Patrick Moore reflects on the life of his late friend, the science fiction pioneer
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Clarke moved to the island of Sri Lanka in 1956.
I have met people who have asked me what on earth it was all about. I could only advise them to read the original story. There were a couple of squibs to the original story, but for me the first was always the best. Also, in his later years Arthur tended to collaborate with other authors. This worked all right, but all in all I always felt that he was better on his own.

Co-author compadres

However, I must record something else here. Though he and I had known each other very well for so many years, and had broadcast and spoken together on many occasions, nothing had come out under our joint authorship – though there was one ‘near miss’. He and I published books quite independently, on the same day – mine had a foreword by him, and his had a foreword by me! But then, as we all remember, a disastrous tsunami struck the whole Sri Lanka area as well as other regions. We wanted to raise some money specifically for the Sri Lankan victims, and I suggested a small book about asteroids, which could be written quite quickly. We had help. Without charging any fee, David Hardy provided the illustrations, and others may come true in the future. Unquestionably he inspired many people, young and old. But personally, I remember him best as a very great and a very loyal friend. I feel that he will always be around, just as he has been since that day, so long ago, when he deliberately came across to shake the hand of a 12-year-old boy.

Predicting the future

Arthur was never right, and some of his ideas sound rather outlandish even today. For instance, he wondered whether our race would ever achieve immortality – and he was quite sure that by 2010 we would have made contact with another intelligently race, hundreds or thousands of lightyears away. How we would react to aliens – and even more importantly, how they would react to us – was something we would have to find out.

Many of Clarke’s future predictions have come true, most famously communication satellites.

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