

## Interview with Patrick Moore on Colchester Hospital Radio, 1986 Acc SA653

*Interviewer: Halley found the comet, did he? But the comet appeared many years before then.*

Patrick Moore: He didn't actually find it. He observed it, in the year 1682. But as I said, it has been observed regularly ever since the year BC 240, and I have no doubt for a long time before that. But Halley saw it in 1682, and at that stage no one knew how comets moved. Even the great Sir Isaac Newton, who was a friend of Halley's, thought they moved in straight lines. Halley wasn't so sure. And he looked at the comet catalogues and found out that the comet he'd seen in 1682 moved in almost exactly the same way as comets previously seen in 1607 and 1531. And he made the very daring forecast that these were one and the same comet that came back regularly and would be seen again in 1758. And it was, and therefore very justifiably, we call it Halley's Comet.

*Interviewer: When will the next comet be back? Or will it burn itself out eventually?*

Patrick Moore: It will next be back in the year 2061, when I'm afraid conditions will be even worse than they are this time. But if you wait til the year 2138, then you'll have a splendid view of the comet. And it'll go on coming back every 75-76 years, for probably another 200,000 years, until it finally wastes away. So there's a long time to go yet.