

Chapter 2

The War Years

With the Second World War starting in September 1939 and access to a decent telescope denied him, Patrick decided to join the East Grinstead LDV (Local Defence Volunteers). The LDV initials acquired a few unfortunate interpretations such as 'Leap, Duck and Vanish' and, a year later, it was renamed 'The Home Guard'. Patrick admitted, on more than one occasion, that he was probably the 'Pike' (the BBC *Dad's Army's* 'stupid boy' character, played by Ian Lavender) of his day! One reason why Patrick became a Home Guard private was that his father, retired Army Captain Charles Moore M.C., now employed as an accountant, had been elected Platoon Commander of the East Grinstead Home Guard. So, Patrick's dad was the Captain Mainwaring of his day! Unlike private Pike though, Patrick was active in both the Home Guard and the ARP (the Air Raid Precautions volunteer organization). One of Patrick's enduring friends, Pat Clarke, served with Patrick during his Home Guard days. Once, on a TV programme in 1974, he recalled how, despite their orders to search the skies for German paratroopers, our Patrick had them stargazing too. On one occasion a Home Guard member rushed into the platoon H.Q. and shouted that he had spotted a bright German flare and the invasion was starting. Everyone started getting guns and ammunition out of cupboards in a mad panic. Patrick rushed out and was back in seconds. "You bloody idiot, that's not the Germans, it's Venus" bellowed a frustrated teenage Patrick! He was amazed anyone, especially in his informal astronomy class, could be that stupid! Patrick occasionally mentioned another Home Guard military commander too, a retired Major J. H. Marr, MC, DSO. Apparently the Major stated: "Good Grief! I'd go home to lunch permanently if young Moore was given a rifle and some ammo, doncha know! What?! What?!"

Despite the war, BAA London meetings were still held whenever possible and the BAA meeting reports from that era show that the young Patrick was keen to attend when he could, although with more and more young men being drawn into the armed services the attendances were low and Patrick would have been a young face amongst mainly middle-aged or elderly men, some of distinctly Victorian origin. The first wartime BAA meeting in which Patrick's presence is officially

recorded is the meeting of May 29th 1940. He would have been 17 years old. The BAA meetings, until August 1942, were held in an upper room of Sion College on the Embankment. The BAA Library was housed in an adjacent room at Sion College. When the War began the meeting start time was moved forward from 17:00 to 15:00, but still on the last Wednesday of the month, except during the summer recess. However, the BAA Council was soon forced to modify this impossibly early timing so that tea was served at 16:00 with the meeting commencing at 16:30 from February 1940. The aerial bombardment of Britain obviously affected BAA observers. Yes, there was a nighttime blackout, which meant light pollution was reduced, but the skies were increasingly cluttered by barrage balloons, exhaust trails, shrapnel and blazing aircraft and many residents of the capital were sleeping in the London Underground.

That earliest recorded contribution from Patrick, described in the BAA meeting minutes for May 29th 1940, at Sion College on the London Embankment, may be of interest to the reader. It came during a discussion on variable stars and the question is attributed to Mr P.A. Moore, so it definitely was Patrick. There were no other P.A. Moore's in the BAA in that wartime year of 1940. The 17 year old Patrick asked the following question: "Does the Variable Star Section take any account of the brightest irregular and long-period variables such as alpha Orionis, alpha Herculis and alpha and gamma Cassiopeia?" Mr F.M. Holborn, deputising for the Variable Star Section director W.M. Lindley, who was unable to attend due to military duties, replied: "No, the Variable Star Section does not observe the brightest variables. The most brilliant object studied is omicron Ceti, but I do Gamma Cassiopeia unofficially." Patrick replied: "Gamma Cassiopeia is really the star I am thinking about most, and I should like to know if naked-eye observation is considered adequate for these stars?" Mr Holborn affirmed that the teenage Patrick must use the naked eye for estimating the magnitude of such a bright star.

The next BAA meeting, namely the one scheduled for the last Wednesday in June 1940, had to be cancelled, and even the October 1940 AGM was postponed *sine die* due to the sustained bombing of London by the Luftwaffe during the period known as 'The Blitz'. Due to the aerial bombardment hazard, the devastation in many parts of London, and the impracticality of winter travel during a blackout, the BAA cancelled all further Ordinary meetings until January 1941, when the aerial warfare over London had abated. Also, due solely to the war, the BAA's membership had already dropped by 46 to only 860 members. Just when Patrick had decided to regularly participate in BAA London meetings, Hitler had intervened.

Patrick's Home Guard and ARP duties did not wipe out his observing though, as even a cursory scan through his vast collection of observing notebooks will show. Any object in the night sky was a target for his 3½ inch refractor. For example, his notes record a good observation of Comet Rigollet on March 8th 1940 and variable stars were always being recorded. Nevertheless, the Moon was Patrick's passion. On October 15th 1940 Patrick, observing with his 3½ inch refractor from his parents' garden, was presented with a very favourable libration (lunar tilt, towards the Earth) of the features on the edge of the disc. Patrick claimed he noted a large crater (it would later be named Caramuel and eventually officially designated as Einstein)

and on the very edge of the disc, beyond some mountains, Patrick saw the suggestion of a dark region (a lunar ‘sea’) and a very prominent crater with high walls and a prominent central peak. It would be 7 years later that Patrick would have a clear night, a favourable libration and the experience to pursue this observation further. He had, of course, been trying to see (Patrick would later phrase it as ‘discovering’!) Wilkins’ ‘Mare X’, described in that Wilkins’ 1937 BAA Journal article (and his 1938 Newspaper article) and mentioned previously as Mare Orientalis as far back as 1906. While Patrick’s later claim that he had ‘discovered’ the new sea was certainly a gross exaggeration, persistence and determination had meant that he was one of the few observers to study the feature well in the 1940s and 1950s.

In fact, I have studied Patrick’s lunar notebook for October 15th 1940 and although there are indeed some nice sketches of these limb regions during a favourable libration there is nothing that corresponds to Caramuel/Einstein. In addition, the dark feature he has sketched close to the Mare Orientale location is more likely the Lacus Autumnae which is also a very foreshortened feature close to the Orientale region, but not the same thing. In addition, Patrick has not drawn attention to these features in his notebook in any way. Patrick actually committed his October 15th 1940 claims to print in his book *The Wandering Astronomer* (pages 158–160) and included the comment that he was on leave from Bomber Command in the RAF, which is certainly not true (we will come to that in a few more lines). However, as a minimum, his sketches, aged 17, of these limb regions, made with a small aperture refractor, are impressive. Also, undoubtedly, he was studying those crucial regions because he had boundless enthusiasm for glimpsing the Moon’s far side. So let’s not judge him too harshly.

On a humorous 50th anniversary *Sky at Night*, on April 1st 2007, Patrick would cynically say to his younger self (impressionist Jon Culshaw) that the Americans would ‘eventually re-discover the Mare Orientale’. Nevertheless, a year later, after a definitive paper by Richard Baum and Ewen Whitaker appeared in the BAA Journal, he made an apology for wrongly claiming to have discovered the Eastern Sea, citing it as simply not knowing about foreign observations of it....Hmmm.... Whatever you say Patrick!!

Of course, the War was well underway when Patrick claims to have made his 1940 Orientale observation and he often stated that he certainly wanted to go to Cambridge University in the coming year to study geology, but “Hitler changed my plans.” This brings us nicely onto his RAF war service.

