oasi.org.uk

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OASI News

The newsletter of Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich)

Dr Allan Chapman *D. Phil MA FRAS* *(1946 - 2026)*

Contents

Society Notices

Dear Members,

January has been a very cloudy and wet month, with few opportunities for stargazing. However, on Monday 19th January the clouds briefly parted to reveal an incredible display of the aurora. Thanks to the power of social media, this was observed by many members of OASI, thank you to everyone who submitted images.

We have to two events to look forward to in February. On Friday 20th, renowned local astronomer, Tom Boles, will be presenting a lecture at the Lantern Room St Augustine's Church, Ipswich. Are we Alone in the Universe? - The Search for Extra Terrestrial Life.

On Saturday 28th February, we are holding a Star Party, in conjunction with Ipswich Museums at Christchurch Mansion Ipswich. We are short of volunteers with this event, so if you are able to help, in any way, please contact Roy Gooding, r.gooding908@btinternet.com, or any Committee member. We would be very grateful for any assistance.

I hope to see you at any of our meetings and events this month.

Thank you,

Andy Gibbs,

Chairman.

Committee 2026

Chairman	Andy Gibbs	Set overall agenda for OASI, chair committee meetings, press and publicity
Secretary	Roy Gooding	Outreach meetings (jointly with Chairman), observatory decoration
Treasurer	Paul Whiting	Finance, supervision of applications for grants. Visits by outside groups, observatory tours, public appreciation of astronomy, outreach activities
Committee	James Appleton	Committee meeting minutes, web site
	Martin Cook	Membership, Tomline refractor maintenance & user testing
	Matt Leeks	Safety & security
	Peter Richards	Lecture meetings
	Mike Whybray	Astronomy workshops, Child Protection Officer, Orwell Park School astronomy
	Andy Willshere	Librarian
	Adam Honeybell	Newsletter
	Paul Whiting	OASI@Newbourne coordinator
(co-opted)	Robin Carpenter	Deputy OASI@Newbourne coordinator

Committee Meeting

Our next committee meeting will take place on Friday 29th May 2026, via Zoom. All members are welcome to attend.

New Members

Daniel Paul

Jane Wood

Society Contact details

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

Social Media

For other astronomy news and astro pictures try our socials:

Facebook:	www.facebook.com/groups/445056098989371
YouTube:	www.youtube.com/@orwellastronomical425

WhatsApp: There is a WhatsApp group. Please email Andy Gibbs 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

The CLOSING date is the **15th** day of the month.

The Newsletter archive is at www.oasi.org.uk/NL/NL_archive.php

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 2nd and 4th 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	
Monday 16th February 2026 20:00 Zoom	Paul Whiting,	Pre-recorded talk: The Invisible Universe, from Supernovae to Black Holes by Matthew Bothwell. (Zoom login details are provided by email to members.)
Friday 20th February 2026 19:45 St Augustine's Church, The Lantern Room (church annex)	Pete Richards	Lecture Meeting. Tom Boles: Are we Alone in the Universe? – The Search for Extra-Terrestrial Life. poster.
Monday 23rd February 2026 19:30 Newbourne Village Hall	Paul Whiting,	Newbourne meeting - beginners and new members welcome! 19:30 Doors open. 19:45 Sky Notes by Bill Barton, FRAS.
Saturday 28th February 2026 18:00-20:00 Christchurch Mansion	Roy Gooding	Public access event. Star party; exhibition in the Mansion if cloudy. Tickets £6 per person, including light refreshments. Tickets available from Ipswich &C Colchester Museums' website.
Monday 2nd March 2026 20:00 Orwell Park Observatory	Paul Whiting,	Taster evening. Places must be booked in advance by email: tour@oasi.org.uk .
Monday 9th March 2026 19:30 Newbourne Village Hall	Paul Whiting,	Newbourne meeting - beginners and new members welcome! 19:30 Doors open.
Monday 16th March 2026 20:00 Zoom	Paul Whiting,	Pre-recorded talk: Massive Stars and Supernovae by Thomas Haworth. (Zoom login details are provided by email to members.)

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.

