

Meet the bogeys



The art of Mrs Moore

[Patrick Moore admires the watercolours painted by his mother, including three previously unpublished pictures]



PATRICK MOORE X 4

► Patrick and his mother Gertrude, who trained as a soprano singer

If aliens really exist, what will they look like? I don't know, but I very much doubt whether they will resemble the 'bogeys' shown in my mother's one and only book.

She began drawing them – for fun – when she was a girl, and her style never altered. Some of the pictures in her book were made before I was born in 1923; the last was drawn in 1978, when she was 91. It was her principle that all the bogeys – the name she gave them – had to be friendly, and certainly

they have personalities. One of my favourites always strikes me as being akin to Mary Whitehouse – it (or he, or she) is so delightfully disapproving. My mother's own favourite was the cyclist making use of Saturn's ring system as a race-track.

A private collection

In fact, they did not begin with anything particular in mind, and she never submitted any for publication. They were simply painted, in watercolour ►

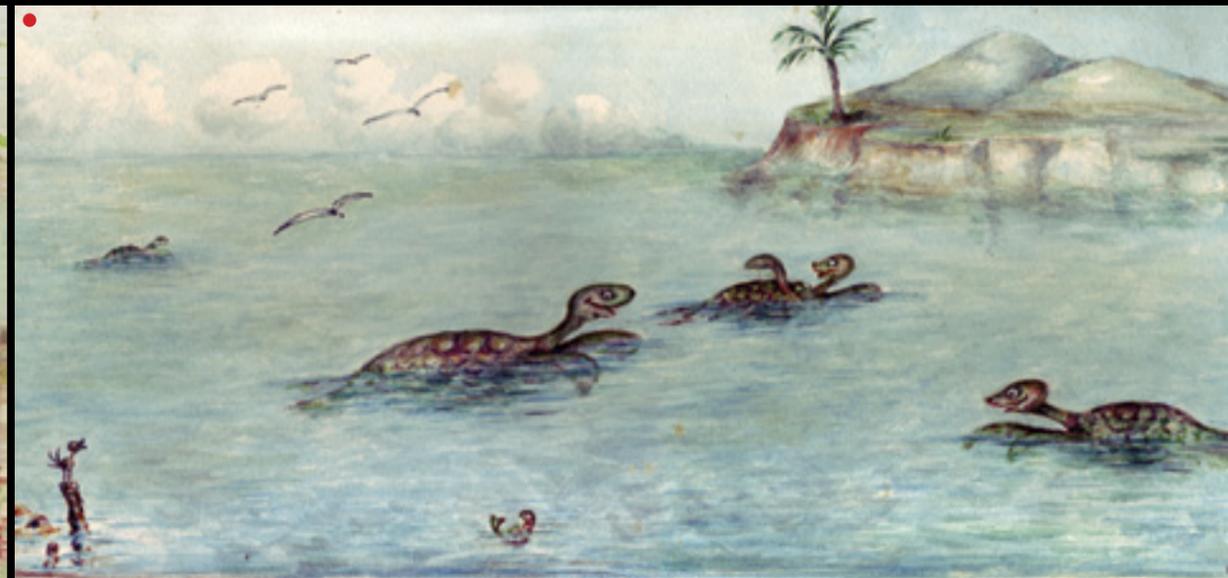
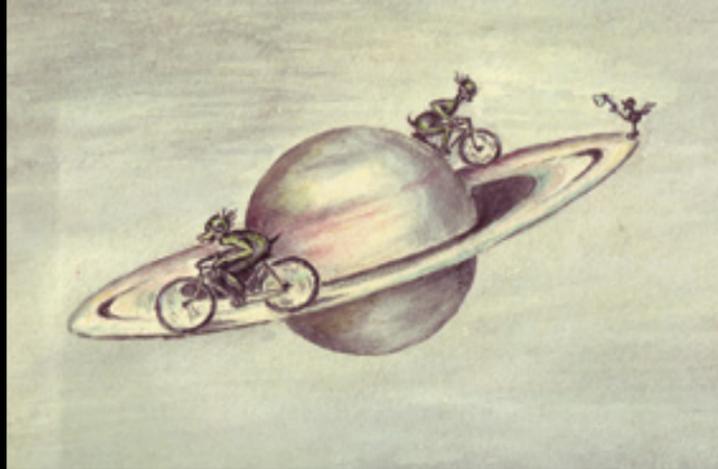
Meet the bogeys