The RAF Records

On a number of occasions Patrick has claimed that he joined the RAF in 1939, aged 16, faking his age and his medical history into the bargain. However, MOD records do not bear this out. These records state that Patrick Alfred Moore (born March 4th 1923), Service Number 1800747, enlisted in the RAF Volunteer Reserves on December 31st 1941, in other words, just over 2 months before his *nineteenth*

birthday and well after he could have taken up his geology degree at Cambridge. On more than one occasion he claimed that he swapped with another young (healthy) recruit at the RAF medical. The healthy recruit took two medicals and the bright 16 year old Patrick took two aptitude tests, or so Patrick claimed! In fact, the RAF records and Patrick's own jottings in his lunar notebooks agree precisely with respect to him enlisting 2 months before his 19th birthday. His third lunar notebook covering 1941–1946 records, under the heading 'January 1st – 2nd 1942' (the days immediately after his official enlistment) the following note:

Went to Euston House, where I was accepted as an RAF pilot and formerly attested – so it seems unlikely that I shall be able to do much lunar work after this spring.

The next entry in his lunar notebook records the following:

Jan – Feb 1942: A period of snow and cloud. On duty with the Home Guard & ARP. Attended Feb BAA meeting where the Rev. Dr. Davidson informed me that actions are to be taken against the inefficiency and slackness of MacDonald, the Lunar Section Director.

This author cannot help wondering if MacDonald's announcement to the BAA that Wilkins had not been the first discoverer of the Mare Orientale/Mare X, at that April 1938 meeting, 4 years earlier, had turned Wilkins, and his future apprentice Patrick, against MacDonald. The BAA meeting minutes for February 25th 1942 record that Patrick asked the Reverend Dr Martin Davidson (BAA Comet Section Director) a question, following Davidson's lecture about recent comets. Patrick asked: "Is it possible that there may be another large planet beyond Neptune?" The Reverend Dr Davidson thought not, or its influence would have been noted on the orbits of comets.

In fact, in early 1942, despite the War, Patrick managed to attend two consecutive BAA London Wednesday meetings, at Sion College on the Embankment: the meeting of February 25th (mentioned above and in Patrick's notebook) and March 25th. He would have turned 19 by the time of the second meeting. These would probably have been Patrick's last BAA meetings at the Sion College venue. On the evening of March 2nd/3rd 1942 a Total Lunar Eclipse had taken place and had been at a favourable altitude from the longitude and latitude of the UK. At that March 25th BAA meeting Patrick told the members that he had seen the eclipse from East Grinstead and had concentrated on the crater Linné, as well as Dionysius and Censorinus, to see if 'the wave of intense cold sweeping over the Moon' affected them. He also observed two stars being occulted by the Moon during totality, all using his 3-inch refractor. Unfortunately the weather had deteriorated after mid-eclipse, as seen from his East Grinstead home, but at least he had observed it and relayed his views to the BAA members present at the meeting. From the cloudy skies of Britain most time-critical astronomical events end up being thwarted.

According to MoD records Patrick was finally called up for RAF service a few months later, specifically, on July 13th 1942 as an AC2 (Aircraftman Second Class). Again, this information tallies with the notes in his lunar notebook:

I joined the RAF VR (Volunteer Reserve) to train as a pilot on 1942 July 13th and from that date of course, all lunar work must be suspended for the duration of the War.

Patrick would have been 19 years and 4 months old, so certainly *not* 16! Around early 1942, before his official call-up to active service, Patrick spent many nights as a volunteer ambulance driver, during and after air raids. From the late 1970s the middle-aged Patrick would claim that he became very friendly, during this wartime period, with a local East Grinstead girl who was a nurse and a fellow ambulance driver. For the first time ever, in his 2003 auto-biography he gave her a name: Lorna. More on this tale shortly! Patrick said that he became a regular pipe smoker on his night-time ambulance shifts as the nicotine kept him awake. His favourite pipe tobacco, then, and for the rest of his life, was 'Three Nuns', although he rarely smoked beyond his sixties.

From July 13th 1942 Patrick only managed to get home to East Grinstead every 2 or 3 months, namely, while on RAF leave. His RAF training took him first to St John's Wood in London and then to RAF stations at Ludlow in Shropshire, Cosford and Stretton in Staffordshire, Paignton in Devon, Sywell in Northamptonshire and Manchester. After completing his basic training with the Initial Training Wing (ITW), Patrick was promoted to the rank of LAC (Leading Aircraftmen) in late 1942. But despite being incredibly busy with his RAF studies he did not neglect astronomy and made many observations while in the military, mainly of bright variable stars which were easy naked eye or binocular targets (stars such as alpha and gamma Cassiopeia and epsilon Aurigae were his favourites). One of his observing logs records that on December 9th 1942, while at RAF Paignton, he gave a talk to the Air Training Cadets on star recognition; he was little more than a cadet himself and was already instructing his colleagues in navigation! Patrick had four visits to RAF Paignton in total during his training period. He was based at the Tenbani hotel there but visited the Palace Hotel too at various times. Almost all of the hotels in the town were being used by the RAF at that time. By analyzing all the observing notebooks Patrick compiled while in the RAF, his early locations, official addresses, and the types of object he observed in the night sky, can be summarized as shown in the first table below (Table 2.1).

The Fianceé: Fact or Fiction?

In early March 1943 Patrick was back at East Grinstead in a brief leave period between spells at RAF Paignton in Devon. He was able to celebrate his twentieth birthday, with family, friends and (so he claimed) the enigmatic Lorna, who was now, allegedly, his fianceé. His 20th birthday, on March 4th, occurred just 1 day after the Bethnal Green tube disaster, when 173 people were crushed to death on the stairs leading to the London Underground station. However (again, according solely to Patrick, on the few occasions he spoke of the War years), disaster was to strike him personally 4 months later. But just before then, on June 30th 1943, Patrick managed to attend another BAA London meeting. From September 1942 the BAA meeting venue had changed from Sion College on the Thames Embankment to the Royal Astronomical Society premises at Burlington House, Piccadilly. The meeting

Table 2.1 RAF stations, observing locations, objects observed, and official addresses for Patrick from 1942 July to 1943 November

Date	RAF station/location	Objects observed
1942 July	St John's Wood, London	Variable stars
1942 August	Ludlow, Shropshire	Variable stars
1942 August	Cosford, Staffordshire	Variable stars & partial solar eclipse
1942 September	Stretton, Staffordshire	Variable stars
1942 September	Cosford, Staffordshire	Variable stars
1942 October	East Grinstead, Sussex	Mainly variable stars/planetary
1942 October	Ludlow, Shropshire	Variable stars
1942 October	Paignton, Devonshire	Variable stars, aurorae, meteors
1942 November	Cosford, Staffordshire	Variable stars, meteors
1942 November	Paignton, Devonshire	Variable stars
1943 January	East Grinstead, Sussex	Mainly variable stars/planetary
1943 February	Paignton, Devonshire	Variable stars, comets
1943 March	East Grinstead, Sussex	Mainly variable stars/planetary
1943 March	Paignton, Devonshire	Variable stars, comets
1943 April	Sywell, Northamptonshire	Variable stars
1943 April	East Grinstead, Sussex	Mainly variable stars/planetary
1943 May	Manchester, Lancashire	Variable stars
1943 June	East Grinstead, Sussex	Mainly variable stars/planetary
1943 July	Cranwell, Lincolnshire	Variable stars
1943 November	East Grinstead, Sussex	Mainly variable stars/planetary
Mail:- 1800747 LAC Moore. G Flight, 1 Squadron, RAF Heaton Park, Manchester		
1943 November	Manchester, Lancashire	Mainly variable stars

report for June 30th 1943, at the new Burlington House venue, recorded him simply as Mr P.A. Moore, that is, without an RAF rank. At that wartime meeting the BAA President F.J. Hargreaves was in the chair, flanked by the secretaries Holborn and Macintyre. During the afternoon the 20 year old Patrick made sure his presence was noted. As was quite common in that wartime era The Reverend Dr Martin Davidson read a paper on behalf of a member who could not be present. In this case the member was Colonel Edgeworth (1880–1972) and the paper was a truly ground-breaking one which then (and now) has largely been forgotten, except when the solar system's Kuiper belt is correctly referred to as the Edgeworth-Kuiper belt.

