the past when Martin Cook and Dave Payne started their Wednesday evenings, back in the summer of 1978, every evening had a specific name, eg Luna, Double Stars and Planetary For the newer members in the 1970's and 1980's the observatory was open 4 / 5 times a week.

Wednesday evenings had been the Nebulae & Faint Objects Section. We propose that this name should now be reinstated. What Martin suggested was that interested members could find any Messier object they wished with their own equipment, and then find it for members at the observatory.

Night Sky (May)

(Times GMT)

The Moon

Full	Last Quarter	New	First Quarter
2 nd	10 th	16 th	23 rd

Object	Date	2 Times		Mag.	Notes
		Rise	Set		
Sun	1	04:36	19:29		
	30	03:52	20:14		
Mercury	1	04:36	19:16	-1.1	Mercury is at superior conjunction on the 3 rd .
	30	05:08	22:17		
Venus	1	06:18	23:32	-4.1	Venus remains very prominent in the evening sky
	30	06:56	23:41		
Mars	1	03:17	14:26	0.9	Mars will be moving into Pisces this month.
	30	01:57	14:38		
Jupiter	1	22:40	06:39	-2.5	Jupiter is in Ophiuchus
	30	20:26	04:29		
Saturn	1	11:19	02:29	0.4	Saturn is Leo, and remains well placed for observation this month
	30	09:29	00:33		
Uranus	1	03:11	14:18	5.7	Uranus is in Aquarius
	30	01:14	12:26		
Neptune	1	02:21	11:53	7.8	Neptune is in Capricornus
	30	00:23	09:55		

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
Ophiuchids	May 19 th to July	June 9 th June 19 th	5

Meteor source is the BAA Handbook

Open Weekend March 2007

Our annual public Open Weekend was held on March 24th and 25th this year. The weather was only partially with us this year. Saturday evening remained completely cloudy all the time we were open. However some 20 optimistic visitor did arrive. As recompense we mentioned that could return on the Sunday evening if the weather improved without any further charges.

The weather on Sunday evening was a total contrast to that on the Saturday. The skies were clear. Four observation sites were in use:

- The Tomline telescope
- Small telescopes on the observatory balconies
- John Wainwright site up his telescope beside the School's Cricket pavilion
- Naked eye and binocular observing on the School's playing field.

The numbers of visitors was not all that great, with an estimation of about 60. However more individual time could be given to the visitors. I invited one of my work colleagues to the event and he arrived with his daughter on the Sunday. Speaking to him the following morning gave me some interesting feedback. It is not very often that we can question open weekend visitors the next day.

The principle feedback was:

- He was on site for about 2 hours.
- He thought the entrance fee was not excessive. (We had increased the entrance fee this year)
- He enjoyed the evening.
- He also met up with some old work colleagues.

Finally I would like to thank all members who were able to attend and give a hand. On the Saturday, members out numbered visitors.

Roy Gooding

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	UT	D R	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (d)	Star Alt (d)	Mag	Star
20 May	21:05:41	D	0.21+	-9	25	3.6	Kappa Gem
	21:59:10	R		-14	17		
21 May	21:47:29	D	0.30+	-13	24	6.7	ZC 1304
25 May	21:22:05	D	0.69+	-10	32	7.3	Hip 57306

There is also a lunar occultation of Saturn during May. Conditions are not ideal, as both the disappearance and reappearance events occur during astronomical twilight. The following table provides details. As above, the data relates to Orwell Park Observatory, but will be similar at nearby locations.

Date	UT	D R	Lunar Phase	Sun Alt (deg)	Planet Alt (deg)	Mag	Planet
22 May	19:10:13	D	0.39+	5	48	0.5	Saturn
	20:18:07	R		-4	40		

James Appleton

SOME NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

As some of you will have undoubtedly noticed, this month's events diary is somewhat leaner than of late and you may be assured that has more to do with the onset of the lighter evenings than any lack of society momentum. Yes, I know in recent years even the winter nights have been getting lighter (!), but the back page of this month's newsletter is not a fair measure of what has actually been going on within OASI...

