



# The Newsletter



of the

## Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

2012  
NOVEMBER

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[www.oasi.org.uk](http://www.oasi.org.uk)

No 479



ANDROMEDA

Taken By: Mike O'Mahony 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012

From Felixstowe With a 120 mm Skywatcher refractor +  
HEQ5 mount Canon DSLR 1100D 10 exposures, each  
20 secs @ ISO6400

Not the best night as there was quarter moon, but you  
have to run with the weather. Trying to work up my expertise.

Mike

# Society News (Roy Gooding)

## 1 Annual General Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> January 2013

All members are invited to attend the AGM . Start time 20:00 Venue: Methodist Church Hall

## 2 Access into the School Grounds and Observatory Tower

The code for the car park gate, is on the back of your membership card. 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.

## 3 Welcome to New Members

Ms Susan Andrews	Mr Andrew Gibbs
Mr Richard Bacon	Mr Alan Philpott
Mr Michael Atkins	Mrs Marianne McMahon
Dr Derk Noske	Mr Lawrence Baird
Mr Stewart Binnie	

## 4 Events Programme for 2012

This provisional event list will be updated through out the year

Event	Venue	Date
Christmas Meal	Lodge at Wherstead	5 <sup>th</sup> December 19:45

## Other Observational Events 2012

Meeting	Venue	Date
Geminids provisional meeting	Behind the refreshment hut at "The Dip" Felixstowe	15 <sup>th</sup> December

## **5 Christmas Meal 5<sup>th</sup> December at 19:45**

After a discussing over several Wednesday meetings, we will be returning to the Lodge at Wherstead

### **Starters**

Butter squash & apple soup

Grilled sardines, dill crème fraiche, dark granary bread

Ham hock terrine with Cumberland jelly toasted ciabatta

Mango & brie filo parcel

### **Main Course**

Turkey with all the trimmings

Crayfish & sole Florentine gratin, dressed salad, buttered new potatoes

Aromatic apricot stuffed tenderloin, seasonal greens, sweet potato dumplings

Stuffed flat cap mushroom Provençal topped with goats cheese, pan fried greens, buttered new potatoes

Pan-seared Gressingham duck, orange port & cranberry reduction, braised red cabbage, baby roasted new potatoes

### **Dessert**

Christmas pudding, chocolate orange ice cream .orange cognac drizzle

Daily selection of sweets

Mixed cheese & biscuits, seasonal chutney

Minced pies, tea or coffee with mints

Total cost £27.50

Deposit £5.00

**Please see me ( Roy Gooding) to book. First come first served!**

The price is only a pound more than last year

# Night Sky (November)

## 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>

Object	Date			Mag	Notes
		Rise	Set		
Sun	1	06:51	16:27		
	30	07:40	15:48		
Mercury	1	07:03	16:22	-0.1	Mercury is in the early morning sky It will be best observed towards the end of the month
	30	06:10	15:11		
Venus	1	11:33	18:16	-4.0	Venus still dominates the pre-dawn sky
	30	11:11	18:31		
Mars	1	01:08	14:52	1.2	Mars is low in the evening sky, and is difficult to observe.
	30	00:46	13:26		
Jupiter	1	20:30	12:49	-2.6	Jupiter is well placed to observe this month
	30	18:31	10:52		
Saturn	1	07:10	16:48		Saturn is visible in the early morning sky this month
	30	05:35	15:02		
Uranus	1	15:27	04:08	5.8	Uranus is near to the borders of Pisces and Cetus
	30	13:32	02:10		
Neptune	1	14:26	00:38	7.8	Neptune is in Aquarius
	30	12:32	18:31		

## OASI Members Group Observing Evenings.

Tuesday 13th November & Monday 10th December.

The venue is Newbourne Village Hall which will be available to us from 7pm until 11pm.