So, it was truly a moment in astronomical history when Dr Davidson read out Colonel Edgeworth's paper entitled 'The Evolution of our Planetary System' to that wartime BAA audience. The 20 year old Patrick was soon asking questions once the paper was delivered. "Does Colonel Edgeworth's Theory provide in any way for the retrograde satellites and comets?" Patrick asked. The Rev. Dr Davidson replied that there was no attempt to explain this in the paper. Patrick continued: "It seems to me that were the asteroids formed in the manner described, Saturn and the other large planets would also be responsible for rings of asteroids, but so far as I know none have been discovered." Shortly after, on the subject of the origin of the Moon, Patrick added another point, namely: "If the Moon was formed in this way, is it not curious that Venus has no satellites? I should have thought the conditions

would have been very similar.” Dr Davidson agreed that the lack of a Venusian moon was puzzling. Anyway, that was the end of Patrick’s contribution to that particular BAA meeting and as he left Piccadilly on that summer evening, heading back to Sussex, he could have had no idea what lay in store for his part of the country, courtesy of the Luftwaffe.

Nine days later, on July 9th 1943, death dealing blows were struck at the heart of Patrick’s home town of East Grinstead, shortly after 5 p.m. on Friday afternoon, when one of about ten enemy raiders swept in from the coast to cause havoc in the shopping centre, resulting in a large number of casualties amongst men, women and children. The majority of these were in the Whitehall cinema, where a bomb had scored a direct hit. Six years earlier, the 14 year old Patrick had played a xylophone solo in that same establishment. It was in that Whitehall Cinema that the death toll was heaviest; 184 people had been watching a Hopalong Cassidy cowboy film when the air raid sirens went off. It was quite common for children to fill the cinema after school ended on Friday and July 9th was no exception. A warning appeared on the screen, about the air raid, but few people took any notice. The later speculation was that the one Luftwaffe pilot who became separated from the other planes decided that he would find another target before he returned home. Supposedly aiming for a train entering the railway station, one bomb hit the cinema and others landed on several shops in the High Street and in London Road. As a result of the raid 108 people were killed and 235 were seriously injured. It was the largest loss of life in any air raid in Sussex and, for no obvious reason, Patrick’s quiet town of East Grinstead had been the target. Surely, his lifelong hatred of Germans was cast in stone from that point onwards.

Within a few minutes of this ruthless attack on an open town, civil defence workers, including police, troops and members of the Home Guard, many well-known to Patrick, had arrived on the scene. Members of the public also helped in various heroic tasks. The combined services accomplished many feats of skill and daring, and worked feverishly throughout the late afternoon and night. There were many harrowing scenes as children and women were recovered from the debris. A newspaper office was used for a mortuary, and later the bodies were taken to a garage where they were left for identification purposes. Less than half of the victims had been identified by Sunday.

Patrick claimed that his fiancée Lorna was killed in early July 1943 during an air raid, and on some occasions he claimed that she was killed while inside her ambulance. Frankly, like many of Patrick’s wartime stories, his account was slightly different every time! Sometimes a V-bomb was responsible and sometimes he would revert to the air raid story. He also repeatedly claimed that it was the day his life ended and he never, ever, gave a lot more detail than that. In one newspaper interview he claimed her death was a week before their wedding. In a few interviews he was reported as saying she was killed in the East End, not East Grinstead. When quizzed he would always say, very rapidly, and in a highly agitated manner, that the war was, “a long time ago and it’s best to forget it and she was the only girl for me”. Indeed, dozens of interviewers over the years, on radio, TV and in the tabloid press, tried to extract more information from Patrick, but none was ever forthcoming.

He claimed he couldn't even recall her first name in one radio interview. The conversation almost always ended with those same words, "it's a long time ago now, a long, long time ago" or, "best to forget it".

The July 9th 1943 bombing date fits perfectly with the few chronological facts that Patrick ever let slip. However, it should be stressed that there really is considerable doubt over the very existence of Lorna, whose surname has never been revealed and whose first name (real or not) was mentioned, for the first time ever, in Patrick's biography, published in 2003. Indeed, prior to the late 1970s a fiancée killed in the war was never, ever, mentioned by Patrick to the press. He always stated that he was a lifelong bachelor and would remain one. Crucially, Lorna was not mentioned, or even hinted at, in Patrick's 'This is Your Life' programme in 1974 and Patrick, under questioning, has stated that there were never any photographs of her, taken by anyone! [I paid £300 for a studio copy of that TV programme and I once found the 'This is Your Life' big red book in Patrick's house. All of the red book's pages had been removed and simply replaced with half a dozen photographs of Patrick alongside the more famous guests.....] It was only after his mother's death, in January 1981, that this story of a wartime fiancée received wide publicity and Patrick did himself no favours by stubbornly refusing to give any details of the girl, even in his own biography. On one radio interview in 1999 he almost walked out of the studio when the subject was persistently raised. It seemed to really stress him when it was pointed out that if he was only 20 when the tragedy occurred, and if he really had wanted a family, there was plenty of time left to find someone else. "Second best's no good for me" he'd repeatedly bark.

Patrick and his parents knew many people who were killed in the East Grinstead July 1943 raid. Indeed, many of his former East Grinstead Home Guard and ARP colleagues were involved in the aftermath, injured, or even killed. Some have wondered if Lorna was loosely based on Private Joan Barber of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) who was, indeed, an ambulance driver, 3 years older than Patrick, and was known to Patrick and his family. Her service number was W/75120. She died in the July 9th East Grinstead raid and was buried, by Patrick's childhood tutor and rector, the Rev. John Missen, at the Holy Trinity Church, Coleman's Hatch. However, Patrick has always said that Lorna was the same age as him, namely 20 at the time of the raid, whereas Private Barber was 23.

A lifelong correspondent with Patrick, and a man born in the same year, the late American telescope maker Tom Cave (1923–2003), visited Patrick in 1944 just before the Normandy landings and exchanged correspondence with him for 60 years. While waiting for D-Day Cave was able to attend a few BAA meetings in London too. However, Cave was adamant that Patrick (and his parents) never mentioned the wartime loss of his fiancée, even when he visited East Grinstead a matter of months after Lorna's alleged demise. In addition, Colin Ronan (1920–1995) was a lifelong friend of Patrick's and, during the BAA Centenary year of 1990 (when he was the BAA President and I was the incoming Papers Secretary), I mentioned the death of Patrick's fiancée to him. His memories were the same as Tom Cave's. Colin's comments were along the lines of: "You know, I joined the BAA in 1938 and sometimes saw Patrick during the War Years at BAA meetings and we've been the closest of friends ever since. He's always declared himself a life long bachelor.