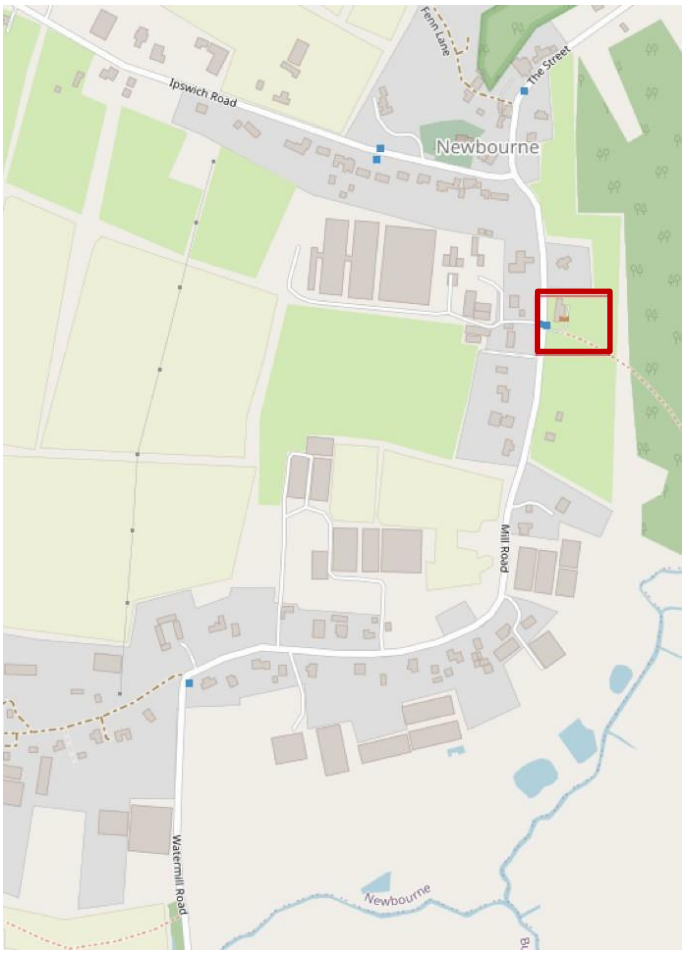
• Turn left at the end of the short corridor then immediately right.

• 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

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

What3Words **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 2026		
January	12	26(S)
February	09	23(S)
March	09	23(S, A)
April	06#	27(S)
May	04#	25(S, A)
June	08	22(S)
July	13	27(S, A)
August	10	24(S)
September	14	28(S, A)
October	12	26(S)
November	09	23(S, A)
December	14(Q)	

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.

Outreach Events 2026

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.

Christchurch Mansion Saturday 28th February 2026 18:00 – 20:00	Roy Gooding	**Setup time: 17:00** Public access event. Star party; exhibition in the Mansion if cloudy. Tickets £6 per person, including light refreshments. Tickets available from Ipswich & Colchester Museums' website.
Kirton Playing Field		Sunday 21st June (Wireless Revival) details to follow
Bawdsey Radar Museum		Monday 31st August (Solar Party) details to follow

BAA news, events & webinars

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

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

Date	Event
Saturday 7th March	Practical Astronomy Show

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.

The Night Sky in February 2026

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	07:35	16:43		
	28	06:43	17:33		
Moon ☾	1	16:06	07:43		Apogee : 10 February 16:52 New Moon : 17 February 12:01 First Quarter : 24 February 12:28 Perigee : 24 February 23:15
	28	13:39	05:45		
Mercury ☿	1	08:10	17:12	-1.1	
	28	06:49	18:43	1.7	
Venus ♀	1	08:03	17:04	-3.8	
	28	07:18	18:34	-3.8	
Mars ♂	1	07:35	15:58	1.2	
	28	06:34	16:14	1.2	
Jupiter ♃	1	14:12	06:32	-2.5	
	28	12:15	04:39	-2.3	
Saturn ♄	1	09:20	20:51	1.1	
	28	07:38	19:22	1.0	
Uranus ♅	1	11:01	02:36	5.7	
	28	09:16	00:51	5.7	
Neptune ♆	1	09:17	21:02	7.9	
	31	09:21	21:05	7.9	

Occultations during February 2026

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 January 2026

No significant meteor showers until April with the Lyrids.

