

Robert Baker [FRAS] (1873-1966),

Lived at 'Brendon', 168 Crossbrook Street, Cheshunt, Herts. Barker was a composer of church music, and by profession a music critic. An active observer since the early 1920s and until 1957, a mentor to several youngsters, he befriended Patrick Moore when he joined the BAA in 1934. Barker founded, in 1934, 'Mr Barker's Circle', an observing group of eight men active from April 1934 to December 1938 and May 1946 to May 1948. He owned the largest instrument of the group, a 32cm (12.6-inch) which he had brought direct from Calver. It was a very heavy instrument, resting on his lawn and covered by a tarpaulin. In 1934 the English Mechanic ceased publishing observations. Barker, a lunar observer, wrote to BAA members Leslie Ball (see [Cheshire](#)), Ben Burrell (see [Yorkshire: West Riding](#)), Robert Edward Diggles (see [Staffordshire](#)), Edward Frederick Emley (see [Durham](#)), Hugh Simmons (see [Bedfordshire](#)), Charles O. Smith (see [Midlothian](#)), and Henry Ewart Wooldridge ([Worcestershire](#)), and started a group, the so-called 'Barker's Circle', which compared observations. Each member issued illustrated circulars from time-to-time, passed alphabetically around the group for comment. In the 1930s there was much lunar work still to be done. They also observed and made drawings of Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, and photos of the Sun. The group published many good papers in the *JBAA*. For a definitive and well-illustrated article (see [McKim 2013](#)).