OBSERVATORY OPERATING LICENCE

Following our much-anticipated and constructive meeting with the school business manager and one of the school governors back in February – and at their invitation – we have formally submitted our proposals for a revised and much simplified Operating Licence for the Orwell Park Observatory. Much consultation and discussion took place at Committee level and with some of our more active and regular observatory attendee members, from which the draft proposal has evolved. A number of members made significant and useful suggestions, but it would be remiss of me not to mention in particular the sterling effort by Dr James Appleton in actually wording the great bulk of the new licence and David Payne from our Trustees who has run his expert eye over the proposals and made sensible and positive amendments to same.

The business manager (Simon Dodsworth) will now review our proposals and we expect the document to be considered by the next school governor's meeting in June. You will, of course, be kept fully informed of progress and at this stage I am reasonably confident that the school's reply will be such that we would not need to call an Extraordinary General Meeting to discuss any significant changes in our use of or practices at the Observatory. A copy of the proposed licence and my covering explanatory letter will be made available for member's inspection on the clubroom notice board.

SLAVERY AND ASTRONOMY

Apart from slaving away at the eyepiece or keyboard, there thankfully cannot be many astronomy connections to the vile institution of slavery, the beginning of the end of which came about with the passing of the Atlantic Slave Trade Abolition Act of 1807. We do have a local one to be proud of, however. A primary driving force behind the act was by Thomas Clarkson, who came to farm 350 acres at Playford Hall from 1816 until his death in 1846. Clarkson was a major influence on the young George Airy and largely by his good offices, brought about Airy's admission to Trinity College Cambridge and towards an illustrious career leading to his becoming the 7th and arguably the most influential of the Astronomers Royal. Moreover, Airy never forgot a friend and eventually designed the Clarkson commemorative obelisk at Playford churchyard, where the two family burial plots are adjacent to each other – Airy and Clarkson at rest side by side. On the bi-centenary day (25th March) it was my honour and privilege to represent OASI at a very special commemoration, hosted by the Wardens of St Mary's Church Playford and the Innes family of Playford Hall. The event was attended by no less than 50 of Clarkson's direct descendants, the leaders of Suffolk County, Suffolk Coastal and Ipswich Borough Councils, members of the Ipswich Caribbean club, the Rastafarian temple in London, the Gt Gt grandson of William Wordsworth (a life long friend of Clarkson and latterly Airy himself) and not least by OASI Hon members James Airy and Elizabeth Amati-Airy. The Airy family

have recently funded the refacing and recutting of the wording on the family headstones, which looked stunning in the gorgeous spring sunshine the day was blessed with.

Should you be short of something to do – and if you are partial to that kind of activity – I can recommend a short ride over to Playford to see the stones, or to pick up a copy of the illustrated biographical leaflets pertaining to Airy and Clarkson now available from the church.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY (IYA2009)

The year 2009 marks the 400th anniversary of the first use of the telescope by Galileo (albeit a number of historians dispute the notion that Galileo was the first man to do so) and has been globally designated the ‘International Year of Astronomy’. Participating countries will have their own coordinator through the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and thence back to the UN. Within the UK the year will be coordinated from the IAU to the amateur astronomical movement via the Federation of Astronomical Societies (FAS). The FAS would like local societies input on what they feel that the FAS member societies as a collective group should be doing towards the event. That obviously includes OASI and, again, we have already begun committee level discussion towards that goal. Thus far we have thought along the following lines:

- ‘Sidewalk Astronomy’ – telescopes in Ipswich town centre, to show the night sky to the public?
- Astronomy outreach packages for local schools?
- An Open Weekend at Orwell Park School, including a major exhibition which could perhaps be extended over several days or a whole week?

Obviously the above suggestions, if acted upon, would require a great deal of development with the school, Ipswich and Suffolk County Councils – and perhaps even a security company to provide ‘minders’ to safeguard those of us in the town centre on a lively Friday or Saturday evening!