He never said a thing about this wartime sweetheart. I read the ghastly story in a newspaper about 40 years later and couldn't believe it. I rang Patrick up but he just changed the subject straight away – what a frightfully strange business!" I should add that I have scoured all of Patrick's observing logbooks from the 1940s, searching for any mention of Lorna. He often used these logbooks as a diary, noting if others were with him when he observed, along with other facts. No female, of any name, is mentioned at any point, apart from his mother and housekeeper, and there is no hint of a family tragedy either.

With no real evidence of Lorna's existence maybe we should just leave it at that? Maybe, 30 years later, Patrick just got sick and tired of the 1970s press (and a few vocal psychiatrists) asking why he was not married, thereby insinuating he might be homosexual, or simply an overgrown mother's boy. In the mid 1970s, like Arthur C. Clarke more than 20 years later, Patrick was, briefly, accused (in mischievous rumours) of maybe having ulterior motives with respect to the teenagers and scout groups who he was mentoring in astronomy. These wild and malicious theories were totally and utterly unfounded, but for a few weeks in his local area some people were giving Patrick very strange looks. The world seems to be full of small-minded and envious trouble makers who simply cannot accept that a life of total celibacy can be a very happy one. His unmarried status did him no favours at this time and it was shortly afterwards that the story of a wartime fiancée was first revealed to the press. This, to me, seems the most likely reason for the Lorna myth. One final thought that I leave the reader with is this. In interviews prior to the late 1970s Patrick always used to say that he had no time for marriage because "I'm married to the Moon, I'm married to the lunar surface....." Well, Freudian slip or not, 'Lunar' and 'Lorna' sound very similar and Patrick was always a big fan, consciously and sub-consciously, of word association, riddles and pseudonyms. So, my view is that 'Lorna' means 'Lunar' and the girl of that first name never even existed..... However, there was actually another girl who Patrick became totally infatuated with, as we shall see much later in this book, during the 1950s.

[Reluctantly, given the cynical times we now live in, and some twenty-first century revelations about unmarried celebrity TV perverts (and even priests), I feel I should add a few more words here, before returning to the War Years. Patrick spent a lifetime helping and encouraging children and teenagers, especially those who were, like he had been, unwell in childhood. In effect, he was giving these children the same encouragement that he had received from W.S. Franks. As these children grew older they always retained a great affection for Patrick and were always welcome in his home, years later, as adults. Decades after they first met him, they would return to see him, along with their wives and children, and many asked him to be their own children's' godparent. Some of the children Patrick taught during the 1950s were still visiting him when they themselves were pensioners and some even moved to West Sussex because he lived there! Basically, Patrick's teaching work with young people was 100 % genuine and they always held him in the highest esteem.]

There are no indications that Patrick attended any BAA meetings in the year following his attendance at the June 30th 1943 meeting. As a young man Patrick almost always made his presence known by asking questions, which were duly recorded in the minutes. He invariably signed his name in the meetings register too. In fact, Patrick's

absence at BAA meetings was entirely predictable, as from July to November 1943 he was on an intensive course at RAF Cranwell and, after a short trip home in November 1943, he joined G Flight 1 Squadron of RAF Heaton Park at Manchester. He then set off with many other recruits for his final training as an RAF navigator in Canada, under the Empire Air Training Scheme, primarily at RAF Moncton in New Brunswick. The second table of his RAF astronomy observations is shown below. This details his period in Canada along with the observations made in his observing notebooks, cross-correlated to his locations and official RAF mail addresses, from December 1943 to the end of the war. As we can see, from that month of December 1943, until June 1944, Patrick was initially in Canada. Then, on his return, he was mainly in northern England, well away from the BAA meetings in London (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 RAF stations, observing locations, objects observed (nearly all being naked eye or binocular variable stars), and official addresses for Patrick from 1943 December to the end of the war

Date	RAF station/location	Objects observed
Mail:- 1800747 LAC Moore. MPO 304. RCAF, Ottawa, Canada		
1943 December	Halifax, Nova Scotia	Mainly variable stars
1943 December	Moncton, New Brunswick	Mainly variable stars
1943 December	Montreal, Quebec	Mainly variable stars
1943 December	Moncton, New Brunswick	Mainly variable stars
Mail:- 1800747 LAC Moore. MPO 211. RCAF A Block, Hamilton, Ontario		
1944 January	Hamilton, Ontario	Mainly variable stars
1944 January	Toronto, Ontario	Mainly variable stars
1944 January	Hamilton, Ontario	Mainly variable stars
1944 February	Oakville, Ontario	Mainly variable stars
1944 March	Hamilton, Ontario	Mainly variable stars
Mail:- Pilot Officer Moore. MPO 304. RCAF, Ottawa, Canada		
1944 June	Moncton, New Brunswick	Mainly variable stars
1944 June	Harrogate, Yorkshire	Mainly variable stars
1944 July 3rd	East Grinstead	First lunar work for 10 months!
Mail:- P/O Moore. A Wing 10 Course, 1 Officers Mess, ACOS, Credon Hill, Hereford		
1944 August	Hereford, England	Mainly variable stars
1944 August	Wellington, Shropshire	Mainly variable stars
1944 August	Hereford, England	Mainly variable stars
1944 August	East Grinstead, Sussex	Numerous objects
Mail:- P/O Moore, Room 157, Queen Hotel, RAF Harrogate, Yorkshire		
1944 September	Harrogate, Yorkshire	Mainly variable stars
Mail:- P/O Moore, Officers Mess, RAF Millom, Cumberland		
Sept' 44 – Sept' 45	Millom, Cumberland	Mainly variable stars
“ “ “ “	Barrow, Lancashire	“ “ “
“ “ “ “	Lossiemouth & Elgin, Moray	“ “ “
“ “ “ “	Aberdeen & Inverness, Scotland	“ “ “
“ “ “ “	St Davids, Pembroke	“ “ “
“ “ “ “	Lindholme/Doncaster, Yorkshire	“ “ “
“ “ “ “	Sheffield, Yorkshire	“ “ “
“ “ “ “	Oxford	“ “ “
October 1945	Home to East Grinstead, Sussex	“ “ “

Although Patrick's familiarity with the night sky and the points of the compass singled him out as being destined to be a navigator he did get his pilot's wings. However, he was the first to admit that he was not destined to fly planes. In an oft repeated story he would recount an occasion when his Commanding Officer watched him landing a Tiger Moth solo, after 9 or 10 hours of instruction. In the evening in the 'Officers Mess' the CO approached him. In Patrick's words: "He gave me an old-fashioned look and said, 'Kid, if you were one of our fighter pilots the Germans would have awarded you an Iron Cross: please stick to being a Navigator!' I bought him a drink in a marked manner". Not surprisingly it was a navigator that Patrick would become. Patrick told me that he often used to entertain his colleagues by playing on the piano in the Officer's Mess and that he spent more time practising his bowling in the cricket nets than on the parade ground. In the Foreword to Patrick's 1961 book entitled *Conquest of the air: The Story of the Wright Brothers* he describes his first RAF trip in the Tiger Moth trainer, with a young officer instructor. 'For a hectic half-hour he hurled me all over the sky, evidently doing his best to tie knots in the exhaust smoke. When it was over I felt somewhat dizzy, but at least I knew what flying was like.'

