



# OASI News

The newsletter of Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)



NGC891 – Paul Whiting using SeeStar taken  
25<sup>th</sup> August 2025. 25 minutes capture

Trustees:

Mr Neil Morley   Mr David Payne   Mr Bill Barton

Honorary President:

Dr Allan Chapman D. Phil MA FRAS

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## Society Notices

Dear Members,

The observing highlight for September will be the opposition of Saturn on the 21st of the month. As viewed from the Earth, the rings are almost edge-on, but this will still be a lovely site in a telescope. It is always fun trying to count the number of moons visible, how many can you spot?

We are planning to hold our open evenings at Orwell Park Observatory on Friday and Saturday 24/25 October. As ever, we need as much **help** as possible for these evenings to run smoothly and safely. There are a variety of roles, including meeting and greeting, car parking and operating a telescope on the sports field.

Our open evenings are the Society's most important outreach event of the year, so if you can help out, in any way, please let myself or any Committee member know.

Thank you and clear skies!

Andy Gibbs,  
Chairman.

## Committee 2025

<b>Chairman</b>	<a href="#">Andy Gibbs</a>	Set overall agenda for OASI, Chair committee meetings, Press and publicity
<b>Secretary</b>	<a href="#">Roy Gooding</a>	Outreach meetings (jointly with Chairman), observatory decoration
<b>Treasurer</b>	<a href="#">Paul Whiting</a>	Finance, Supervision of applications for grants. Visits by outside groups, Observatory tours, public appreciation of astronomy, Outreach activities
<b>Committee</b>	<a href="#">James Appleton</a>	Committee meeting minutes, Web site
	<a href="#">Martin Cook</a>	Membership, Tomline refractor maintenance & user testing
	<a href="#">Matt Leeks</a>	Safety & security
	<a href="#">Peter Richards</a>	Lecture meetings
	<a href="#">Mike Whybray</a>	Astronomy Workshops, Child protection officer, Orwell Park School Astronomy
	<a href="#">Andy Willshire</a>	Librarian
	<a href="#">Adam Honeybell</a>	Newsletter
	<a href="#">Paul Whiting</a>	OASI @ Newbourne

## Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be the Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025 on Zoom. All members welcome.

## New members

Liam Wills

David & Elizabeth Russell

Gitana Tunikaitiene

Katharine Ramsey

## Society Contact details

Website:	<a href="https://www.oasi.org.uk">https://www.oasi.org.uk</a>
Events:	<a href="https://www.oasi.org.uk/Events/Events.php">https://www.oasi.org.uk/Events/Events.php</a>
Email queries:	<a href="mailto:info@oasi.org.uk">info@oasi.org.uk</a>
Submissions for Newsletter:	<a href="mailto:news@oasi.org.uk">news@oasi.org.uk</a>
Members-only message board:	<a href="https://groups.io/g/OASI">https://groups.io/g/OASI</a>
Observatory (meeting nights only):	☎ 07960 083714

## Social Media

For other astronomy news and astro pictures try our socials:

Facebook:	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/445056098989371">https://www.facebook.com/groups/445056098989371</a>
YouTube:	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@orwellastronomical425">https://www.youtube.com/@orwellastronomical425</a>
WhatsApp:	There is a WhatsApp group. Please email to be added.

We'd like to use social media a little more, since it's a more direct and immediate way to interact with members and potential members. Feel free to post pictures, comments or interesting articles. The more it's used, the more other people will be inclined to use it as well.

## Articles for OASI News

News, pictures and articles for this newsletter are always welcome.

Please send tables as separate files in one of these formats (Excel, .csv, OpenOffice)

If you don't feel up to writing a major article, perhaps you might write a short note for OASI News along the lines of "This month I have mostly been observing/constructing/mending/reading/etc."

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

The CLOSING date is the **15th** day of the month (i.e. 15<sup>th</sup> September).

