



Letter from the Editor

The 50th anniversary of the first humans to land on the Moon is being celebrated in many ways. Here at SpaceFlight we know you want inside stories, anecdotes, personal reflections and deeper insights behind the scenes. In this issue and the next we do just that.

I am particularly delighted to include the outstanding contribution of a key figure in the Apollo engineering fraternity and play the "what if" game regarding President Kennedy's flagging interest in Space. Would he have abandoned the effort if he had lived?

Issues over the Apollo 11 mission itself occupy fifteen pages of this magazine and provide insight to some of the near misses, all caused by imperfect understanding of the software and of the way the propellant gauging system was configured. Scares at the time which turned out not to be so terrifying after all.

Up and down the UK there will be many events taking place to remember Apollo 11 and next month, in our second celebratory issue, we will tell you about some of those as well as completing the story of the flight and recalling the experiences of British citizens involved in humankind's greatest adventure – so far!

David Baker

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COVER: A COMPOSITE IMAGE CREATED BY ED HENGEVELD SHOWING BUZZ ALDRIN LEAVING EAGLE

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Even as Apollo 11's Lunar Module descended to the Moon, computer readouts and fuel quantity levels revealed a vulnerability discovered only minutes from touchdown.

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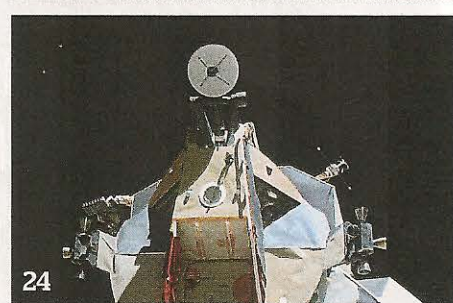
Just how close did Armstrong and Aldrin come to crashing on the Moon – not nearly as close as believed at the time but it was a near thing.

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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