While in Canada, Patrick claimed to have met no less a person than Orville Wright, the very first man to fly in a 'heavier-than-air machine'. Like many of Patrick's wartime stories the account varied slightly each time, as did the year and country of the encounter.

Over the years Patrick's account became more detailed, with many more recollections of numerous questions he had supposedly asked Orville Wright. Yet, in Patrick's short book about the Wright Brothers, he simply said 'I will always be glad that I once met him.'

Sometimes Patrick said that he had met Orville while he was in Canada, training with the RAF, and sometimes he was in the USA, having hitched a ride on an RAF flight. In the latter version of events Patrick claimed he was attending a fortunately timed meeting of an American society, of which he (Patrick) was a member, on the day that Orville was a guest of honour. I have searched for possible dates when this might have occurred and have found just one, whereas Patrick could never provide any specific dates or details whatsoever, claiming that he could not remember, every time I raised the subject! The one date I came up with was Friday December 17th 1943, the 40th anniversary of the famous Kitty Hawk flight. Patrick had just started his RAF training period in Canada that month and a gala evening in honour of Orville Wright was being held at the Hotel Statler, in Washington D.C., on that day. Numerous dignitaries from the world of aviation had been invited and, bearing in mind Orville's well known sadness at the use of aircraft in war, the evening was themed 'Aviation for Peace'. It was broadcast on the NBC Radio Network. Orville did not enjoy publicity and had only agreed to attend because he had been promised that President Roosevelt would be there. The President was scheduled to announce that the Kitty Hawk Flyer would be returned from the Science Museum in London, to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, after the War. As it turned out Roosevelt did not turn up and Orville was asked to present an award to a military man, General Hap Arnold, which he was not at all happy with.

Anyway, I have digressed a bit, and my point here is that during Patrick's 9 months in Canada, the December 17th 1943 Washington gala is the most likely event where

the publicity shy Orville Wright might have been at the same venue as Patrick, if he had hitched a ride with senior RAF Officers attending the gala event. Orville's brother Wilbur had died in 1912 and Orville Wright himself did very little flying after 1920. He allegedly told Patrick, in person, that he was saddened to see aircraft used in warfare and it had dented his flying enthusiasm. Patrick described him as quiet and unassuming but said that he liked him immensely. In his eighties Patrick added a further twist to the story, claiming that in his final question to Orville he had asked him if he thought that men would land on the Moon? Despite Patrick's inability to recall precisely when and where he met Orville Wright he claimed that he remembered his reply, regarding men landing on the Moon, word for word, namely: "I reckon so, but it'll sure mean some hard work."

As Canada is a good place from which to view aurorae the young RAF trainee Moore was always keen to be up in the air at night, armed with a camera, just in case there was a dramatic display. Frequently he was a night time passenger on an Avro Ansen trainer plane, even in his days off, as it got him above the clouds on moonless nights, when the aurora is best seen. On Patrick's second wartime trip from Canada to the USA he managed to wangle another invite to an unspecified science meeting, and to a small reception afterwards, where he claims to have met Albert Einstein. Patrick found him to be "Exactly what I expected; unworldly, communicative and blissfully unaware of his unique status". Patrick often recounted asking Einstein if he could explain the infinity of the Universe in non-mathematical terms, and Albert had apparently replied that he had never been able to do so satisfactorily. Einstein was an expert violinist and, at the reception, was encouraged to demonstrate his musical skill, but he wanted a piano accompaniment and, according to Patrick, his young self jumped at the chance. Patrick accompanied Einstein on the piano as he played Saint-Saëns' Swan. Surely, a claim to fame that few people could ever hope to equal? Well, maybe; however, like almost all of Patrick's claims to have met an astonishing number of great men of science, there is absolutely no independent evidence of the Einstein musical pairing..... In the twenty-first century a friend of Patrick's created an amusing photographic montage of Einstein playing a violin, next to Patrick playing the piano. The picture usually sat on top of the *Marshall & Rose* baby grand piano in Patrick's music room. Even Patrick was amazed that people thought this picture was genuine, as clearly it was a middle-aged Patrick in the image, looking barely younger than Einstein, who was 44 years his senior!

If I sound sceptical about these meetings with famous people it is simply because, over the years, Patrick's stories tend to grow and grow, from actually seeing someone at a distance to knowing them very well indeed. His tales of meetings with the great Mars observer E.M. Antoniadi, when he was pressed for more details, literally evaporated into thin air. Patrick was a great entertainer and raconteur and hated to disappoint anyone with a boring tale. The dates of the meeting with Einstein would vary between 1939 and 1944, depending on who Patrick was telling the story too. Patrick often mentioned Einstein in his early books, but it was only well after his mother's death, and, specifically, after 1986, that the 'accompanying Einstein' story was related to the media, or divulged in his books. Now, 1986 was the year of the death of a former BAA President (1954–1956), Reginald (Reggie) Waterfield (1900–1986). Waterfield had genuinely met many famous people in his life, including Will Hay, and was a stickler for painstaking scientific research. He was, however,

not a great fan of Patrick's and once described him, in later life, as "a beached whale"! However, the two men knew each other very well. Waterfield often used to relate, at BAA meetings, that one of *his* proudest moments was when he met Einstein, in the 1940s, at a small reception in New York, and was encouraged to play the piano as an accompaniment to Einstein on the violin. Sounds familiar? Waterfield's account of that meeting bore staggering similarities to Patrick's own account, which Patrick only announced to the media shortly after Waterfield's death, on June 10th 1986. Waterfield's friend Harold Ridley once told me that "some of Patrick's stories sound like Xerox copies of Reggie's life". I will say no more!

In June 1944 Patrick and numerous other RAF trainees returned to England from Canada on the good ship 'Empress of Japan', swiftly renamed 'Empress of Scotland' after the Japanese joined the war on the enemy side! Patrick claimed that even a basic knowledge of astro-navigation told him while on deck that the ship was sailing unusually far north, near to Greenland. When he mentioned this to a naval officer he was greeted with a stony silence. Apparently this course (to avoid U boats) was highly classified data, and despite Patrick being a trained navigator the naval officer seemed most unhappy that he had deduced this Top Secret information simply by staring at the sky!

For most of the war, according to Patrick, he was a full time navigator with RAF Bomber command, based at various RAF bases, mostly in northern England and mostly with Wellington bombers. From the information available it appears he spent most of the last *year* (not years) of the war at RAF Millom in Cumberland, with time also spent at RAF Barrow in Lancashire and RAF Harrogate in Yorkshire. Trying to observe the Moon setting, when he was in the bomber at night, became something of an obsession for Patrick, although he could not explain why when I asked him about this. He never actually witnessed an aerial 'moonset'. However, he did add that he vividly remembered seeing a rare 'lunar rainbow' one night while on a mission.



Fig. 2.1 A stern-faced Patrick (*centre, back row*) and the other five members of his six man Wellington Crew in 1945. On the *right, in the front row*, is his colleague the radio operator Guest Harding Dempster (later Flight Lieutenant Dempster) (Official RAF photograph. Photographer unknown)

In Patrick's observing notes for November 27th 1944, made from RAF Millom, he notes that the BAA's Auroral and Zodiacal Light Section Director, Mr W.B. Housman (the Director since 1928), lived relatively nearby at Seaton Observatory, Workington. Patrick's notebook comments read: 'Work on auroral effects upon magnetism is to be commenced shortly. Compass swinging (air over Walney Island) carried out on Nov 21st at 9 hours.' Patrick was obviously endlessly enthusiastic about all aspects of his hobby even while on active duty. The war had one big advantage in that the whole country was blacked out and so skies were very dark. This enabled Patrick to carry out many naked eye observations, including some of the Zodiacal Light and Gegenschien, which are almost impossible to see when skies are even slightly bright. Also, when in his Wellington bomber, navigating, he would again look out for aurorae and usually had a film camera with him!