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FROM THE WHOLE OF THE OASI MEMBERSHIP WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED – please contact me or any member of the Committee.

Further information on IYA2009 may be found at <http://www.astronomy2009.org/>

OASI 40TH ANNIVERSARY PRESIDENTIAL LECTURE

As indicated elsewhere in this issue and in last month’s newsletter, Allan Chapman will be paying us a visit on **Friday 4th May** at the Methodist Church Halls, Blackhorse Lane, Ipswich – 7.45 for 8pm.

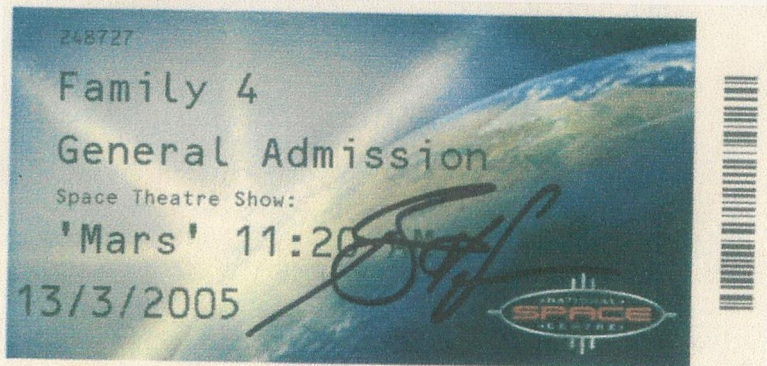
Given the significance of the year, Allan will present another of his wonderfully interesting talks on this special occasion detailing ‘*That Clubbable Passion – the Amateur Astronomical Society*’ – a title taken from his groundbreaking book., ‘The Victorian Amateur Astronomer’ The invitation has been extended to neighboring astronomical societies, along with several well-known local astronomers who are not OASI members. Please make an effort to come along for the evening to wave the OASI flag – the lecture will be in the capacious main church and we can seat up to 200 souls if needed. By all means you are welcome to bring along your friends or family – refreshments available – it’ll be a goodun!!

A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL SPACE CENTRE, LEICESTER

by Tina Hammond

One day whilst browsing the internet, my son Lindsay and I visited the National Space Centre's web site. We checked out the kids zone, answered a few questions, took a virtual tour and clicked off.

Imagine our surprise when a few weeks later a complimentary family ticket – worth £28 - came popping through our letter box. We had won an online competition!! The ticket was only valid on one date, so Howard took time off work and we motored up to Leicester, arriving at 11 am.



Ticket with Dr Barnard Harris autograph

Even before entering the building, Lindsay was instantly thrilled to see a genuine USSR Soyuz space capsule (the only one in western Europe, I understand) visible through the windows, snaking up the by the stairwells. Myself – I was thirsty!

The beauty of being Privileged Guests immediately manifested itself by our being escorted through to book with no queuing - all free with the ticket - ourselves into four fixed time activities (Mars Imax, Bernard Harris, Fizzy Flyers, Stardome).

Our first appointment was almost immediately in the Space Theatre, which was showing a very impressive 3D Imax Mars presentation, and was highly enjoyable (I ticked it as v v v good on my feedback form!), making a change from the standard star-based shows.

At last there was time to relax and enjoy a refreshing cup of tea in the very reasonably priced - particularly for a captive audience – Satellite Bar self-service cafeteria.