The Newsletter archive is at [www.oasi.org.uk/NL/NL\\_form.shtml](http://www.oasi.org.uk/NL/NL_form.shtml)

**Authors, please note that your articles will be publicly available worldwide!**

## Reproducing articles from OASI News

If you plan to reproduce an article exactly as per OASI News then please contact the Editor – otherwise, as a matter of courtesy, please seek permission from and credit the original source/author. You may not reproduce articles for profit or other commercial purpose.

## Meetings and events

We have regular meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month (usually) at **Newbourne Village Hall**, and every Wednesday at **Orwell Park**. Night sky observing will usually take place when the skies are clear. See [website](#) for more events.

Date, Time & Location	Contact	Event
Weekly, every Wednesday, from 20:00, Orwell Park Observatory, Nacton	Martin Cook	Observatory open
Monday 15th September 2025 20:00 Zoom	Paul Whiting,	Pre-recorded talk: Imaging Black Holes with the Event Horizon Telescope by Ziri Younsi. (Zoom login details are provided in an email to members.)
Monday 22nd September 2025 19:30 Newbourne Village Hall	Paul Whiting,	Newbourne meeting - beginners and new members welcome! Observing target for the month: Andromeda. 19:30: doors open. 19:45: Sky Notes by Bill Barton, FRAS.

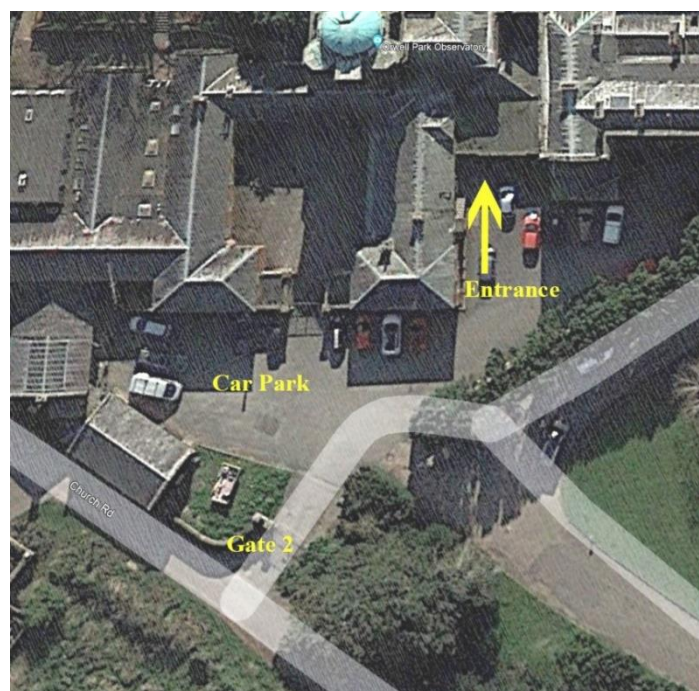
## OASI @ Orwell Park

There are regular meetings every Wednesday evening from 8pm. Access is controlled by a gate and a fob. The entrance is gate 2 is on Church Road, What3Words is [tour.fuse.banks](#)

### Access into the School Grounds and Observatory Tower

The route is as follows:

- Enter through gate 2 (gate 1 being the main gate) and park inside as per the attached map.
- Enter the school through the double black doors as indicated on the map. A key fob will be required to open the door.
- Continue straight through the next two sets of double doors.
- Turn left at the end of the short corridor then immediately right.
- Pass through the single door and on your left you will find the staircase leading to the observatory.
- On no account must you deviate from this route.



When leaving the observatory use the same route but in reverse. Please keep noise to a minimum as there are staff quarters nearby.

## OASI @ Newbourne

[newbourne@oasi.org.uk](mailto:newbourne@oasi.org.uk)

We meet at Newbourne Village Hall, Mill Lane, IP12 4NP  
on the 2nd and 4th Mondays from 19:30.