The address is Mill Road, Newbourne

You can find a location map on [www.newbourne.org.uk](http://www.newbourne.org.uk)

The object of these evenings is to give members the opportunity to bring their own telescopes to a dark site and to chat with other members in a warm environment & compare the optics and performance of our scopes.

There are good kitchen facilities so hot drinks and possibly hot snacks will be available. In the event of poor seeing we will use the hall as a forum for observational & equipment discussion.

Any questions let me know.

Telephone [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Hope you can make it.

Mike Norris

### **The OASI mailing list**

OASI has an email distribution list which all OASI members can join to keep in touch. If you want to join the list please send an email from the email account you want added to this list to this address:

[REDACTED]

The email needs to include your name (as you gave it on your membership application). Including your name is essential so we can confirm you are an OASI member (particularly if you have a cryptic email username:-).

Please note that the "oasimail" address above is not the actual email list.

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## Kelling Heath Star Party - Autumn 2012

Mike Norris

Those of you who read my report on the Spring Star Party at Kelling Heath will be surprised to learn that after much deliberation and the purchase of a slightly larger tent that I did in the end make the autumn star party this September.

In the beginning the prospects looked decidedly uncertain with half a gale blowing as I put up the tent while the pitch itself in the blue sector was under trees blocking much of my skyline. There were only a few pitches taken on the Wednesday when I arrived and that night we had a full blown gale which threatened to drop the tent and me into the North Sea. The following day the pitches began to fill up and I soon made the acquaintance of Daniel who had taken three years to build a 16" Dobsonian similar to our Millennium Dob and was hugely excited about trying it out for the first time at Kelling. Since he had forgotten to bring a waterproof cover for it we spent Thursday morning in sunny Cromer looking for a tarpaulin. That night the sky cleared and I got in some great observing with my 8" Skywatcher Dob. On Friday I spent the day wandering about the site which was now completely full - hundreds of scopes, some exquisitely hand made in wood or metal. I met a group of three elderly astronomers who had driven down from West Yorkshire. They ran a self funded centre for schools and similar. They had a self made solar scope that appeared to consist of a PST stuffed up the backside of an aluminium tube, but through it I saw some of the best solar images ever!

Friday night was awesome. There were some astronomers who been coming to Kelling for years and even they had never seen a sky so clear. Such was the abundance of visible stars that it was almost impossible to discern any constellations. Cassiopeia's W usually such a clear

signpost in the sky was completely lost among the nearby stars. In fact for much of the night I was content to just sit in my chair with my bino's and look up.



On Saturday the trade stands arrived. Unlike in the Spring it was warm, the sun was out, and the place was packed. Wex was offering a deal on an ex-demo Meade125PE which caught my eye and eventually caught my pocket. They only had two and on the first they were offering six free Meade 4000 series eyepieces, just too good to miss! Saturday night was also wonderfully clear. I spent it with my next door neighbour who had a monster 12" Meade and a selection of very expensive 2" eyepieces. Together we toured every Messier object within our range. I crawled reluctantly into my sleeping bag at 3am.

It had been a great four days not only because of the clear skies but also because of the people you meet, their enthusiasm and their willingness to share their experiences with you. Its certainly worth the little effort and the odd bit of discomfort. I have booked for Spring and Autumn next year - hope to see you there!

## Members Observing Evening October 15th Newbourne

Mike Norris & Mike O'Mahony

With the sky the consistency of cold porridge it was understandable that only nine people attended this first winter meeting, although half of these were new members. During a brief clearing of cloud cover at 8pm we were able to watch the ISS go over but this was the only observation we were able to make that night.

However Mike O'Mahony had set up his telescope in the hall and demonstrated the equipment and set up suitable for prime focus and afocal imaging.

A prospective new member Claire Roper had brought in a somewhat dusty Skywatcher Mercury refractor on a Synscan AZ Go-To mount which she had owned for several years but had never seen anything through it! It was a challenge for the OASI team and soon Mike O'Mahony, Gerry Pilling & David Murton were huddled over the manual and checking connections. Two hours later Claire still had not managed to see anything with her scope not because of any failure of the OASI experts but because the cloud cover refused to relent. Not to be beaten the scope was brought into the hall where it found hypothetical stars and objects in an hypothetical clear sky. A small victory and hopefully a new OASI recruit.