From the limited information available it appears that Patrick's main role in the final year of the war was as a navigator in a six man Wellington crew, patrolling the north Atlantic air space and available for bombing raids on U Boat bases and even mainland Germany. In the 1960s and 1970s he let slip to a few journalists that his Wellington crew were trained to be part of a Pathfinder squadron, flying in low-level, to mark targets with parachute flares. The Atlantic clasp on his Air Crew Europe Star medal confirms his involvement in RAF air crew activities over the Atlantic. When asked in later years if he ever took part in bombing raids, Patrick never, EVER, answered the question, except with: "I spent the war pottering around, flying things". Would he want to bomb Germans, after what had happened in East Grinstead on July 9th 1943? Would he relish or be revulsed by the prospect? We shall never know for sure as he refused to talk about it. When really pressed he would say "I don't talk about the War ever because of....." dramatic pause and finger tapping of the nose..... "Military Secrets"!!! I even heard him say that 65 years after the war ended! One story Patrick often told to numerous people, including myself, usually late at night, after a few drinks, was that he was once dropped behind enemy lines and hit by shrapnel, while hanging from a parachute. He claimed he still managed to escape under fire, and the 'Secret Army' French Resistance got him back to the UK. Many of his colleagues were, apparently, killed and they had been known as the 'The Ten', because there were ten of them! Again, a lot of finger tapping on the nose and a wink: "Military Secrets....can't say another word". According to the Royal Air Force Personnel Management Agency at RAF Innsworth, there is no record of him serving in any *specific* RAF squadron as either an airman or an officer. This could mean that he never became accepted for regular activities (the RAF had plenty of staff by the end of the war and Patrick was very young and not very healthy) or it could mean he was assigned to dogsbody duties.

Patrick said that he looked forward to his periods of RAF leave when he could return to his beloved East Grinstead home and play a game of tennis. On such occasions Patrick (unlike most astronomers) loved the British 'double summer time' as it enabled him to "play tennis till midnight". As with many who served in the RAF, Patrick considered himself lucky to survive the war, as he knew so many people who did not make it through. On one flight in a Wellington he sustained a serious injury to his left leg and knee caused, allegedly, by shrapnel from enemy fire. He also

claimed that he sustained a serious spinal injury and was told by RAF medics that his back might only hold up into his thirties. Regarding another occasion, he said he only just managed to land from a mission in an RAF Wellington. It was his responsibility to get four men and the injured pilot back to safety. Sometimes this story changed in the tabloid press, with the plane even becoming a Lancaster (which he told me he'd never flown!) and he had to clamber, Hollywood style, over the bodies of the dead crew to wrestle with the controls. Patrick said he was injured and lost many of his teeth in the crash landing. From that moment on he would, apparently, have to wear a full denture. [N.B. Horrendous though it sounds it was not uncommon for young adults, with a few dental problems, to have all their teeth removed and replaced with dentures in the pre-NHS 1940s. Dental work was relatively crude and highly expensive for the working classes of that era.] Excluding Patrick's 'Biggles' style war hero yarns there is one independently verified wartime story in which Patrick really did almost lose his life; but we will come to that later.

One positive thing that did emerge from Patrick's war-time experience was that he had an excellent fluency in French by late 1945. For much of his time with Bomber command he flew with a Belgian pilot, so Patrick learned to speak French with an Anglo-Flemish accent! This would serve him in good stead as a splendid French teacher during the 1950s. Even before the war, some French fluency was already present, inherited from his father and 'French-Swiss' grandmother.

Patrick's lunar observations suffered badly in 1942, 1943 and 1944. Indeed, between 1942 July 13th and 1944 July 3rd there are no entries whatsoever in his lunar notebook. On the latter date (just after the end of the 'Project Neptune' assault phase of the allied invasion of northwestern Europe) there is simply a note saying:

Looked at the Moon for the first time in Ten Months!

The RAF records show that Patrick had finally graduated at New Brunswick, and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer, on June 2nd 1944, serving in 'General Duties (Aircrew Branch)'. In other words, he was only officially commissioned in the final year of the war, just 4 days prior to D-Day. In that era, prior to 1947, an additional six digit commissioned service number was issued to the officer and this number is sometimes seen in parentheses after the commission date. Thus Patrick's full service identity now became 1800747 Patrick Alfred MOORE (165462). When asked where he was on D-Day Patrick would, on many occasions, snap "In Denmark" and quickly change the subject. Well, as he was returning from Canada to Yorkshire at that time and Denmark was under Nazi occupation, this seems somewhat unlikely!! Frankly, whoever asked that question got a different answer. Sometimes it was Denmark, sometimes Norway and sometimes he was disguised as a fisherman, on a Dutch fishing vessel. Unfortunately, the RAF records and his own observing notes make a total mockery of these entertaining yarns!

There are many tragic events in warfare which make one wonder what would have happened if someone who had been killed at a young age had, instead, survived. On D-Day itself another BAA member of Patrick's generation and one equally as skilled in observing and sketching the Moon (more so in truth) was killed on his first day of active military service. His name was Samuel Morris Green

(1921–1944) and such were his achievements, even 2 months before he would have turned 23, that a full obituary appeared in the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*. The lunar observing world and even Patrick's future may have been very different if Green had survived: we will simply never know.

Patrick's RAF commission was confirmed by his presence at the BAA London meeting of Wednesday August 30th 1944, at Burlington House in Piccadilly, where he was recorded in the minutes, for the first time, as 'Pilot Officer Moore'. In all earlier entries he was simply 'Mr Moore'. For such a young man, in an era when the BAA was dominated by distinctly Victorian looking gentlemen, the youthful Patrick certainly had a lot to say at that August 1944 meeting and it is worth mentioning what the minutes recorded of his thoughts on that wartime Wednesday afternoon in London. If nothing else, they reveal that Patrick, even aged 21, had already decided that the lunar craters were volcanic, not meteoritic, in origin; a view he would unswervingly hold, against all the evidence, even into his late seventies! We will revisit his obsessive, unswerving view of the lunar cratering process many times in this book. The President, in that year of 1944, was the distinguished planetary observer F.J. Hargreaves and he invited the tall, bearded and bespectacled BAA stalwart F.J. Sellers, who bore a distinct resemblance to the modern day entertainer Rolf Harris, to present a paper on behalf of Patrick's future mentor (who was not present) H.P. Wilkins. It was a brief talk, in which a detailed sketch of the lunar crater Plato, made by Wilkins, was shown, along with its main features, some elusive and others not. Members were invited to comment on the features indicated on Wilkins' drawing. The 21 year old Pilot Officer Patrick Moore was not shy in coming forward and had a great many comments to make. Patrick began as follows: "I would like to say that I looked at the Moon four nights ago for the first time for a year. I noticed an increased dark appearance of Plato's floor, but I was unfortunately unable to make a drawing. Visibility was mediocre and I could see no detail, but the depth of hue was unmistakable. Could the mist have been caused by the emission of CO₂, which is known to be a late stage in the activity of a volcano?" After some musings from the President and Mr Sellers about Patrick's suggestion, Patrick continued: "I expect a mist composed of CO₂ would be low-lying. There are many recorded instances of lunar fogs other than those in Plato – in Schickard and Theophilus, for instance." Later, Patrick added: "I think the difficulty lies in finding a satisfactory alternative to CO₂". In answer to theories about ice on the Moon Patrick suggested: "Surely if the surface were composed of snow or ice the albedo of the Moon would be far higher than it is?" Later at that same meeting Patrick makes the additional comment: "Surely it is reasonable to suppose that there is also a layer of volcanic ash, since the lunar surface exhibits so many signs of great volcanic activity in the past?" However, most of the members present, even in those pre-spaceprobe years, when the origin of the lunar craters was unknown, seemed unimpressed by Patrick's arguments that the lunar craters were volcanic. This did not put the young Patrick off though as he pressed home his view adding: "Is it not curious that so many [craters] are completely circular?" Also, in answer to a 'tidal pocket' explanation by Mr Sellers, Patrick stressed "I should not have expected such circular craters" and "Meteors striking the surface of the Moon would have to strike

