

Starstruck



by Reg Green

The Latin phrase '*Per ardua ad astra*' ('Through struggle, to the stars') is, fittingly, the motto of the Royal Air Force, in which for twenty months of compulsory military service after World War II, I and tens of thousands of gauche striplings like me made a pretence of protecting Britain from the Red Army. For many of us, bored and irritated with

military life, the highlight of the week was the Monday night movie at the base's theater, which was called The Astra. Throughout those slow Monday afternoons, we anticipated the pleasure ahead by repeatedly reciting the motto to each other, its meaning having been miraculously transformed into "After work, to the movies."