Although the sky conditions were disappointing it was always the hope that observing would be just one aspect of these evenings. With a comfortable, warm and spacious hall and with warm drinks and snacks available it is a very pleasant venue for members to meet each other evaluate equipment and just chat about astronomy. We hope to see you there. The next dates for Newbourne are Tuesday 13th November and Monday 10th December start 7pm.



## Solar Observing at Alnesbourne Priory 26<sup>th</sup> August

Mike Norris



I am please to report that the solar observing day at Alnesbourne Priory was a great success with over sixty visitors, including a number of children, attending the clubs display. Many thanks to all those club members who brought their scopes and gave up their Sunday. The club manager Nick Button has asked me to pass on his thanks to OASI members for a well conducted event and has extended an invitation to OASI to arrange a similar day next year.

# Astronomy Workshops

**Doors open at 7:30pm.**

**Workshops START at 7:45pm**

**Venue: NACTON VILLAGE HALL IP10 0EU**

If you are a new OASI member, or haven't been to one of these workshops before – they are a mixture of events of different characters including beginners talks, interactive workshops, hands-on observing sessions, films etc., suitable for all. They are also a chance to chat with other members over a cup of tea and a biscuit, in a venue rather warmer than the observatory dome on a winter's night!

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Run by...</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Special Relativity</b> We have had previous workshops on measuring the speed of light. One of the most important theories emerging from the fact that light speed appears to be a universal constant is Einstein's Special Relativity. The workshop will explore the historical perspective and thinking that led to the theory. This inevitably includes some mathematics – of O-level (GCSE) standard – to explain phenomena such as Lorentz contraction. The voyages of the Starship Enterprise will provide a few worked examples!	<b>David Gibson</b>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> December</b> (Assuming this doesn't end up as a clash with the OASI Christmas Meal!)	<b>One small step for [a] man...</b> Sadly Neil Armstrong died this year, and to remember how great his small step was, I'll be dusting off the canisters of 16mm NASA film that OASI were bequeathed a few years ago, and firing up our 70's vintage film projector, to show the official NASA film of the Apollo 11 flight. Also, I'll gather together some background material about that most modest hero.	<b>Mike Whybray</b>
	<b>More to follow in the new year....</b>	

Mike Whybray Workshops organiser  
[redacted] (Mobile) [redacted] (Home)

Workshops venue: NACTON VILLAGE HALL IP10 0EU (next to the small village school, just below and left of the N in Nacton on the map). Please park on the same side of the road as the hall, but avoid parking on the white lines which mark clear spaces for various driveways and passing places. The police do occasionally check up on this!

**Note that Mains Sewerage is coming to Nacton village, which will result in access problems for the next few months – you may need to get to the village hall and the observatory by alternative routes. More detailed information here:** <http://nacton.onesuffolk.net/news/anglian-water-provides-mains-sewerage-for-nacton/>

**The map for the village was in the last newsletter**

## OCCULTATIONS DURING NOVEMBER

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
07 Nov	01:22:23	D	0.49-	-49	21	5.2	κ Cnc
	02:20:19	R		-42	30		
17 Nov	17:05:58	D	0.20+	-10	16	4.9	43 Sgr
	18:06:29	R		-19	11		
17 Nov	17:22:39	D	0.20+	-12	15	7.0	ZC 2816
17 Nov	17:37:17	D	0.20+	-15	14	7.5	Hip 94879
22 Nov	19:27:55	D	0.72+	-32	41	7.4	Hip 116865
23 Nov	21:49:03	D	0.81+	-52	41	5.7	51 Psc
25 Nov	00:14:18	D	0.88+	-58	34	6.8	ZC 203

