



The Newsletter



of the Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

Registered charity No 271313

www.oasi.org.uk

2010 MARCH

No 450



ASTRONOMY IN THE PARK

Our treasurer feeling the chill on his return from Dubai!
Christchurch Park on 20th February.

Society News (Roy Gooding)

1 Committee Meeting Saturday 10th April

NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

All members are invited to attend the next Committee meeting, on Saturday 10th April.
Start time 20:00. Venue Methodist Church Hall

2 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. The gate code is on the back of your membership card

3 Welcome to New Members

Bruce Bysouth Richard Hudson Richard Stansfield Guy Bennett
Allison Price

4 Events Programme for 2010

This is a provisional event list, which will be updated through out the year

Meeting	Venue	Date
Astronomy Workshop Sir Patrick Moore's house Paul Whiting	Nacton Village hall	Wednesday 3 rd March
Astronomy Workshop Where did our Universe Come From Mike Whybray	Nacton Village hall	Wednesday 7 th April
Lecture by Nick James: An Automated Video Meteor Detection System	Methodist Church Halls, in Blackhorse Lane	Friday 19 th March 20:00
Orwell Country Park "Star Party"	Orwell County Park	Saturday 20 th March
Spring Star Party Organised by the Norwich Astronomical Society	Kelling Heath, Norfolk	Thursday 15 th April to Sunday 18 th April
Lecture Dr. Alan Chapman Thomas Harriot, Galileo and the First Telescopic Astronomers	Orwell Park School	Friday 23 rd April 20:00
Astronomy in the Park (Solar Observing)	Reg Driver Centre Christchurch Park	23 rd & 24 th May

1 st option		
Astronomy in the Park (Solar Observing) 2 nd option if previous weekend is cloudy	Reg Driver Centre Christchurch Park	29 th & 30 th May
Summer Barbecue		TBA
Perseid Meteor watch	The "Dip" Felixstowe	Saturday 14 th August
Autumn Equinox Sky Camp 2010 Organised by Loughton Astronomical Society with the support of the SPA	Kelling Heath, Norfolk	Monday 6 September until Friday 17 September
Lecture by Tom Boles: Discovering Supernovae - Motivation & Rewards	Methodist Church Halls, in Blackhorse Lane	Friday 22 October 20:00
Open Weekend		16 th / 17 th October Provisional Date Waiting for confirmation from the School
Geminid Meteor watch	The "Dip" Felixstowe	Saturday 11 th December
Christmas Meal		Wednesday 15 th December

5 Dr. Alan Chapman's Lecture

Alan Chapman's lecture venue has been moved to Orwell Park School. Entrance will be by the School front door. Directions will be given in the entrance hall.

6 Public Outreach Observing Events for 2010

Orwell Country Park "Star Party" 20th March

Set up time	TBA
Event Open	19:00
Event Close	TBA

This will be at the Orwell County Park and is a repeat of the successful meeting we held there last spring. This is being co-ordinated by Paul Whiting.

Moon transits the meridian	15:40
Saturn rises	18:08
Sun sets	18:18
Venus sets	19:47

Astronomy in the Park (Solar Observing)

After a successful event in May last year, this event will be repeated again in May.

Night Sky (March)

All times GMT

Moon

3rd Quarter	New Moon	1st Quarter	Full Moon
7 th	15 th	23 rd	30 th

Object	Date	Times		Mag	Notes
		Rise	Set		
Sun	1	06:51	17:44		
	31	05:42	18:36		
Mercury	1	06:47	16:32	-1.0	Mercury will below Venus towards the end of the month
	31	06:03	20:13		
Venus	1	07:21	18:45	-3.9	Venus is now a very prominent object in the evening sky
	31	06:20	20:23		
Mars	1	13:21	06:08	-0.6 to 0.2	Mars is now receding from us. Its brightness reduces considerable
	31	11:40	04:06		
Jupiter	1	06:58	17:33		Jupiter is too close the sun this month to be observed
	31	05:12	16:16		
Saturn	1	19:31	07:53	0.5	Saturn is at opposition the 22 nd
	31	17:20	05:51		
Uranus	1	07:22	19:04		Uranus is too close the sun this month to be observed
	31	05:27	16:16		
Neptune	1	06:30	16:19		Neptune is too close the sun this month to be observed
	31	04:34	14:26		