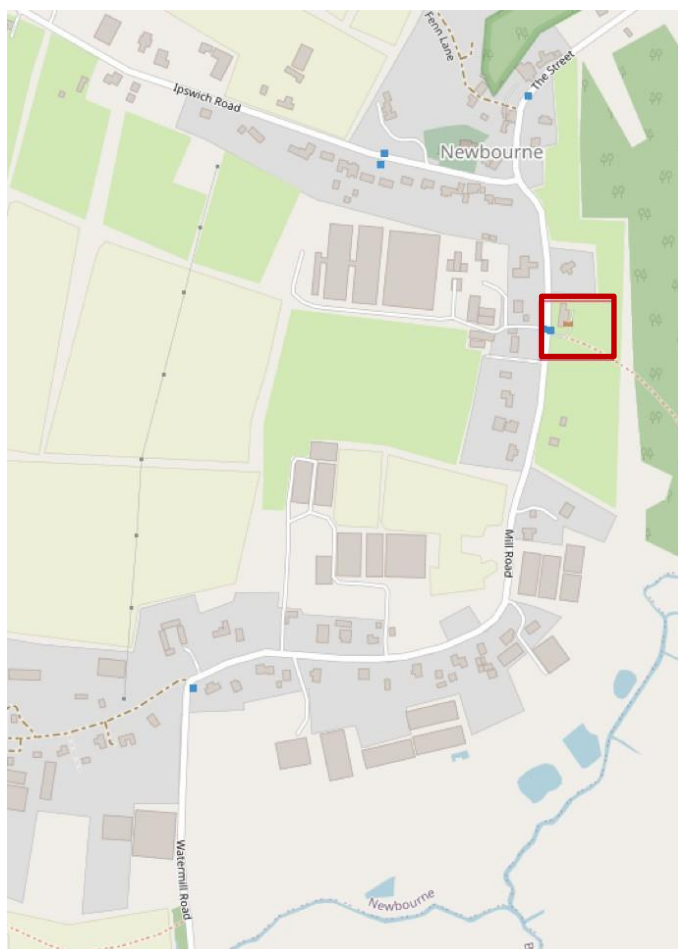
What3Words [scars.atlas.printing](https://www.what3words.com/scars.atlas.printing)

**Visitors are welcome but we do ask you to join the  
Society after two visits.**

<http://www.oasi.org.uk/OASI/Membership.php>

### Newbourne dates for 2025

September	08	22
October	13	27
November	10	24
December	08	22



We open up for all meetings at 7:30pm.

Astro News (A) / Sky Notes (S) at 7:45pm followed by any Talks (T), Workshops (W) and occasional Quiz (Q).

# indicates a change to the normal monthly pattern.

## Forthcoming Outreach Programmes 2025

All members are welcome to come along and help out at these events – you don't need to be an expert in the subject, just some enthusiasm! Just respond to the email call for help prior to the event.

Please note that not all events are open to the public.

## BAA news, events & webinars

BAA: <https://britastro.org/events/future-events>

Events correct at time of publication, please go to website for latest information.

*Nothing in September*

### The BAA Radio Astronomy Section

The BAA Radio Astronomy Section have been enjoying talks, seminars and tutorials via Zoom and these are available on the BAA YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/britishastronomical/playlists>.

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# The Night Sky in September 2025

Event times are for Orwell Park Observatory at 52.0096°N, 1.2305°E. Times are **GMT** unless otherwise stated.

## Sun, Moon and planets

Sources: <http://heavens-above.com/PlanetSummary.aspx> <http://heavens-above.com/moon.aspx>