James Appleton

## PETER DENNIS HINGLEY, 6 OCTOBER 1951 - 20 JUNE 2012



I felt very honoured when Jane and Clare, Peter's sisters, and his daughter Eleanor invited me to deliver this Eulogy on behalf of the family, for Peter and I have been friends for over 40 years. And I should also say that synchronizing with the beginning of this funeral service, tributes to Peter will be given, on steam whistles, by his friend Andy Darby on a preserved GWR (God's Wonderful Railway) locomotive on the Bodmin Railway in Cornwall, while another great railway friend, Leigh Delany in Tasmania, will be thinking of him.

And as his sister Clare Walker put it, she knew Peter was making plans to escape from London for the duration of the Olympic Games, but dying was 'going a bit too far'!

I first met 'The Hingleyosaurus', as I often referred to him, in the autumn of 1970, when he came up to read a reluctant degree in science (he wanted to do an arts degree, but his dad wanted him to do science), at Lancaster University, and I was then a second-year history undergraduate, albeit a few years older than Peter. In spite of being an instinctive 'arts' man, however, Peter had a lively interest in science and technology, and what brought us together was his joining of the University Astronomical Society, which I was getting off the ground. Peter and I had very different talents in many ways, which enabled us to work well together. I was a natural windbag who became unconscious five minutes into any committee meeting, whereas Peter was a natural organiser and administrator, and I suspect the Lancaster Astronomical Society committee was amongst the first of many on which Peter has served over the last 42 years. His enthusiasm and ability to get things done and to organise always left me staring with incomprehension. And one of the last bodies on which he served was the Council of the Society for the History of Astronomy, which he did with immense energy for many years, and he will be *very* difficult to replace!

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Yet in no way was Peter a dry administrator. What immediately struck you upon meeting Peter - be it for the first or for the thousandth time - was his sheer love of communicating. He was an excellent and often outrageously funny lecturer, and he took his profound erudition in the history of astronomy to countless Astronomical Societies, not only across the length and breadth of Great Britain, but also abroad. And he did the same for a wide variety of Railway and Industrial Archaeology Societies.

And then there was his utterly crazy sense of humour. 'Did you hear the one about what the art mistress said to the gardener...?' or something to that effect would greet you as you walked into his office at the RAS. Spectacularly politically incorrect, yes: yet Peter's humour was never *cruel* or fashionably mocking. His humour was of the school of *The Beano* comic, the now sadly defunct *Punch*, the seaside comic postcard, or the late Les Dawson or the still 'tickling' Ken Dodd. There was nothing trendy or sneeringly 'alternative' in Peter's humour. It was as traditionally English as fish and chips, tea, and brown ale. (Just like my own, in fact.)

By intellectual instinct, Peter was a historian and bibliophile. And an absolute first-rate one at that. He had no interest in currently fashionable historical theory. What some continental sociologist thought about the 'Scientific Revolution' warmed his heart about as much as did the growing tentacles of the European Union. For what fascinated Peter was individualism and idiosyncrasy in the process of history. What made him such a pillar of the Society for the History of Astronomy was the Society's concern with the local, the individualistic, and the non-government-directed history of British astronomy. For Peter's aims, and those of the Society, were hand-in-glove. He also saw the past as a thing to lovingly preserve, for the wisdom of our ancestors was an inextricable part of his mental architecture. And this preservation included books, pictures, artefacts, and historical locations. It applied to Victorian railway engines, canal boats, and Droitwich barges as much as it did to telescopes, books, and old photographs. Indeed, one of his great, and enduring contributions to astronomical scholarship was his copying, digitalising, and cataloguing of the RAS's vast archive of pictures and photographs, along with the way in which he made the RAS's rich historical treasures accessible to local astronomical and other societies at weekends. And in his own time! From a sheer love of learning, and a love of communicating what he knew!

