

After my visit to Prague to report on the International Space Science Conference in May, I was back in London for only a few weeks before ‘Apollo 11 Fever’ hit Fleet Street. These early stories before a great event, the preliminaries or “Prelims” for short, which I wrote were for example “Queen will send message to the Moon”, an analysis “Why Russia had lost the Moon Race” and “Britain’s contribution”. All this was written in London, before I left on the standard flight to Florida. I might just mention here that Apollo 10, which had been reported by Alex Faulkner, the *Daily Telegraph’s* New York Bureau Chief, flew faultlessly to within a few kilometers of the Moon’s surface. In lunar orbit, it tested one more the complicated manoeuvres of undocking the LM from the CSM (see above) and again the docking on return. All went well and the launch date for Apollo 11 was set for 16 July 1969.

The owner of the *Daily Telegraph*, Lord Hartwell, decided wisely that on this most important story, I should be helped by his son, Adrian Berry, my assistant. We got on very well together, not only in the London Office, but also at the Cape and at Houston. When we had to share a room at the Cape, he only complained once, perhaps not unreasonably, when I smoked a cigar before breakfast. We both sent our stories to London through the New York Office, and it was left to the Sub-editors in Fleet Street whether in the next morning’s paper, they appeared side by side, each having its own ‘by-line’ or if they were combined into one report with a joint by-line of both our names.

At Cape Canaveral the atmosphere was electric, highly charged with unending discussions among the 3500 representatives of the media, who had come from all over the world. The arrangements made by NASA for our work were almost perfect with press briefings several times a day to keep us informed of the latest state of affairs. The last Press Conference given by the three Astronauts which I had attended and reported had taken place in Washington on 5 July, when the three astronauts appeared behind a transparent plastic wall to shield them from the threat of any medical infection of the mass media. After their years of training, all three were very optimistic, as they had every right to be.

The documentation issued by NASA and the industrial contractors was voluminous, clearly and simply written for the non-scientific reporter. It was most generously distributed in an edition of 3500, so that everyone could have his or her own copy. Most important was the actual ‘Flight Plan’, setting out in perfect detail, minute by minute, each event, each action of each astronaut, so that we could easily and precisely follow the flight as it took place in space. Ours were exact copies of the Astronaut’s own Flight Plans! One could not ask for more.