

Apollo 11 40th Anniversary

21 July 2009

Some months back, or has it been a year, I have watched preparations for Apollo 11 40th Anniversary celebrations unfold on John Saxon's website. Over the past month I decided to write some words.

This poem is dedicated to Apollo 11 and all those years at Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station.

It is also to honour and thank John for his involvement over many years, and all those involved back then. Many thanks are extended to all those who have assisted John behind the scenes. Their support has made the celebrations over the past few days happen, culminating in today's main event.

Many thanks also for everyone being present here today.

REFLECTIONS:

Can you believe

Brian Hale



APOLLO 11 40th ANNIVERSARY

Dedicated to: Apollo 11, John Saxon and Team, Mike Dinn, Astronauts,
NASA and Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station.
21 July 2009



REFLECTIONS:

Apollo 11

Can you believe it's forty years?
To some it may seem last week
When a group of people assembled
At Honeysuckle Creek.

Who were they do I hear you ask
Technicians, cooks, and engineers
All focused on that great event
That's remained with us for years.

Politicians, guards and electricians
Were also there back then
With thanks to every one of them
Those women and those men.

Early morning, Mike and Tom were there.
As tense as all the rest
With Hamish taking photographs
Recording history at his best.

And on that very day you know
A man sat at control
We all know his name is John
As history did unfold.

They had tested every system
While the Eagle waited in the dust
With little fuel left some hours before
When it landed, but only just.

The astronauts were so eager
That Houston changed its mind
To let those guys go early
Which made Honeysuckle prime.

When Mike made a page to all
Thirty minutes to acquisition
The equipment went to overdrive
Everyone "calmly" in position.

And after locking onto that spacecraft
Confusing delays got out of hand
As life support checks way up there
Were taking twice as long as planned.

But Neil and Buzz soon were ready
The hatch they did unlock
Then crawled backwards to a ladder
And turned a camera on for all to watch.

When the noise became an image
The picture was upside down
Ed flipped a tiny little switch
Which made it the right way round.

Sleeting rain on that windy winter's day
It was now early afternoon
And as the world watched in awe
Saw man's first step upon the moon.

If you reflect for just a moment
Wherever you may have been
And thank those folk up on the hill
For those images that were seen.

The help of others made this true
And we all must thank them still
TID, Parkes, Carnarvon in the west
And Deakin near Red Hill.

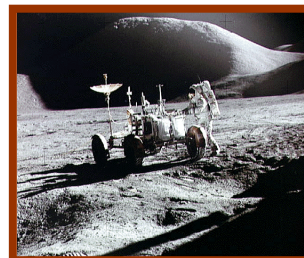
Honeysuckle Creek

It was a short time later
HSK and all those guys
When "Houston had a problem"
They helped to save those lives.

We saw some drive upon the moon
In an expensive lunar car
It didn't run on gasoline
And couldn't go too far.

Skylab, was it broken?
It had a stuck solar wing
A huge umbrella fixed it up
By astronauts with rope, oops string.

Soon after Soyuz followed
Joined the world in expectation
As the Americans and the Russians
Met in space a great elation.





TRANQUILITY BASE HERE



John at Tidbinbilla
 John went to Tidbinbilla
 When HSK was closed
 It was now deep space spacecraft
 That kept him on his toes.

Space probes to many planets
 He was there and helped them through
 Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and beyond
 Just to name a few.

Then came the massive shuttle
 When man returned to space
 Back to those early manned space flights
 As he kept up the pace.

He kept us all so well informed
 With his mailing list and news
 For anything to do with space
 It was the first place to choose.

He continued with this mailing list
 Until the day he left
 But even with his absence
 We still received his best.

Getting ready
 Apollo 11 turning 40
 Was getting all so near
 And once again John took control
 Again with little fear.

The emails then came flooding in
 Through his great dedication
 To make the world a better place
 For Apollo 11's celebration.

Page after page of info
 Was it written day and night?
 Then compiled upon his website
 For us to attend this magic sight.

A team of guys behind the scene
 Who are they you may ask?
 I really have to mention some
 Who helped John with this task.

Helpers
 They trusted Geoff as treasurer
 He was perfect for this job
 His experience in cash not tax
 I know us he'll not rob.

Tony's task, design a plaque
 Great words up on the hill
 The only fear I think he had
 Was, who will pay the bill?

I saw a guy named Phil
 Selling clothing on the web
 He should have been a model
 I think it can be said.

They needed help to label wine
 Someone who did not drink
 They gave that task to Michael
 A good choice don't you think!

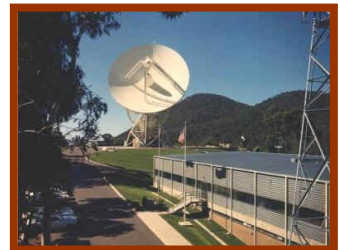
Colin was all so tireless
 Sorting lots of information
 As John's website remained in check
 For the approaching celebration.

Glen out at Tidbinbilla
 Had arranged a lunch for all
 And to recognise that great big dish
 That will be closed by end of fall.

A capsule that's been buried
 With lots of our great treasure
 Will stay upon our memory
 And remain let's say, forever.

Thanks
 This day would not have happened
 Without all the astronauts
 A special thanks we give them all
 Who helped give us our thoughts.

Many thanks to CSIRO
 And NASA that's for sure
 And apologies to those I've missed
 I can't write ten pages more.





THE EAGLE HAS LANDED



A last thank you I do mention
It's great we've all come along
The faces that we see today
Who are in this friendly throng.

*"But, for those no longer with us
From all the passing years
I hope we feel their presence here
It's OK to shed some tears".*



A personal note

It saddens me I wasn't there
On that very special day
As I joined some years soon after
Which changed my life, I say.

To Canberra I did venture
My new wife Lenore with me
And like many many others
We raised our family.

These words with some reflection
Are my memories of those days
But I'd like your words to fill this gap

For Apollo 11 and HSK.



Conclusion

Well now Apollo 11's turned forty
And life begins at that
It's so good to get together
Reminisce and have a chat.

And as I ponder many other thoughts
Could I write a longer poem?
Yes, but I really have to finish now
As we all must soon go home.

But remember back then at HSK
When the atmosphere got tense.
Kangaroos did hop around
The antenna and by a fence.

Three Cheers:

I hope John will continue
Remain dedicated and so nifty
And help us celebrate again,
When Apollo 11 turns 45
and soon after will turn 50.

Three Cheers: Apollo 11 and Honeysuckle
Creek Tracking Station.

Thanks to: Apollo 11, John Saxon and his Team, NASA
and Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station.
Written July 2009 by: Brian Hale HSK 71-78 and TID 93-06
Thankful assistance from: Colin Mackellar and Hamish Lindsay
Acknowledgement : Bryan Sullivan & Jackie French
"To the Moon and back".