And this, I believe, lay at the heart of his professional life. For libraries, manuscripts, and historical pictures and artefacts were not only his life's passion; they were also his job. For Peter was part of the noble historical tradition of the Scholar-Antiquary-Librarian. Not long after graduating from Lancaster University, he came to work in the Burlington House quadrangle where he would stay for the rest of his life. First, as an Assistant Librarian at the Society of Antiquaries; then, head-hunted as an Assistant at the RAS; and then as RAS

Librarian and Archivist. And yes, Peter grumbled about being too busy, which he was, but he came to love the RAS Library, its collections, the people who used them, and the ambiance of a world-class learned society. Here, Peter's glorious individualism (I *won't* say eccentricity) could flourish and be appreciated. It was his theatre. And that, perhaps, is why he often came to work three hours early, to undertake favourite cataloguing projects before the normal working day began, and why he often made the RAS Library available to appreciative users at weekends. But it will feel strange to come up the great staircase and not hear, 'Ah, Chapman, did I tell you the one about the...?'

Thinking of Peter, I immediately think of the great 17<sup>th</sup>-century antiquary John Aubrey, author of the classic *Brief Lives* biographies. They both had a passion for books, manuscripts, archaeology, old artefacts, traditional values, jokes, ribald tales, colourful friends, gossip-collecting, eating, and drinking. I am sure Peter and Aubrey would have got on like a house on fire. Indeed, I suspect that they have met already, sitting on a cloud, watching the angels go by, with Aubrey saying to Peter, 'Good Lord, Sir! Do you mean to say that in *your* time on earth mankind had learned how to send *intelligences* to each other by means of tame bolts of lightning?'

And when our mutual friend Dr Roger Hutchins telephoned me to say that Peter had died, the phrase which immediately sprang to mind was one from John Aubrey: 'When a learned man dies, much learning dies with him!' What could be more apt?

And again in the tradition of the great scholar librarians and antiquaries, Peter has published numerous articles. Many relate to astronomical history, but there is also much on aspects of his beloved industrial archaeology. With T. C. Daniel, he edited and published the manuscript autobiography of the Victorian astronomer Edwin Dunkin in 2002, and Peter has published numerous learned articles in a wide variety of journals. Indeed, his published *ouvrage* needs to be drawn together and catalogued, for Peter's writings will be of interest to a range of people working in a diversity of historical scientific and technological disciplines.

But in addition to all the above, there were other facets of Peter that were perhaps less well known. He was, for example, very proud of his ancestor Noah Hingley, the West Midlands Iron Master, whose firm made the great chains for the *Titanic*. 'Our family's best work is on the bottom of the Atlantic', Peter would say. He was also a quite superb architectural and industrial archaeological photographer, preferring to work in black on white roll film with (I think) a classic Rolleiflex camera. And his passion for canal narrow boats, steam trains, and ships opened up a whole vast dimension of Peter's life which we do not have time or space to discuss here.

And no appreciation of Peter can fail to give full expression to his passion for the sea, and all things nautical, and in a few moments we will hear a reading of one of

his favourite poems, John Masefield's *Sea Fever*. He was for many years an active serving Officer in Her Majesty's Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR), in which Service he came to hold the Commission of Lieutenant Commander. (I was told that he was able to bring a Minesweeper alongside the dock with a style and an elegance that outdid his ability to park a car.) And relating to the armed Forces and to industrial archaeology, he also served as Honorary Curator of the preserved Chart Gunpowder Mills at Faversham, Kent.

Yet one aspect of Peter's life was perhaps even less known to his friends, and was probably only mentioned to me because he knew my own religious position: namely, his membership of the Prayer Book Society. Peter revealed very little about his actual religious beliefs, but what was clear was his love of the liturgy and language of both the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) and the *Authorized Version* (1611) translation of the Bible. I also know that he liked to go to churches where the worship was traditional, both when visiting relations in the Midlands and - so I am informed - to this present church of St Giles in the Fields in London. Was it just the beauty of words, music, ceremonial, tradition, celebrating *Englishness*, and fine architecture that appealed to Peter, or was there something more? I would like to think so.