the surface normally". The President disagreed with Patrick here, explaining that it was the explosion on impact that caused a circular crater, not the impact itself. Patrick countered "That would be reasonable if meteoritic bombardment occurred when the Moon had lost its atmosphere." Clearly, in a room of much older, and much more experienced observers Patrick was very confident, and even precocious, in his views. He certainly liked his voice to be heard.

Interestingly, immediately after this discussion the next speaker at that August 1944 meeting was a man who would become a life long friend of Patrick's, and arguably his closest ever friend in the BAA: the future historian, author and BAA Journal editor Colin A. Ronan (1920–1995), then Lieutenant Ronan. By 1946 he would have risen to the rank of Major Ronan. The subject of Colin Ronan's talk was particularly interesting, bearing in mind what would eventually happen to Patrick. Colin addressed the audience on the subject of making astronomy more popular to the public by making educational astronomical films! One almost wonders if Colin could see Patrick's future role laid out in a crystal ball. Well, outside the BAA and back in his RAF role Pilot Officer Moore was soon promoted to Flying Officer, on December 2nd 1944 in fact, but only 1 month later, Patrick, and his entire Wellington bomber crew, almost lost their lives.

In January 1945, Patrick, and the six-man Wellington Crew he had recently been assigned to (a picture of which always hung in his study) were flying at an altitude of 19,000 feet. Suddenly, the plane stopped responding to the pilot. Everything had iced up and the plane went into a near vertical dive. As the pilot grappled with the controls, and the plane plunged through the 4,500 foot level, the decision was made to bail out. The radio operator, Flight Sergeant Guest Harding Dempster (later Flight Lieutenant Dempster, RAF service numbers 1575608/177185) handed the navigator Patrick a parachute; but, with horror, they realised there was something wrong with it. The ripcord appeared to have already been pulled. It was very unlikely that the parachute would work. There was a frantic decision as to what to do. The rest of the six man crew were preparing to bail out. There were only two options: they stay on the plane and try to make a landing, or Patrick and one other would have to share a parachute. According to Dempster the crew decided that 'because of the spirit Patrick had engendered amongst the crew', the problem with his parachute was their problem, not his alone. They would all stay on the plane and attempt a crash landing. Remarkably, the pilot managed to achieve a successful landing at St David's RAF base in Pembrokeshire. Patrick had experienced the closest shave of his life. This is the only flying incident in Patrick's war years which can definitely be verified as true. It was certainly dramatic, but I suspect it triggered a lot of other 'boy's own' adventure stories worthy of Biggles which Patrick would enjoy telling to close and trusted friends in later years. A few weeks after that incident Patrick and his Wellington colleagues were moved from St David's to RAF Lindholme near Doncaster where they were trained in dropping 'window' (silver foil) to confuse the German radar ahead of RAF bombing raids.

Catch Patrick in the right mood (after a few drinks) and he would sometimes reveal a bit more about his RAF period, even if one had to allow for significant embellishment. He once told me that during the war he was flying in an aircraft at

30,000 feet and did not notice that his oxygen line had become disconnected. "If another member of that Wellington crew hadn't noticed there would have been no books and no *Sky at Night*" he would comment. Another thing Patrick mentioned was "FIDO.....straight from the fires of hell." I wanted to know more about this: "A rabid dog?" I queried. "No, Fog, Intensive Dispersal Of....I once landed a Wellington using FIDO, and frankly it is not something I would want to do again, to put it mildly." Patrick explained that, during the War the RAF developed a system for burning off mist and fog on runways. The amounts of fuel involved (100,000 gallons per hour!) were designed to change the local weather by the amount of heat generated and make a fogbound runway more visible. Unfortunately it was like landing a plane "inside an active volcano" according to Patrick, but with improving radar techniques FIDO did not last very long. At other times Patrick would hint at special self defence lessons he was given for secret RAF military operations in case he was behind enemy lines. "You never forget how to look after yourself once you've had that kind of British military training" he would say, in a manner incredibly reminiscent of Foggy Dewhirst in *Last of the Summer Wine* (along with *Dad's Army*, *Yes Minister*, and *'Allo, 'Allo*, one of the few TV shows he actually liked). "Came in useful in my 70s, in the BBC car park, when two black youths tried to mug me. I broke the one Sambo's arm like a twig". Now and again he would also throw in the comment "Take my word for it, those German concentration camps were unspeakable; you don't forget scenes like that". Patrick occasionally claimed that he had been to the camp at Dachau, 10 miles northwest of Munich, in 1945, but refused to go into any more detail.

After a few more drinks a few more wartime stories would emerge. "Frankly, my entry into the RAF disrupted the allied war effort considerably. The little incident of us accidentally dropping practice bombs onto an ornamental rock garden in Barrow-in-Furness has been blamed on me, but I have to say it wasn't entirely my fault!" He also claimed that one of his RAF colleagues was so useless at astro-navigation that when they were flying over the Irish Sea, the colleague swore that his sextant measurements showed they were over Cape Horn! A similar favourite yarn and one that he repeated on the Michael Parkinson show (alongside his mother) in 1974, was that he was the only RAF trainee navigator who had been convinced they were over Norwich when the plane was actually flying over Bristol! In a short article inside the *Radio Times* during 1969 (the May 8th edition) Patrick claimed that during the war years he was involved in the so-called 'Department of Bright Ideas', which dreamed up crazy plans like building a raft the size of England in the North Sea, to confuse the enemy radar. Yet this was a tale he never repeated in his later years! Instead, he would claim he was a personal friend of the wartime weapons designer Col. Robert Stuart Macrae, the inventor of the sticky bomb and a helmet which fired bullets and "damn near blew my own head off". One thing Patrick was never short of was rip-ping yarns!

Despite serving in the RAF during the later war years, Patrick was becoming well known at BAA meetings as an enthusiastic lunar observer, and his presence was increasingly recorded in the minutes. At the April 25th 1945 meeting, 3 months after his near brush with death in the Wellington over Pembrokeshire, a question

was asked by another BAA member, referred to as 'Mr Cox' in Patrick's lunar notebook, but as Mr R.E. Diggles in the official meeting report! The question, as Patrick remembered it, was:

By observations of the rays (on the Moon) is it possible to plot approximately positions of craters on the invisible side of the Moon?