Object	Date	Rise	Set	Mag.	Notes
Sun ☉	1	05:07	18:42		
	30	05:55	17:34		
Moon ☾	1	15:46	22:03		Full Moon : 07 September 18:09 Perigee : 10 September 12:10 Last Quarter : 14 September 10:33 New Moon : 21 September 19:54 Apogee : 26 September 09:47
	30	15:10	21:57		
Mercury ☿	1	03:58	18:26	-1.2	
	30	07:11	17:50	-0.5	
Venus ♀	1	02:10	17:34	-3.8	
	30	03:35	16:57	-3.8	
Mars ♂	1	08:41	19:38	1.6	
	30	08:39	18:17	1.6	
Jupiter ♃	1	00:23	16:33	-1.8	
	30	22:49	14:54	-2.0	
Saturn ♄	1	19:25	07:02	0.7	
	30	17:28	04:56	0.7	
Uranus ♅	1	21:14	13:00	5.7	
	30	19:19	11:04	5.7	
Neptune ♆	1	19:20	07:14	7.8	
	30	17:25	05:15	7.8	

## Occultations during September 2025

[https://iota-es.de/moon/grazing\\_descrx101.html](https://iota-es.de/moon/grazing_descrx101.html) and  
<http://www.lunar-occultations.com/iota/bstar/bstar.htm>

Observers are encouraged to download and install the [Occult](#) software program [Windows only] to generate predictions for their own particular site coordinates.



## Meteor showers during September 2025

No significant showers in September. But there can always be the odd rogue if you keep looking long enough!

See also <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/meteor-shower-guide>

For radio observation, use reflections from Graves Radar on 143.049MHz or the Brams transmitter in Belgium on 49.97MHz and UK GB3MBA on 50.408MHz <https://www.ukmeteorbeacon.org/Home>

See also [https://www.popastro.com/main\\_spa1/meteor/radio-meteor-observing-2020/](https://www.popastro.com/main_spa1/meteor/radio-meteor-observing-2020/).

## Comets

Source : <https://heavens-above.com/Comets.aspx>.

Comet	Brightness	Date of last reported observation	Angular separation from Sun	Constellation
<a href="#">C/2025 A6 Lemmon</a>	9.2	2025-Sep-14	53°	Lynx
<a href="#">C/2025 K1 ATLAS</a>	11.5	2025-Sep-10	41°	Virgo
<a href="#">240P NEAT</a>	14.3	2025-Sep-08	111°	Eridanus
<a href="#">C/2022 N2 PANSTARRS</a>	14.6	2025-Sep-05	115°	Taurus
<a href="#">3I ATLAS</a>	14.8	2025-Sep-13	54°	Libra
<a href="#">C/2024 E1 Wierzbos</a>	14.9	2025-Sep-11	69°	Corona Borealis
<a href="#">C/2021 G2 Atlas</a>	15.3	2025-Sep-11	59°	Serpens
<a href="#">C/2014 UN271 Bernardinelli-Bernstein</a>	15.3	2025-Sep-02	92°	Mensa
<a href="#">217P LINEAR</a>	15.3	2025-Sep-09	54°	Cancer
<a href="#">47P Ashbrook-Jackson</a>	15.6	2025-Sep-02	168°	Aquarius
<a href="#">C/2022 E2 ATLAS</a>	15.7	2025-Sep-11	121°	Cassiopeia
<a href="#">65P Gunn</a>	15.7	2025-Aug-25	103°	Sagittarius
<a href="#">C/2023 C2 ATLAS</a>	15.8	2025-Sep-11	118°	Cepheus
<a href="#">414P STEREO</a>	15.9	2025-Sep-06	32°	Leo
<a href="#">C/2024 J3 ATLAS</a>	15.9	2025-Sep-11	106°	Scutum
<a href="#">C/2024 T5 ATLAS</a>	16	2025-Sep-02	115°	Eridanus

## Visible ISS passes >30° max altitude for September 2025

Source: <http://heavens-above.com/PassSummary.aspx?satid=25544>

Times are **GMT**.

Predictions are approximate (07/04/25) due to craft adjustments. Check the day before.

There are more passes than this, but they're below 30 degrees, so will be harder to spot unless you have good weather and can see the horizon. As with stella/planetary brightness, the more negative the magnitude, the brighter it is.