Name	Date of Maximum	Dates visible	Max z	Description

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/.

Comets

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

Comet	Brightness	Date of last reported observation	Angular separation from sun	Constellation
C/2025 A6 Lemmon	10.2	2026-Feb-08	74.0	Ara
C/2025 T1 ATLAS	10.8	2026-Jan-20	5.0	Capricornus
24P Schaumasse	11.7	2026-Feb-10	103.0	Virgo
C/2025 R3 PANSTARRS	12.4	2026-Feb-08	30.0	Pegasus
29P Schwassmann-Wachmann 1	12.5	2026-Feb-09	153.0	Leo
88P Howell	12.7	2026-Feb-08	35.0	Sagittarius
235P LINEAR	13.9	2026-Feb-09	83.0	Scorpius
C/2022 QE78 ATLAS	14.5	2026-Feb-09	160.0	Cancer
C/2014 UN271 Bernardinelli-Bernstein	14.7	2026-Feb-06	81.0	Mensa
C/2022 N2 PANSTARRS	14.9	2026-Feb-09	89.0	Taurus
C/2024 T5 ATLAS	15.0	2026-Feb-06	68.0	Fornax
240P NEAT	15.1	2026-Feb-10	93.0	Taurus
3I ATLAS	15.1	2026-Feb-10	141.0	Gemini
C/2021 G2 Atlas	15.1	2026-Jan-20	71.0	Ophiuchus
210P Christensen	16.0	2026-Jan-31	90.0	Libra
C/2025 Q3 ATLAS	16.0	2026-Feb-06	62.0	Cetus

Visible ISS passes >30º max altitude for February 2026

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.
17 Feb	-3.3	06:12:54	10°	WSW	06:16:12	60°	SSE	06:19:30	10°	E
18 Feb	-3.0	05:27:30	24°	SW	05:29:08	47°	SSE	05:32:22	10°	E
19 Feb	-2.5	04:42:19	35°	SE	04:42:19	35°	SE	04:45:12	10°	E
19 Feb	-3.7	06:15:23	10°	W	06:18:43	82°	S	06:22:05	10°	E
20 Feb	-3.7	05:30:03	29°	WSW	05:31:36	73°	SSE	05:34:56	10°	E
21 Feb	-3.4	04:44:44	58°	SE	04:44:44	58°	SE	04:47:46	10°	E
21 Feb	-3.7	06:17:53	10°	W	06:21:14	85°	S	06:24:35	10°	E
22 Feb	-3.8	05:32:21	27°	W	05:34:04	86°	S	05:37:25	10°	E
23 Feb	-3.8	04:46:57	81°	SE	04:46:57	81°	SE	04:50:14	10°	E
24 Feb	-3.8	05:34:31	23°	W	05:36:29	79°	S	05:39:50	10°	ESE
25 Feb	-4.0	04:49:06	79°	WSW	04:49:16	85°	S	04:52:37	10°	E
26 Feb	-3.5	05:36:39	20°	W	05:38:47	55°	SSW	05:42:03	10°	ESE
27 Feb	-3.8	04:51:15	62°	SW	04:51:33	68°	SSW	04:54:53	10°	ESE
28 Feb	-2.7	05:38:51	17°	W	05:40:54	31°	SSW	05:43:54	10°	SE

Is Earth's Moon Our Space Larder.

A short article from the Library

Andy Willshere

Where do we go from here? This is a major question that is in the mind of politicians, moguls in commerce, companies vying for the outer reaches of space and most populations on Earth.

Around 70.000 years BCE humankind was mining flint and at 4,500 years BCE ochre was being extracted. Since then we have dug holes, worked in holes and blown up earth to produce holes to make the mining of specific items easier to obtain.