The question was referred to Patrick who replied:

No – all the rays observed to pass over the limb are members of known systems – Tycho, Copernicus, Anaxagoras.

In fact, although Patrick's own record of this exchange is similarly recorded in the BAA minutes, the question was actually re-directed to Mr P.M. Ryves, by the President P.J. Melotte, but before Mr Ryves could respond Pilot Officer P.A. Moore had interjected! Sometimes Patrick's recollections of events could be very different to the actual situation.

After that meeting, Patrick agreed to some co-operative lunar work with another BAA member, R.H. Whittome at Peterborough, who intended to examine the Mare Crisium region. Patrick's notebook also records that he was keen to examine what he described as "my new craters" in the Mare Humorum and the ruined ring south of Heraclides.

With Patrick having suffered back, knee and dental injuries (by whatever mishaps) during his brief active period with the RAF, and with his existing heart condition, he was put on somewhat lighter duties for much of 1945. Instead of being a navigator he was made an 'adjutant', a term which meant that he assisted senior officers by communicating their orders and dealing with their correspondence, something that Patrick would have been very well suited to.

After World War II hostilities ended, in the late summer of 1945, Patrick spent a brief period as an RAF Area Meteorological Officer. On numerous occasions Patrick admitted that his knowledge of meteorology was highly limited and his main source of information was a sodden clump of seaweed nailed to the door of his office! With the end of the war, Patrick's father (now in very poor health) was able to step down from his role as East Grinstead Home Guard Platoon Commander and he managed to get an accountancy job close to home, as the accountant at the Felbridge Place Hotel in the town.

Patrick's lunar notebook records the following on October 3rd 1945:

Demobilized from the RAF with the rank of Flying Officer. This means that serious and regular observations of the moon can be resumed at once. A proper program of work must be made out.

According to MoD records Patrick officially left the RAF on December 5th 1945, although this was not the final farewell. The discrepancy of 2 months between 'demob' and leaving was not unusual. Many airmen had a lot of leave allocation due to them when they left the forces at the end of the war. Sometimes Patrick would describe himself as having been 'invalided' out of the RAF. After a 6 month break when he considered writing for a living, and even accepting a grant to take his planned geology degree at Cambridge, he eventually scrapped both plans and

managed to be re-commissioned as an Acting Pilot Officer (Training), on June 13th 1946! This was purely a teaching role with the ATC though. On December 1st 1946 Patrick was confirmed as a Pilot Officer (no longer acting) and he was made 'Flight Commander' at the East Grinstead ATC. The 'Commanding Officer' plaque he so often had in the background on later *Sky at Night* programmes (next to a favourite snoozing place for his cat Jeannie) hailed from his ATC commander days. He held this training post until September 5th 1947. After a few drinks in later life Patrick could easily promote himself, in a moment of fantasy, to having been an RAF Flight Lieutenant, or even a Squadron Leader, to account for the plaque. In reality he only ever had ATC cadets under his command and in the real RAF he only rose to the rank of Flying Officer Moore! Tut-tut, naughty Patrick!



Fig. 2.2 Patrick with his ATC colleagues at East Grinstead in December 1947, shortly after his father's death. Patrick is in the *front row*, to the *left* of the baton holder (Local 1940s newspaper photograph. Photographer unknown)

Incidentally, in the same month that Patrick was demobilized from the RAF, his British Interplanetary Society fellow member Arthur C. Clarke's famous paper, *The Future of World Communications* (predicting the Geostationary Satellite), was published in the October 1945 *Wireless World*. Arthur had genuinely been demobilized from the RAF with the rank of Flight Lieutenant; he had not made it up! Arthur's address at that time had returned to his original Somerset one, namely: Ballifants, Bishops Lydeard, near Taunton. As we shall see in the coming pages Arthur was, undoubtedly, a huge influence on Patrick. Both men had many shared interests, but were very different. Five years Patrick's senior, Arthur was a technical man, good at maths and physics. Unlike Patrick he had resumed his studies after the war, gaining a first class degree from Kings College London, writing a technical book on Interplanetary Flight in 1950, and becoming the assistant editor at *Physics*

Abstracts, all while building his science fiction writing career. As the war ended Arthur had played a pivotal role in restructuring a new British Interplanetary Society, along with Eric Burgess, Kenneth Gatland, Phil Cleator and Ralph Smith; but while the idea of future space travel obviously excited Patrick, observing the Moon through a telescope, as part of the BAA, would always be his first love.

While serving as Flight Commander for the East Grinstead Air Training Cadets Patrick was already working his way back into regular observing. Just one week after he took that post on there was a total lunar eclipse, on December 8th 1946. Frustratingly, the skies were cloudy, and only the briefest gap appeared at 18:37 GMT, some 18 minutes after totality had ended. Nevertheless, despite the Moon's altitude of just 25 degrees in the eastern sky, Patrick observed the lunar eclipse until clouds returned at 18:48 GMT. In Patrick's 3-inch refractor the eclipsed portion seemed a dark purple, the umbral border was definitely sharp and, judging by this partial phase, it seemed like a dark eclipse. Patrick's observation was described by H.P. Wilkins a few weeks later, at the 1947 New Year's Day BAA meeting. At the 1947 February 26 BAA meeting, following a talk by Wilkins about F.H. (Harry) Thornton's observation of a possible meteor strike in the lunar crater Plato, Patrick gave a short presentation about his 10 years of observing the naked eye variable star Gamma Cassiopeia. During Patrick's talk he claimed to have independently detected the star's significant brightening, as a 13 year old, back in December 1936! Patrick explained that over the past 10 years he had averaged 70 magnitude estimates of the star each year.

Two years after Patrick's War demob his father became seriously ill (towards the end of 1947) and Captain Charles Moore had to relinquish his hotel accountancy post. Patrick was needed at home to help his mother cope with his bedridden father; hence he left the ATC. On December 15th 1947 Patrick's father died at home. He was only 62 years old. The family Doctor, N.B. Shaw, diagnosed the cause of death as "left lobar pneumonia with Delirium Tremens." Delirium Tremens is an alcohol withdrawal symptom. As Charles Moore's health had deteriorated, he had become a heavy drinker. Captain Charles Moore was cremated, at Streatham Crematorium, on December 18th 1947; exactly 1 week before Christmas Day. After his father's death, Patrick still maintained close links with the ATC (and the local Scout group) and even attended the Christmas 1947 party. A picture permanently in his study showed him at that function and was marked 'Junior Service Club ATC Army Cadets'.

At that point, Patrick decided to consider his options outside the military (presumably his father's pride in Patrick's military duties were no longer an issue) and it was time to think seriously about becoming more heavily involved in astronomy. It was time to acquire some better telescopic equipment too, as a priority. Patrick could have resumed his plan to get a degree at this point, but for whatever reason he chose not to. Servicemen whose degrees were interrupted by the War were entitled to a grant, but Patrick said he intended to "pay his own way, but it did not work." I would venture to suggest that Patrick liked his East Grinstead home and his mother's cooking too much. He was still only 24 years old and with his father no longer around the close bond between mother and son (and Rufus the cat) must surely have been even stronger in that bereavement period. Patrick had always been closest to his mother, so he was unlikely to leave her now. They would live together for another 33 years, until she died, aged 94, at the very start of 1981.

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It Came From Outer Space Wearing an RAF Blazer!

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