Date	Brightness	Start			Highest point			End		
	(mag)	Time	Alt.	Az.	Time	Alt.	Az.	Time	Alt.	Az.
<a href="#">01-Sep</a>	-3.8	03:39:45	19°	W	03:42:02	69°	SSW	03:45:24	10°	ESE
<a href="#">02-Sep</a>	-3.9	02:53:26	75°	SW	02:53:36	79°	S	02:56:59	10°	ESE
<a href="#">02-Sep</a>	-2.9	04:27:03	10°	W	04:30:08	33°	SSW	04:33:12	10°	SE
<a href="#">03-Sep</a>	-3.4	03:40:09	24°	W	03:41:46	44°	SSW	03:45:00	10°	SE
<a href="#">04-Sep</a>	-3.1	02:54:09	43°	SE	02:54:09	43°	SE	02:56:40	10°	ESE
<a href="#">11-Sep</a>	-2.8	20:21:54	10°	SW	20:24:11	33°	SSW	20:24:11	33°	SSW
<a href="#">12-Sep</a>	-2.9	19:33:34	10°	SW	19:36:36	32°	SSE	19:37:50	24°	ESE
<a href="#">13-Sep</a>	-3.7	20:21:09	10°	WSW	20:24:13	63°	SSW	20:24:13	63°	SSW
<a href="#">14-Sep</a>	-3.6	19:32:36	10°	WSW	19:35:52	54°	SSE	19:37:34	25°	E
<a href="#">15-Sep</a>	-3.2	18:44:07	10°	SW	18:47:17	41°	SSE	18:50:29	10°	E
<a href="#">15-Sep</a>	-3.8	20:20:30	10°	W	20:23:42	79°	WSW	20:23:42	79°	WSW
<a href="#">16-Sep</a>	-3.8	19:31:50	10°	WSW	19:35:12	77°	S	19:36:53	27°	E
<a href="#">17-Sep</a>	-3.7	18:43:12	10°	WSW	18:46:31	65°	SSE	18:49:51	10°	E
<a href="#">17-Sep</a>	-3.6	20:19:51	10°	W	20:22:53	70°	WSW	20:22:53	70°	WSW
<a href="#">18-Sep</a>	-3.8	19:31:09	10°	W	19:34:30	86°	S	19:35:58	31°	E
<a href="#">19-Sep</a>	-3.8	18:42:25	10°	W	18:45:47	84°	S	18:49:02	11°	E
<a href="#">19-Sep</a>	-3.2	20:19:08	10°	W	20:21:54	53°	WSW	20:21:54	53°	WSW
<a href="#">20-Sep</a>	-3.8	19:30:23	10°	W	19:33:45	78°	S	19:34:57	37°	ESE
<a href="#">21-Sep</a>	-3.8	18:41:38	10°	W	18:45:00	85°	S	18:47:59	13°	E
<a href="#">21-Sep</a>	-2.5	20:18:23	10°	W	20:20:52	36°	WSW	20:20:52	36°	WSW
<a href="#">22-Sep</a>	-3.4	19:29:36	10°	W	19:32:53	55°	SSW	19:33:54	37°	SE
<a href="#">23-Sep</a>	-3.6	18:40:48	10°	W	18:44:08	68°	SSW	18:46:58	14°	ESE
<a href="#">24-Sep</a>	-2.5	19:28:48	10°	W	19:31:51	33°	SSW	19:32:56	26°	S
<a href="#">25-Sep</a>	-2.9	18:39:55	10°	W	18:43:08	44°	SSW	18:46:04	12°	SE

## Bill Barton's Radio Broadcast

ICRFM (Ipswich Community Radio) 105.7 MHz at about 08:25 in the morning of the first Wednesday of each month. I aim to cover what there is to see in the sky and then a little bit on something topical. ICRFM is also available to listen to over the Internet and there is a listen again option on their website. <http://www.icrfm.com>