Strange though it may seem, I was not entirely surprised when Roger told me of Peter's passing, for I had sensed that something was seriously wrong for a good six months. I remember coming into the RAS Library before the monthly meeting, on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2012. Peter came *shuffling* up to me like a little old man, speaking in a faltering, cracked voice. Knowing what a comedian and mimic Peter could be, I was on the verge of saying [and here I offer a respectful bow and a polite prior apology to the Reverend Alan Carr, the officiating Priest] 'Come on Hingley, stop arsing around!', when it struck me that no, he wasn't, there was something *wrong*. On later occasions he was sometimes better, sometimes worse; and when I last saw him, on 10 May 2012, at a special gallery exhibition opening at the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford, my wife Rachel was aghast, and she said to me later, 'Peter looks 75!'

I personally believe that Peter is now in Heaven, but it did make me smile to contemplate his possible mode of conveyance there. Was it by sea? Well, when the great Victorian mathematical astronomer Mary Somerville as - alas - a 92-year-old was contemplating going to Heaven, she speculated that it might be by sea. She was, after all, an Admiral's daughter, with RN Captain nephews and a lifelong love of things nautical. 'The Blue Peter', she wrote in her *Reminiscences*, 'has long been flying at my foremast... I expect the signal for sailing. It is a solemn voyage, but it does not disturb my tranquillity... I think of death with perfect composure and perfect confidence in the Mercy of God.' For Eternity to Mary began with a voyage over a calm sea to a friendly shore where she would once again meet long-lost friends and loved ones. So could Peter have sailed to Heaven in a mine-sweeper?

But what if Peter went to Heaven by train: on God's Wonderful Railway, indeed?

I can imagine his soul coming into Paddington, and at Platform 6<sup>ths</sup> finding Daniel Gooch's *Iron Duke* waiting, in steam, magnificent and shining, with the stovepipe-hatted Isambard Kingdom Brunel, hand ready on the regulator, welcoming Peter onto the footplate. 'Welcome aboard, Hingley old fellow! I gather from "Him Upstairs" that you know how to fire one of these beasts – there's the shovel!', says Isambard, knocking the ash from his celestial cigar.

Then they begin the slow climb out of Paddington, as all the early engines did when crawling up out of the Thames basin. But after West Drayton, they really start to pick up speed, then Brunel says, 'Start shovelling harder, old fellow, for now we have the grandest incline of all ahead of us.' Faster and faster they race into the sunset, then after going through Reading in a flash, the line begins to rise upwards. And upwards. And upwards. The sky turns a pure dark blue, then black. They shoot past the moon, then, an instant later, past the sun. Through the Milky Way they fly, overtaking the speed of light as though it were a snail. Past the Andromeda Galaxy - 'Good Lord, it didn't look like *that* on the Hubble photos', exclaims Peter - and soon they are in regions unglimped by any telescope. Then straight ahead, in a glorious, shining light unlike anything seen before by mortal man, is the Heavenly City, with the 7-foot broad-gauge track leading straight through the gate.

'Unfold the Union Jacks and St Georges!', shouts Isambard to Peter, and in a glorious blaze of steam, whistles blowing and flags flying, the celestial *Iron Duke* thunders through the Pearly Gates, St Peter adroitly jumping out of the way, and giving a friendly wave to his namesake. 'Tender brakes hard on!', shouts Isambard, who in turn throws *Iron Duke* into full reverse, in the finest GWR style. And with screeching wheels, blowing steam, and a strong smell of hot lubricating incense, they come to a perfect halt, before the Throne of Almighty Grace.

And God says to Peter, 'Welcome!'