OCCULTATIONS DURING MARCH

The table lists lunar 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
19 Mar	18:47:54	D	0.14+	-7	33	7.2	Hip 12319
19 Mar	20:42:07	D	0.15+	-24	17	5.7	mu Ari
20 Mar	21:34:56	D	0.23+	-29	19	6.7	ZC 524
22 Mar	20:22:34	D	0.43+	-20	47	7.0	ZC 835
22 Mar	23:16:33	D	0.44+	-36	22	7.1	Hip 26691
23 Mar	21:53:14	D	0.55+	-30	41	7.0	ZC 1014
24 Mar	00:59:14	D	0.56+	-35	14	6.8	ZC 1033
24 Mar	22:42:48	D	0.66+	-34	40	7.3	Hip 37278
27 Mar	01:59:20	D	0.87+	-30	20	3.5	omi Leo
	02:41:12	R		-26	14		
29 Mar	02:20:02	D	0.98+	-27	21	4.8	87 Leo

At 21:12 UT on 26 March, there is a grazing lunar occultation of the magnitude 5.0 star 5 Leo (xi Leo). The graze track passes within a few kilometres of Ipswich. Please contact me if you are interested in observing this phenomenon.

James Appleton

Chairman's Chat

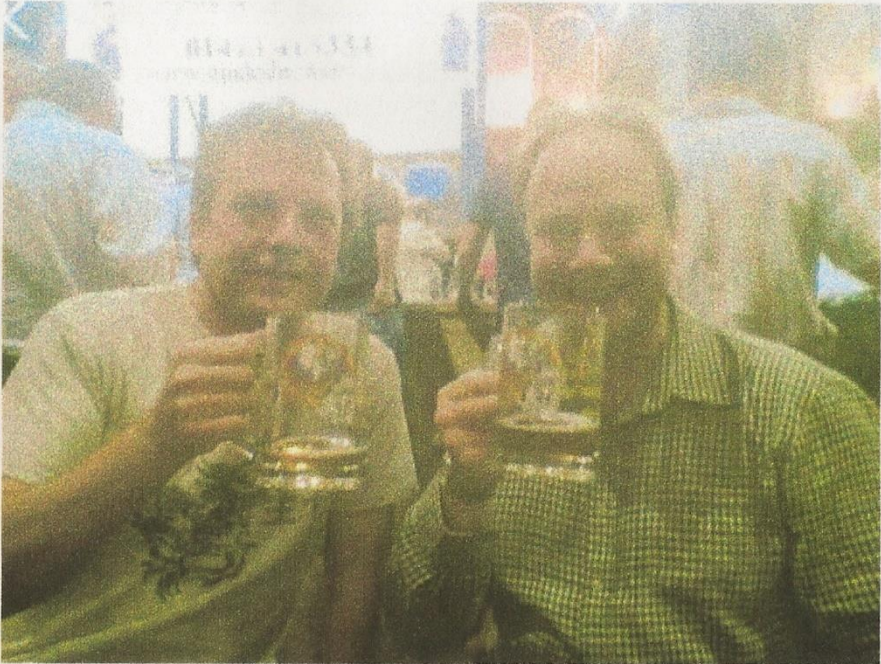
We're now well into the start of the new year. The weather hasn't been too kind recently as many of us only know too well. There haven't been as many clear evenings to enjoy the night sky views. However the good news is Mars is making its presence felt and is worth a look. If any of you have any observations or images of Mars, or indeed other objects, please pass them onto the magazine and the website.

For those of you who prefer armchair / internet astronomy, and I'm not criticising it in any way, one of our members, Dee McCleavy drew my attention to an interesting project. How many of you have heard of the Galaxy Zoo? It's definitely not the latest computer game but is all about characterising galaxies on the internet. The Galaxy Zoo contains almost a quarter of a million galaxies imaged using a robotic telescope called the Sloan Digital Sky Survey. In order to understand better how these galaxies and our own formed, the Galaxy Zoo team need help in classifying them according to their shapes, a task still better performed by the human brain than a computer. The web site is <http://www.galaxyzoo.org/> Why not take a look and pass on your experiences to the OASI Journal?