## Tribute to Gerry Pilling

Neil Morley, OASI Trustee



**Gerry Pilling at the 2007 OASI Summer Barbecue at Newbourne**

I first met Gerry Pilling when he arrived as a visitor at the OASI Open Weekend at Orwell Park Observatory in October 1999. I'd brought along a Helios 80 mm short tube refractor and sited it among an array of telescopes in the Belvedere at the observatory. Gerry came over, noted that the telescope was pointed almost vertically, and asked me about the object visible in the eyepiece. I explained that it was M57, the *Ring Nebula* in the constellation Lyra, and that he would be looking at a planetary nebula formed from material thrown off by a star at the end of its life. When Gerry looked through the eyepiece and saw a hint of the smoke ring, it was a definite "wow" moment, and I could see that he was fired with enthusiasm!

We started talking. It turned out that Gerry had previously worked at BT Laboratories in Martlesham where I was based, and was working as a digital logic designer at Schlumberger in Felixstowe. He described his love of motorcycles, sports cars, technology and gadgets of all kinds. He also loved building, operating, and fixing radio controlled model boats and aeroplanes.

A little after the open weekend, in 2000, Gerry joined OASI and involved himself in activities including the Small Telescope Observing Nights (STONs) which had started in 1999 and ran on Monday evenings with Ted Sampson as observing director. In 2003, Gerry took over from Ted as observing director. With the able assistance of fellow members Paddy O'Sullivan and Dave Robinson, Gerry helped members gain confidence in finding their way around the night sky and develop practical skills in using small telescopes, primarily the 254 mm Dobsonian reflector and Meade ETX-125 Maksutov-Cassegrain. STONs always included a programme of themed observing targets in the southern skies visible from the observatory over the River Orwell. Gerry played a huge part in welcoming members and helping them find their feet in their astronomy journeys. He freely offered advice and was instrumental in helping members resolve problems with their equipment. If a member didn't own a telescope, Gerry was always on hand to advise the best choice based on lifestyles and needs.

With his love of gadgets and radio controlled models, the ETX-125 was the logical choice of telescope for Gerry and the instrument became a beloved companion for observing the night-time sky and the Sun (using a glass solar filter). Keen to further his knowledge beyond that offered by Meade's manual for the telescope, Gerry purchased a copy of *Using the Meade ETX: 100 Objects You Can Really See with the Mighty ETX* by Mike Weasner. Gerry's inherent curiosity led to the discovery of undocumented features within the firmware of the Autostar handset for the ETX, and he always had a comment (or three) about the matter: "My Meade is supposed to do it like this, and it doesn't work so I manage to get round it like this. I still don't know why!" On 5/1/2005, Gerry relayed his experiences to the membership and presented a talk to members of OASI on "Making Friends with the Meade ETX-125". He also acquired a Fullerscopes 203 mm Dobsonian and appreciated the increased aperture and operational simplicity that it offered.

Gerry stepped down as STONs observing director in 2015. At that time, only three of the five balcony windows in the Belvedere remained operational and STON meetings were experiencing significantly increased levels of light pollution. STON activities migrated to Newbourne and Gerry and his ETX became a regular fixture there.

Gerry participated in many OASI observing projects. His favourite term describing the appearance of a nebulous object through an eyepiece was "a fuzzy blob". Here are some edited highlights:

- On 8/6/2004, members of OASI successfully observed the transit of Venus. At Orwell Park Observatory, the Tomline Refractor was the primary instrument used for capturing timings of the event. Gerry set up the Society's Meade ETX-125 with a full-aperture glass solar filter and used it to observe the event from the Belvedere. Small groups of school children visited the observatory during the day and Gerry gave them the opportunity to view the transit through the instrument.





