

The new year of 1971 was certainly full of interesting scientific events: The faultless American Apollo 14 flight to the Moon was in stark contrast to the disastrous failure of the European satellite launch in Kouru, French New Guinea. England's century old currency went metric, and I launched my successful currency converter. [See Title 78]

The Apollo 14 launch date was set for the end of January and the Lunar Science Conference, also in Houston, for the middle of the month. I discussed with Ricky March, the Foreign Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, the advantage of spending the month of January in the USA, to which he readily agreed.

I started in Washington as usual, staying as a guest member at the famous Cosmos Club to which I was elected as a full member in 1986, [See Title 306] and there picked up an interesting discovery of Professor Gary Thomas of the University of Colorado. It was a giant hydrogen gas cloud in our galaxy, estimated to be 80 thousand million kilometers long, which his team had found but considered of no danger to Earth. At the University of Maryland, near Washington, I heard of the difficulty which British scientists had in contributing to the exploration of the Moon, simply a question of money.

At Mission Control Center in Houston, on 9 January, the last Press Conference before the launch of Apollo 14 took place, and I reported that full safety precautions had been taken to avoid a recurrence of the Apollo 13 disaster. There was also some criticism by the Apollo 14 astronauts that the whole of the American Space Program was not properly supported, neither by the Government nor by the American public. The cut-back on the Apollo programme was like "Buying something and then not using it" as Navy Commander Mitchell, one of the astronauts, put it.

The Lunar Science Conference dealt with numerous subjects, and I reported many of these, but only three were published:

	Column	centimeters
MOON WIND FILLED UP CRATERS		16 CC
IRON OXIDE FOUND IN MOON ROCKS		18 CC
NUCLEAR ROCKET ENGINES FOR PLANETS [See Title 102]		21 CC

Apollo 14, launched on 31 January, had some trouble in the docking of the Lunar Module with the Command Module but finally succeeded. The astronauts landed in the Lunar Highlands and carried out extensive walks, thus wiping out the bad reputation of Apollo 13. My reports and analyses were published on the front page with pictures.