Thanks to those of you who attended and supported the AGM. This year, my number one priority is progressing the operating licence and building the relationship with the school with a view to refurbishing the observatory. Over many years Society members have expended huge efforts in the preservation of a unique part of our heritage. How many other working Victorian observatories have survived? Let's not forget that when OASI first moved into Orwell Park in 1965, the observatory was virtually derelict. Its testament to the blood sweat and tears of those original members who had the vision and dedication to bring the observatory back from the brink. This involved countless sackfuls of concrete, cement, resin, breeze blocks, buckets of water, plaster, metalwork, and many journeys up and down the spiral staircase, hard work over many hours and many years. From the bottom of my heart, a very big thankyou. At the AGM there was general agreement the situation has got to the position where some very serious assistance will be required, largely outside the capabilities of the Society. I take this very seriously. Two specific areas include water ingress in the dome around the transit area where the exterior guttering has failed, and the balcony doors/windows which are decaying. Meetings have been arranged with the school, and I will keep you posted with progress. If any member has any experience of applying for funding/grants, especially historic buildings, please do

get in touch with me. I value your opinion.

We have a growing list of events this year, so why not come along and take part? If you can help in any way, please contact any of the committee members. Finally, if you have any suggestions about the running of OASI. I'm always open to new ideas. Clear skies for 2010!



Left to Right Mike Whybray (Workshops and Library), Neil Morley. "Even the most foolish will recognise this distinctively golden beer, only the finest hops are in our dry store but some maniac has tipped them all in, creating an explosion for the senses". Words by Neil Morley.

Astronomy in the Park (Star Party)

Roy Gooding

This event was the first of our new public outreach observational meetings for the year. They are a legacy of the meetings we held last year for IYA. The first Astronomy in the Park events were staged last year, as part of our contribution for IYA. Both were held in day light hours to observe the sun. After the clouded out event in November, Sam Pollard, Christchurch Park's manager, asked if an evening observing session could be arranged. Due to the vagaries of the English climate 3 dates were selected, one in January and two in February. The weather caused the abandonment of the January meeting. The next scheduled date was on 20th February. This public event would also comprise of two firsts:

- This would be the first time we had run a public, evening, observing session in the centre of Ipswich.
- As far as any one knew, no astronomical equipment to observe the night sky had ever been set-up in Christchurch Park before.

Sam Pollard and his staff looked after the registration of the visitors and directed them to the observing site. We were the hosts for the evening

Saturday 20th arrived with blue skies, which bid well for the evening. By midday a few fluffy cumulus clouds started making an appearance, these are fine weather clouds so caused no concern. However the cloud cover continued to increase until early evening, when more than 90% of the sky had been obscured. The forecast spoke of frost before midnight, so there should be clear skies sometime.

Members started waiting at the park's Westerfield Road entrance at about 18:10. A short time later, Sam Pollard arrived and opened the gates. We made our way to the top of the hill, parking under the trees near the water fountain. At this time the skies were more cloud than clear. We commenced to set up our equipment.

Three telescopes and one pair of tripod mounted binoculars were in use:

John Wainwright - 16" Dobsonian reflector

Roy Gooding - 120mm refractor

Roy Gooding - 140mm Maksutov-Cassegrain

James Appleton - Binoculars

A little after 19:00 Sam, having met the visitors at the entrance gate, brought them over to us. There were about 40 visitors. Luckily, by this time the cloud was showing signs of dispersing. The moon and Mars were visible in the gaps. An hour or so later the skies were completely clear of cloud. Undertaking any visual astronomy from the centre of any town does limit what can be seen. The limiting magnitude was only about 3, with the moon washing out a lot of the sky. The brighter Messier objects were visible.

Objects shown to the visitors included:

Moon

Mars

M45

M42

M44 (Beehive Cluster)

The International Space Station, followed by an undocked Space Shuttle was observed, as they drifted over. There will not be many more occasions to see these two spacecraft together.

One of the visitors brought along his 100mm terrestrial telescope, which he primarily used for bird watching. He mentioned that he had never pointed it at the moon. He was suitably surprised and impressed with what he was able to see. A little later he had attached a digital camera and proceeded to take pictures of the moon!