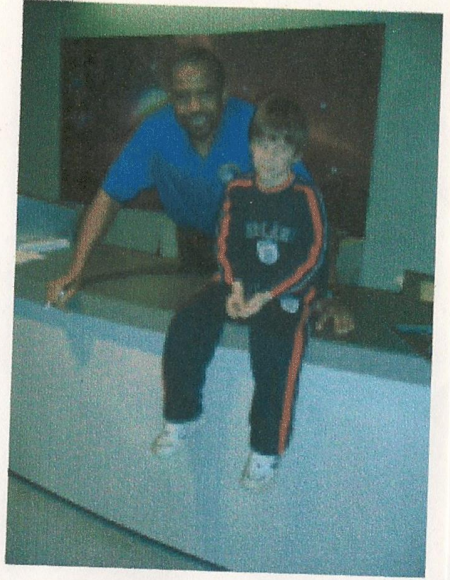
Next on our agenda was a 45 minute talk by Dr Bernard Harris, the first black astronaut to do a space walk. I was most surprised – perhaps naively - when he told us that when he was training the only way to achieve zero gravity was actually to go into space and do the 35 second walk there... It seemed incredible that man has not yet managed to make a machine that would simulate that on earth. It demonstrates just how strong our gravitational pull is, and how much we take it for granted.

First becoming interested in space travel when he was just eight years old, Dr Harris's heroes are – perhaps predictably – Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. He was very enthusiastic about his subject, and told us that he has a BSc in Biology and also one in Medicine, and was selected by NASA to be their in-flight surgeon in 1990. He became a fully fledged astronaut in 1991, and was the Payload Commander on the first Russian/American space program. Between 1991 and 1995, when he did his last space flight, he has managed to clock up nearly 29 hours and 3,000,000 miles in space!! Since 1995 he has obtained an MSc in Biomedical Sciences. He described doing a space walk as 'liberating'.

Lindsay thought he was wonderful and later had his picture taken with him, together with his talking Astro-Monkey, which says 'Houston we have a problem [fart]! Dr Harris (unsurprisingly) said he had 'never seen one of those'.



Thor



Lindsay & Dr Barnard Harris



Lindsay & Howard in rocket tower

Dinner was excellent, a good range of food for all tastes and appetites, and again, very well priced.

There were half a dozen different galleries available for our delectation, each as different from the other as is possible within a broadly similar subject.

Into Space deals with all hardware involved in space missions, from rockets to food.

Exploring The Universe is self explanatory, and covers everything from black holes to the age of the universe, etc.

The Planets is not only about the solar system but not only has a piece of Moon rock, bought back by Apollo 17, but also a decent sized Martian meteorite.



Fizzy Flyers

Observing Earth discusses terribly mundane but vital subjects that affect our everyday lives, such as telecommunications and, er, the weather.

Space Now is as close to interactivity as is possible and gives the latest news on all things connected to space and travel thereof.

Satellite Station is a simulation of a satellite, with all the complicated controls at your disposal!

Making our way upwards through the three decks of the five floor, 42 metre high Rocket Tower, which houses the largest rockets at the NSC, we explored the exhibitions and played with the interactive activities on display. On the top deck is the Satellite Zoo, a collection of various satellites.

The 65 feet high PGM17 THOR (manufactured from the mid 1950's to 1963), the USA's first Intermediate Range Ballistic



Me with Dr Bernard Harris & Farting Astro Monkey

Missile and ancestor of all Delta launch vehicles still used today, is on display in the Rocket Tower.

Outside is one of the British Blue Streak ballistic missile launch vehicles, manufactured from 1955. The ballistic mission project was cancelled in 1960 but the rockets were used as the first stage of the European satellite launcher, Europa, until 1972, when the project was cancelled.

I suspect that should we return, there will be something on the latest Phoenix rockets, as there were embryonic displays in the Rocket Tower with 'Phoenix' tantalisingly emblazoned on them.

To add atmosphere to, and accompany, the Festival of Science and Culture –the then theme of the special activities on – were a Caribbean band and the colourful dancers associated with that part of the world.

Lindsay attended his hour long Fizzy Flyer School after dinner and made a rocket! Ingredients: Take one 35mm plastic film case (rapidly becoming obsolete), decorate with cardboard wings and pointed nose, place half an Alka Seltzer in the bottom (where the film would go in), add a spoon of vinegar, put seal in, and sit back and just watch it go! A couple landed on the roof, much to the chagrin of the children involved.