Why is this? At the earliest time, it was probably for survival which incorporated making tools to aid manufacturing objects which would have included weapons, helping with our continued existence. We would have been able to build dwellings and places to store our belongings. We could paint showing stories of our culture and make gemstones and minerals into adornments. As we progressed, we found how to produce and manage metals and make alloys which provided humans with information about how to build villages, towns and cities and set up methods of trading with other areas and countries. In some areas, the production of metals and alloys became spiritual and symbolic.

It can be suggested that mining wasn't a by-product of societies, it was the catalyst for development and culture.

So, where DO we go from this planet? How do we get there? What will we find useful when we do? How much profit will it give?

The closest entity beyond Earth is the moon, with the probability of mining, building, acquiring energy and even living within the infrastructure constructed. All this activity is needed to support and develop lunar functioning.

Having arrived on the moon the biggest question is who owns it? If I put my flag into the ground, is this piece, bit, football pitch, large acreage or all of this entire world, mine.? At the moment there is no specific law that provides legal rules. In 1967, there was an Outer Space Treaty that was signed by only 110 countries, which specified that no country could declare sovereignty over the moon, and it could only be used for peaceful reasons. This treaty was added to in 1979 under the Moon Treaty which declared that all lunar assets belonged to all humankind. This however was not ratified by the U.S. , Russia or China. Did they know something we didn't? Under current law, private ownership of lunar land is banned and territory cannot be claimed. What will happen when companies want to excavate commercially will be something for future discussion.

In 2020 NASA postulated a framework code of ethics to "*promote transparency, interoperability, and peaceful exploration"* and to date this has been signed by 56 nations, including the United States.

It is called the Artemis Accords. This type of framework is essential for the future control of space. Its ethos is to engender ethical standards in all sectors of international commerciality. There are many critics who think that this framework will discourage commercial investment, but at present this is the best treaty on offer.

Assuming that we can live and work on the moon, it would be a good idea to build habitats, roads, vehicles and power systems in situ making it very much cheaper. This would reduce the exorbitant costs of transporting materials

from Earth to our moon.

Already NASA is supporting as many as 11 companies to evolve technically practical solutions that will allow lunar civilisation to exist. Some of these ideas range from utilising moon regolith to construct roads and housing foundations as well as using its chemical formation to produce battery power, which would provide widespread power systems across the lunar landscape. One company has formed a complete department tasked with using simulated moon dust (as close to the original contents as possible) to make solar cells and strands of wire, by harnessing solar energy and robotic expertise. They are also working on how to produce oxygen, metals and construction materials from lunar regolith. Another group are working on a 'paving robot' that can pick up the regolith, melt it, then shape the paving surfaces and place them in the correct alignment. Food is another necessity for lunar habitation. Using LED lighting for growth of leafy green plants is already possible, so again using regolith, researchers are working on how this can be transformed into enriched soil.

Our biggest problem to a human presence on the moon and a massive industrial enterprise in operation is that we have to think of all situations that we have performed badly on and to our mother planet, and not to repeat them. We have to consider legally protecting the moon from allowing frantic commercial enterprises from ripping the inside out of a new smaller world and to combat avarice and greed. However, as we have already postulated, getting all countries to agree to a form of legal conformity is going to be very difficult. There will always be the human trait of bypassing the legal norms to contend with, which without a doubt will cause untold problems in the future.

References:

Artemis-Accords-signed-13Oct2020.pdf

Moon Treaty - Wikipedia

Home | Blue Origin

Astroport Space Technologies | astroportspace.com

Member observations

Aurora – 19th January 2026

On Monday 19th January a powerful aurora was visible over the UK. Here are some of the photos recorded by our members. Do note…the aurora often looks quite pale and grey to the unaided eye, but cameras and smartphones are able to pick out the reds and greens very well.

Martin Cook

Photos of the aurora on 19/1/2026 taken from East Ipswich.

Samsung galaxy S20 5G smartphone.
The aurora was visible with the naked eye even with the light pollution from street lights and Ipswich hospital.
The light green glow intensified then dimmed several times, backlighting the house opposite and the clouds.

20260119_220451 22:04, 26mm, f1.8, iso1600, 1sec. Outside back garden.

20260119_221043 22:10, 26mm, f1.8, iso1250, 1sec. Inside through window.