We had hoped to show the visitors Saturn, before they left but unfortunately Saturn would not be rising to after 20:00. It would not have risen above the low atmospheric murk and the park tree line until well after 21:30. The last of the visitors left a little before 21:00 with no sight of Saturn. On arriving home with a clear eastern horizon, Saturn was well placed to observe.

Other members who were able to attend were: Paul Whiting, Neil Morley, Eric Sims, Pete & Nicky Richards, Tina Hammond

Astronomy Workshops

Doors open at 7:30pm.

Workshops START at 7:45pm

Venue: NACTON VILLAGE HALL IP10 0EU

Date	Event	Run by...
3rd March 2010 Doors open 7.30pm Start 8.0pm	Sir Patrick Moore's House At Nacton village Hall	Paul Whiting
7th April 2010	Where did our universe come from? I'll be talking about the evidence for (and against) the Big Bang theory of the history of the universe, and asking the questions: Where did it all come from? Was there anything before the Big Bang, and what if anything can we know about that?	Mike Whybray

Mike Whybray

Workshops organiser

 (Mobile)
(Home)

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Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich) Guest Speaker Lecture Series for 2010

Friday, 19th March 2010

8pm @ the Methodist Halls, Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk.

Nick James,

British Astronomical Association

"An automated video meteor detection system"

Note the Venue change for this talk only

Friday, 23rd April 2010

8pm @ the Drangery, **Orwell Park School**, Nacton, Suffolk.

Dr Allan Chapman,

Wadham College - University of Oxford

OASI Presidential Address 2010:

"Thomas Harriot, Galileo and other Telescopic Astronomers"

Friday, 22nd October 2010

8pm @ the Methodist Halls, Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk.

Tom Boles,

World-record-breaking Supernovae Discoverer

'Discovering Supernovae - Motivation & Rewards'

OASI Committee Contacts & Responsibilities

Neil Morley	Chairman	☎	
Roy Gooding	Secretary	☎	MAIN POINT OF SOCIETY CONTACT Press Publicity with Chairman. Observatory Decoration. Visits by potential new members.
Paul Whiting FRAS	Treasurer	☎	Finance. Supervision of Grant Applications. Visits by outside groups. IYA 2009 Coordinator
James Appleton	Committee	☎	Committee Meeting Minutes. Web Site.
Martin Cook	Committee	☎	Membership. Tomline Refractor Maintenance.
Peter Richards	Committee	☎	Lecture Meetings. Email Distribution Lists.
Eric Sims	Committee	☎	Newsletter.
Mike Whybray	Committee	☎	Librarian & Workshops.
Bill Barton FRAS	Committee	☎	Safety & Security.
John Wainwright	Committee	☎	Forward planning & Strategy Equipment Curator

DIARY for MARCH

<p>Monday 8th & 22nd From 8pm</p>	<p><u>SMALL TELESCOPES OBSERVING NIGHTS AT THE OBSERVATORY</u> Main observing targets: Mars, Saturn, Cancer M44, Leo—Doubles and M objects.</p> <p>☎ Paddy O'Sullivan [REDACTED] ☎ Gerry Pilling [REDACTED]</p>
<p>Wednesdays From 8PM</p>	<p><u>MAIN OBSERVATORY CLUB NIGHTS</u> Primary Observational targets: Nebulae and faint objects.</p> <p>☎ Martin Cook [REDACTED] (mobile) [REDACTED] ☎ Roy Gooding [REDACTED] (mobile) [REDACTED]</p>
<p>Wednesday 3rd Doors open 7.30pm Start 8.00pm</p>	<p><u>OASI WORKSHOP</u> Sir Patric Moore's House Run by Paul Whiting <u>Nacton village Hall</u> ☎ Mike Whybray [REDACTED]</p>
<p>Tuesday 2nd Thursday 4th Thursday 11th Thursday 18th Thursday 25th</p>	<p><u>OBSERVATORY VISITS BY LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP</u> Taster Evening Tina's Group Woodbridge Probus Club Hollesley WI AJS & Matchless Owners Club ☎ Paul Whiting FRAS [REDACTED]</p>
<p>Saturday 10th April @ 8pm</p>	<p><u>COMMITTEE MEETING</u> Methodist Church Hall Blackhorse Lane Ipswich</p>

Society Primary Contacts

Chairman: Neil Morley ☎ [REDACTED]

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 [REDACTED]