

‘To reach the stars is one of the oldest dreams of mankind’. I often began an essay with these words. So for example when I exhibited 36 selenographic items from my Moon Collection at the Library of the University of Houston, Texas, in April 1973, I wrote a few paragraphs as a preface to my Catalogue:

“I am also deeply conscious of the fact that without the writers of imaginary Moon voyages, first Lucian of Samosata, then Bishop Wilkins, later Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, and more recently Arthur C. Clarke, man’s age-old dream of reaching the stars—via the Moon’s stepping stone—might have faded many centuries ago”

The story of man’s first landing on the Moon, the story of the 17 Apollo spacecraft, is indeed a Saga, a story of heroic achievement and marvellous adventure, the greatest yet in all human history. It was my much-envied privilege to report it all in some detail, from Cape Kennedy, from Houston and if unavoidable, from London, as Science Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*.

I began with the tragedy of Apollo 1 in January 1967 [see Title 147] through to its triumph in July 1969 of the first landing of man on the Moon [see Title 182], and to its lingering death in December 1972 [see Title 242]. My reports were always prominently displayed on the top of the page, if not on the front page, of the *Daily Telegraph*.

As I was considered the Apollo expert by the various Editors of the newspaper I had to brief myself, with the aid of voluminous reports, provided by NASA and the industrial manufacturers of the Apollo components, so that I could write at once, simply and intelligently, about any possible mishap during the progress of the Saga. When Apollo 13 was in serious trouble, “Houston, we have a problem”, the classic phrase, [See Title 207] I myself was also in trouble, in a London Hospital after a hernia operation. However I had to, and was able to fulfil my duties easily. I watched the unfolding of the potential catastrophe on BBC television from my bed, wrote my comment in the afternoon, and then telephoned it through to the copy-taker in Fleet Street.

My efforts were appreciated and I received a £ 100 pound sterling bonus, the only one during 10 years on the staff.

One further preliminary comment: Why did the Americans succeed when the Russians failed? The answer was spelled out in full in a contribution entitled “The Apollo Tradition” in *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 270, (1977) by Robert T. Seamans and Frederick I. Ordway. [See Title 273] They summarised the reasons for the Apollo success in a Table which follows, listing the 13 shared characteristics, which are of course only possible in a free and democratic society like the USA.