Our final visit of the day, to the Stardome, was a disaster and we wished we had not allowed ourselves to be talked out of the earlier slot by the member of staff who did the booking. Due to lack of communication between staff, it ran nearly an hour late, and was much shorter than usual, having to be cut short very abruptly due to the place closing. I personally detest queues, so I additionally found it very frustrating just standing around idly for ages.


No trip out is complete without bringing home some sort of tatt, so a visit to the Cargo Bay shop saw Lindsay start on what has been a (seemingly) lifetime fascination with packs of DIY plastic rockets. I don't know how many sets I have bought him since then!!

The NSC is a great place, both for children and adults, and after visiting places such as this and Herstmonceux, I find it really frustrating that we do not have such good educational places near us to take kids to. I guess that's why all the parties Lindsay gets invited to are at Laser King and Wherstead Ski slope, and not stimulating places like this!

OASI Committee Contacts & Responsibilities

Kenneth J. Goward FRAS	Chairman	☎		Press & Publicity with Secretary.
Roy Gooding	Secretary	☎		MAIN POINT OF SOCIETY CONTACT Press Publicity with Chairman. Observatory Decoration. Visits by potential new members.
Mike Harlow	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.
Peter Richards	Committee	☎		Lecture Meetings. School Lighting liaison. Email Distribution Lists.
Eric Sims	Committee	☎		Newsletter.
Mike Whybray	Committee	☎		Librarian & Workshops.
Paul Whiting FRAS	Committee	☎		Visits by outside groups.
Bill Barton FRAS	Committee	☎		Safety & Security.

Diary for May

<p>Wednesday 2nd 9th 16th 23rd 30th FROM 8PM</p>	<p><u>MAIN OBSERVATORY CLUB NIGHTS</u> Primary Observational targets: Nebulae and faint objects. ☎ Martin Cook [redacted] (mobile) [redacted] ☎ Roy Gooding [redacted] (mobile) [redacted]</p>
<p>FRIDAY 4th 7.45pm for 8pm <u>At the Methodist Church Halls</u> <u>Blackhorse Lane</u> <u>Ipswich</u></p>  <p><i>An OASI 40th Anniversary Event</i></p>	<p><u>OASI 3RD PRESIDENTIAL LECTURE</u></p> <p>OASI Hon President and Internationally renowned Astronomy Historian, TV Presenter and Author, PROFESSOR ALLAN CHAPMAN will present a lecture entitled;</p> <p><i>'That Clubbable Passion; the Amateur Astronomical Society'</i></p> <p><u>All OASI members and their guests are cordially invited to attend.</u></p> <p>Refreshments will be available.</p> <p>☎ Ken Goward [redacted]</p>

Society Primary Contacts

Chairman: Kenneth J. Goward FRAS ☎ [redacted] (daytime & evenings)
Secretary: Roy Gooding ☎ [redacted] (daytime) [redacted] (evenings)
E-Mail queries ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk

Society Trustees

Mr Roy Adams Mr David Brown Mr David Payne

Society Honorary President

Professor Allan Chapman D.Phil MA FRAS

Observatory Telephone Number

Meeting nights only

NB

OASI has a **members' email distribution list**. The list is used to send reminders about society events and astronomical and society 'news flashes'. It's also a great way for members to report observations or send anything of interest to other OASI members.

If you are an OASI member, and you'd like to join, send an email to the society email address ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk and please include your first name and surname, as given on your membership application form or membership card, in the message.

OASI PRESIDENTIAL LECTURE

'That Clubbable Passion; the Amateur Astronomical Society'

In our 40th Anniversary year, OASI members and their guests are cordially invited to attend the 3rd Presidential Lecture to be presented to the society by

Professor Allan Chapman
of Wadharn College, Oxford

At

The Methodist Halls
Blackhorse Lane
Ipswich

Friday 4th May 7.45 pm for 8pm Light
Refreshments will be available