**Gerry observing the 2004 Transit of Venus from the Belvedere**

- On 28/12/2004, Gerry observed Comet C/2004 Q2 (Machholz) from the Belvedere. His observing report using the 254 mm Dobsonian stated: *The comet appeared as a fuzzy blob with a star-like centre. (QED!)*
- On 22/5/2007, he observed an occultation of Saturn from his home using his 203 mm Fullerscopes Newtonian. His wife Jackie was also involved, as his observing report indicated: *After some time I found Saturn, about five minutes before disappearance. Mrs P found Saturn difficult to spot but, when she found it, said that it was pretty against the light sky. Just over an hour later, after Saturn emerged from behind the Moon, she said that it was quite a "wow" against the bright lunar limb.*
- In an article contributed to the March 2008 OASI Newsletter, page 8, Gerry started ominously:
  - I attended the AGM. *"Charming!" said the Chairman.*
  - I made a proposal – so I was given another job! *"And serves him right too!" said the Chairman.*

Gerry's proposal was that OASI urgently recognise an unsung hero, "the Tea Lady of Old Nacton Village" who had unstintingly served refreshments at many meetings over many years. Gerry and Jackie visited Norwich "on the day of my birthday, when I was only hexadecimal 3D years old, to exercise my little sports car". There, they purchased an attractive vase which Gerry later presented to Nicky Richards (née Gillard). A photo of the presentation appeared with Gerry's article.

- Gerry observed several meteor showers including the Perseids in August 2010. His observing report reads like a complaint to trading standards: within an hour and a half "I saw four meteors which were clearly Perseids. This was nothing like the 80 meteors per hour advertised!"
- On 01/04/2012, he observed a lunar grazing occultation of the star 29 Cancrī. Fortuitously, the track of the graze passed just 670 m due south of his home at Martlesham Heath, allowing him to observe the event from his back garden.

While serving as OASI Chairman (2009-2013), I soon learned to allow a slot at the AGM for Gerry and Paddy O'Sullivan. There was always mention of the worsening state of the balcony windows at the Belvedere and a timely reminder whenever the trees around the observatory needed trimming!

On a personal level, Gerry was extremely supportive after I was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma in 2014. By pure coincidence, he had a hospital appointment on the same day as my first treatment session and came over and sat with me. As was customary, we started chatting about lots of things unrelated to astronomy. I was invited to an Ipswich Model Boat Club event at Needham Lakes the following week where I met Gerry and his predecessor as STONs director, Ted Sampson. I remember being handed "the controls" of Ted's boat and, under their watchful guidance, no boating mishaps occurred that day!

Gerry suffered from a long-term back condition and, not long after the event at Needham Lakes, his mobility deteriorated and he was unable to travel or attend OASI meetings. Due to ill health, he did not renew his membership in 2023. In November 2024, Jackie emailed me saying that Gerry was confined to home and wished to donate his Meade ETX to OASI. I visited a couple of times and we managed brief periods of conversation. I pay tribute to Jackie, family members, and professional staff who cared for Gerry towards the end.

Gerry passed away on Friday 09 May 2025. His funeral on 12 June was held at St Mary's Church in Martlesham. As a former motorcyclist, it was particularly appropriate that he arrived in a motorcycle hearse. The service and wake at the Newbourne Fox was memorable and well attended. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Gerry a wonderful voyage of discovery among the stars.