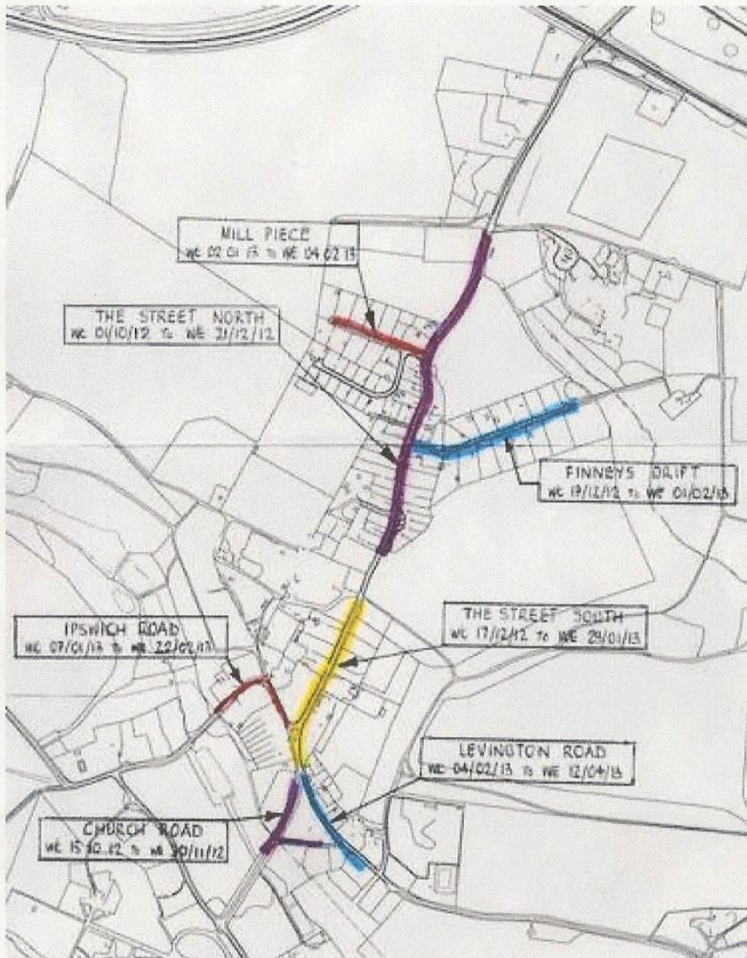
Rest in Peace.

Amen.

By OASI Honorary President, Dr Allan Chapman, Wadham College, Oxford. Delivered at Peter's funeral, at St Giles-in-the-Fields Parish Church, London, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012, and written up from notes with minor amplifications, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2012. Peter was a regular visitor to OASI, welcomed by all who knew him. He opened the OASI Library in 2004 and lectured to the Society on the *Transit of Venus* (2004), *The RAS Library Collection* (2004), *The Biggest Telescope In the World* (2008) and was scheduled to lecture again on *Observatory Architecture* (2011), but was prevented by ill health. He hosted a visit by members of OASI to the RAS Library in October 2010, and provided much informal assistance on matters historical to members of OASI.



## Nacton village road closures



Posted: Sep 27, 2012

### Newsletter Articles

Our Society is always on the lookout for newsletter articles! If you would like to submit an article, please email it in Microsoft word format <e.g.A5 landscape 10 point font> to the editor, Eric Sims at [REDACTED] by the third Wednesday of each month to ensure it appears in the next month's newsletter. If you don't have access to a computer, please phone me at the number published inside the back page of the newsletter.

Eric Sims

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## **Back To The Roots**

*by Tina Hammond*

Many OASI committee members have researched the history of the Observatory, with the major players such as Colonel George Tomline and John Isaac Plummer being the focus of attention.

An opportunistic timing of two parties in London - spaced within just 48 hours of each other - forced me to have a couple of nights there in October 2012.

Although not exactly central, I decided to stay at Greenwich and do a bit of OASI research, concentrating on Plummer's early days.

James Appleton has done a huge amount of research into Plummer, and it was from his book that I got the bare bones of his life.