The gallery

The drawings in *Mrs Moore In Space* are certainly not meant to be anatomically correct. They are entirely the product of my mother's imagination. At least they are friendly – the complete antithesis of the stereotyped bug-eyed monster. One really feels that it would be pleasant to meet them.

She was not a trained artist, and she never did any professional painting. It was only when a publisher friend saw her paintings that she was asked to produce her one and only book. Here are some paintings from the book – certainly there is nothing else quite like them.

Pictures marked with a ● are previously unpublished and exclusive to BBC Sky at Night magazine. – Ed



▶ (she never tried oils), and stored. Things changed when I came along. Mother had always been interested in astronomy, and collected some books about it. At the age of six I happened to pick up one of those books, read it, and was hooked. I persuaded mother to draw me a bogey Christmas card, and she produced the first of the bogeys of

the later era – two Martians boating in a Martian canal. After that, Christmas cards were regular, and people complained bitterly if they did not arrive on time. Most were highly topical – for example, the approach of a near-Earth asteroid led



to the concept of a traffic controller in the main asteroid belt. When she finally realised that she could do no more, I gave up sending Christmas cards altogether. Without her, I just hadn't the heart.

When she was in her early eighties (she looked more like she was in her early sixties) a publisher

friend of mine came to dinner, and saw the framed paintings hanging on the walls. Learning that they had never been published, he pounced: "Put these into a book!" We did. I admit that I played a major part in the text, but certainly not in the drawings, apart from suggesting themes. The result was *Mrs Moore In Space*. I must say that

mother was not in the least daunted by publicity; she coped beautifully with press interviews, and television. The book was very well received. It sold out, and what you see presented now is from the new 2003 edition – just the same, apart from a revised foreword.

Where did she find her inspiration? I really cannot say, no doubt because I



am hopelessly inartistic. I wish I had inherited that talent, but so far as I am concerned, perspective is a closed book. I did inherit her musical ability, and mother and I were always exceptionally close because we always stayed together. I knew that I would remain a reluctant bachelor, because the girl ▶

Meet the bogeys



▲ Gertrude Moore holding the family's beloved cat, Rufus, in 1946

[The life of Mrs Moore]

Gertrude Lilian Caldwell-Moore (née White) was born on the outskirts of London in 1886, and educated at Ravensfield College.

In 1912 she went to Italy to train as a soprano under Sabatini and Clerici, and even before completing her training was offered a lead in grand opera. However, she came home at the outbreak of the War; in 1917 she married my father (Captain Charles Caldwell-Moore, MC) and never sang professionally.

After I was born we lived in Bognor Regis, then in East Grinstead, and then, after my father's death, in Selsey. Her book, *Mrs Moore In Space*, was published in 1976, and has now been reprinted.



▲ Patrick with his mother at Selsey in 1973, when she was 87

► I was to marry was in the wrong place when a German bomb fell in 1943, and I never really left home. My father died fairly young, mainly because of inhaling a lungful of German poison gas in 1917. Otherwise, the bogeys would never have become known, and would not have had a cosmic bias.

PATRICK MOORE X 8



One day we will no doubt meet other races – provided that we manage to avoid blowing ourselves up and turning our planet into a radioactive wasteland. Some will be similar to ourselves; others will be very different. It would be great to encounter an alien similar to, for instance, the friendly creature seen

in the act of offering his companion a Christmas pudding. Frankly, I do not think that this is very likely – but one never knows.

And I will leave mother herself to have the last word. "At least," she said, "nobody can tell me I'm wrong." ☺

Buy *Mrs Moore in Space*, a collection of Gertrude Moore's artwork, from the [Book shop](#) on p104.