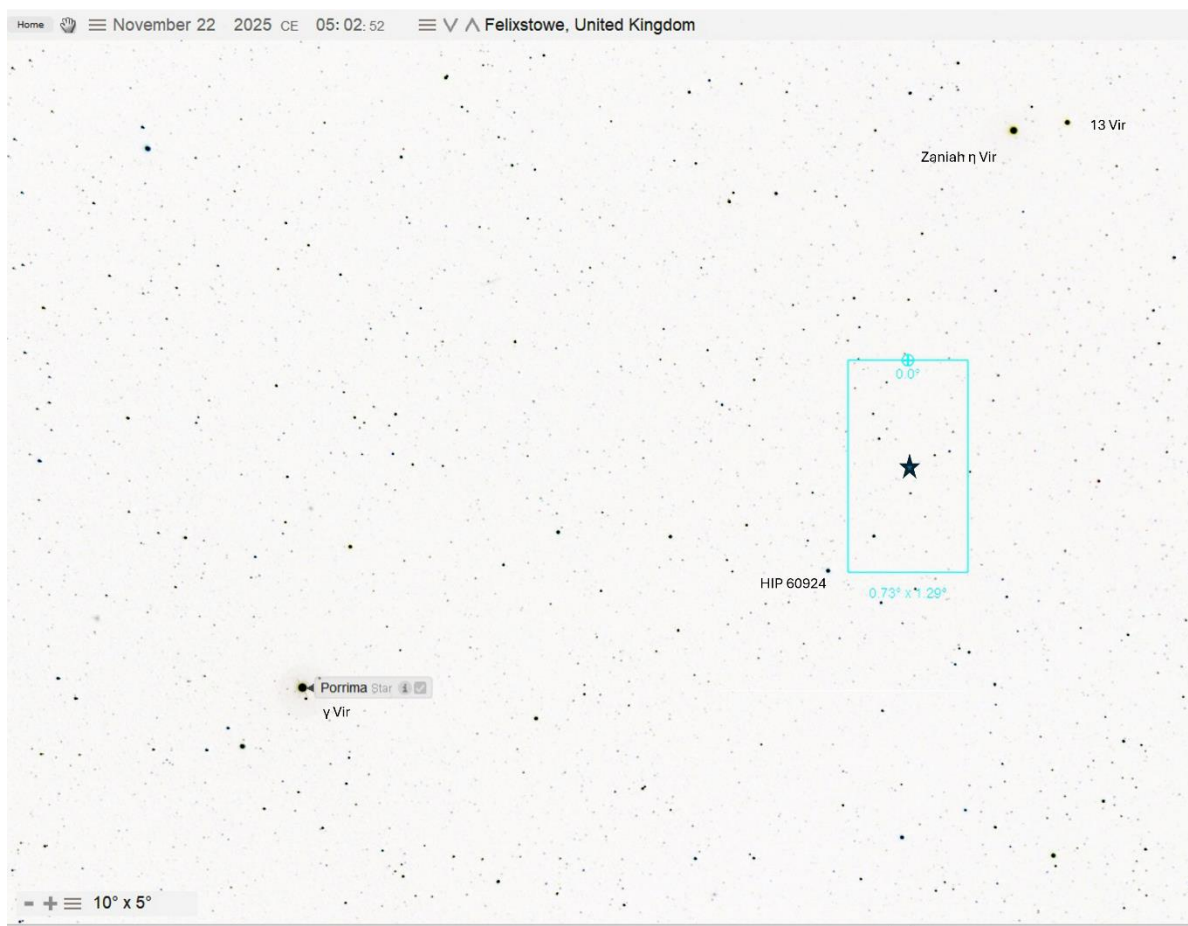
## Comet 3I / Atlas

Paul Whiting

The third known interstellar visitor to our solar system (after 1I / 'Oumuamua and 2I / Borisov) is a little different to its predecessors. The first two were predominantly rocky or asteroidal, whereas Atlas is more gassy or comet-like. As it draws nearer to the Sun it is expected to show a distinct tail, but whether it will be bright enough for us to observe remains to be seen (or not)! The original prediction was for it to reach magnitude 11.5, but now it is expected to reach 14.5 around the end of November this year. Fortunately, this coincides with the best time to view the comet from the UK.

At 5am around the 22<sup>nd</sup> November would seem to be the best time to try to image it. It is quite low down ( $28^\circ$  above the horizon) in the SSE by SE, but leaving it any later risks the sky brightening too much with the dawn. The Nov coordinates (30/8/25) are 12h 31m 51s -  $02^\circ 12' 48''$ , but of course cometary orbits are easily perturbed by anything with gravity it goes near. So do check online for the latest position and brightness.

Below is a finding chart of Virgo, showing the field of view for a SeeStar S50.





## Maintenance work at Orwell Park