Born at 6 Garden Row, Deptford - now Batavia Mews - it was thought that he moved to 78 High Street, Deptford when a small boy. However, I discovered that this is incorrect. The address is actually 78 Deptford High Street, Deptford. The place is now an opticians and I actually went inside but was not allowed to the back of the shop [the property is a large three storey Victorian house which extends a considerable way back into the garden], nor was I permitted to take a photograph inside, despite explaining my interest in the place. The place has been tastelessly done out with foam insulation,

covering up whatever delightful Victoriana would have been there in Plummer's day. Above the shop are six flats.

When he was 18, Plummer moved to 13 Surrey Terrace, New Cross. Walking through the streets adjacent to this, I felt that this was a very pleasant place to live and that Plummer would have felt pleased with himself when he moved there. Indeed, I felt as if the aura of Plummer was still in the air that I breathed. Alas! Every road except Surrey Terrace exists intact. Replaced with some ugly 1970s apartments, it represents everything that is bad about British architecture in the last fifty years.

I was unable to find a date of marriage for Plummer's parents, John and Catherine, although John was born in Greenwich in 1807 and died in late 1883, still living there. Plummer clearly did not use his huge earnings to move his parents to a better area of London!

Plummer was the third of four children, with two elder sisters and a younger brother. Mary Catherine was born on 15 February 1840 and Elizabeth Ellen on 26 April 1842. Curiously, both were baptised on the same day, on the afternoon of 19 June 1842.

Plummer himself, as is well-known, was born on 6 February 1845 and his brother William Edward in the spring of 1849 (I ran out of time to check this!). A return visit is on the cards.....

## DIARY for NOVEMBER

<p><b>STONs</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 20<sup>th</sup></b>  <b>From 8:00pm</b></p>	<p><b>SMALL TELESCOPES OBSERVING NIGHTS AT THE OBSERVATORY</b>  <b>Main observing targets: Pegasus and Andromeda</b>  ☎ Paddy O'Sullivan [redacted]  ☎ Gerry Pilling [redacted]  Dave Robinson [redacted]</p>
<p><b>Wednesdays</b>  <b>From 8.00pm</b></p>	<p><b>OBSERVATORY CLUB NIGHTS</b>  Observing with the Tomline Refractor and other telescopes if skies are clear.</p> <p>☎ Martin Cook [redacted], mobile [redacted]  ☎ Roy Gooding [redacted] mobile [redacted]</p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> November</b>  <b>Doors open 7:30pm</b>  <b>Start 7:45pm</b></p>	<p><b>OASI WORKSHOP</b>  <b>At Nacton Village Hall</b></p> <p><b>Special Relativity</b> By David Gibson  ☎ Mike Whybray [redacted]</p>
<p><b>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November</b>  <b>Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November</b></p>	<p><b>OBSERVATORY VISITS BY LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS</b>  <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Kesgrave Brownies</b>  <b>Ipswich &amp; District Electrical Association</b>  ☎ Paul Whiting FRAS [redacted]</p>
<p><b>AGM January 19<sup>th</sup></b>  <b>8:00pm start</b></p>	<p><b>NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING</b>  <b>Venue: The Methodist Church Hall</b>  <b>Blackhorse Lane Ipswich</b></p>

### OASI Members Group Observing Evenings.

Tuesday 13th November & Monday 10th December.

The venue is Newbourne Village Hall which will be available to us from 7pm until 11pm.

The address is Mill Road, Newbourne

### **Society Contact Details**

Observatory tel. no. (meeting nights only): [redacted]

Secretary: Roy Gooding [redacted] (day) [redacted] (evening)

Web-site. James Appleton: e-mail [redacted]

E-mail queries: [info@oasi.org.uk](mailto:info@oasi.org.uk)

Facebook.com/orwell astronomical

Chairman: Neil Morley [redacted] / e-mail [redacted]

Please send material for the OASI web site (e.g. observations, notices of events, general interest articles) to [info@oasi.org.uk](mailto:info@oasi.org.uk)