20260119_231350 22:13, 26mm, f1.8, iso3200, 0.5sec. Inside through window.

Stephen McElvanney

Taken with a Canon 800D and Tokina 14-20mm f/2 from Melton.
8s exposure, ISO 200 and processed in Affinity.
The base of the letter P is pointing at Polaris
(Note: The image quality is reduced for Newsletter, but the full resolution image is available on the website)

Jack Gleed

Jack took an incredible 360 video (available online) which shows all the shapes and colours we could see. This is just a screen grab of a single frame.

The full video can be viewed here:

https://youtu.be/Se3goosTozQ?si=73tVdTgrCDpKZrKY

Martin Cook - SeeStar on holiday

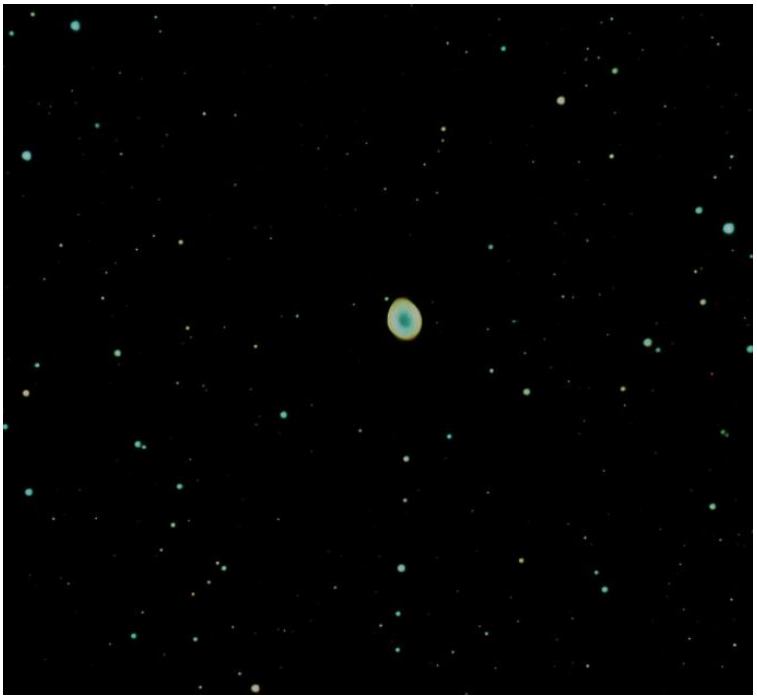
In November I was on holiday in North Norfolk staying in the small village of Ringstead, about 3 miles from Hunstanton. No street lights and dark skies. I took the opportunity to test out the Society's See Star.

All the images were taken with the telescope in alt-az which would result in star trails and field rotation compared to using the telescope set up equatorially. To combat star trails the exposure was kept down to 10 seconds and to reduce the amount of field rotation the overall time imaging an object was 1 hour.

Using the SeeStar software I checked each image. Selecting only the best ones for routine stacking, these images were then cleaned up using the built in AI de-noise software. Finally, the image had its brightness and contrast adjusted in Photoshop.

17-11-2025 18:15 – 18:48.
M27 the Dumbbell nebula, a planetary nebula in the constellation of Vulpecula.
20 minutes of stacked 10 second exposure.

21-11-2025 17:44 – 17:47.
NGC 457 the Owl cluster. An open star cluster in the constellation of Cassiopeia.
9 minutes of stacked 10 second exposure.



21-11-2025 18:00 – 18:22.
M57 the Ring nebula, a planetary nebula in the constellation of Lyra.
19 minutes of stacked 10 second exposure.

21-11-2025 18:24 – 19:04.
NGC 6946 the Fireworks galaxy in the constellation of Cygnus.
29 minutes of stacked 10 second exposure.

21-11-2025 19:06 – 19:50.
M1 the Crab nebula in the constellation of Taurus.
27 minutes of stacked 10 second exposure.

21-11-2025 19:52 – 20:56
M33 the Triangulum galaxy in the constellation of Triangulum.
22 minutes of stacked 10 second exposure.