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Where were you on 20 July 1969? I am sure most of us can remember, if we are reminded, that its the date of the first moon landing. This year is the 50th anniversary, so there will be any number of programmes and news celebrating the anniversary.

Apollo 11 was the spaceflight that landed the first two people on the Moon, Commander Neil Armstrong, and lunar module pilot Buzz Aldrin, both American, landed the Apollo Lunar Module *Eagle* on 20 July 1969. Armstrong became the first person to step onto the lunar surface six hours later; Aldrin joined him 19 minutes later. They spent about two and a quarter hours together outside the spacecraft, and collected 47.5 pounds (21.5 kg) of lunar rock to bring back to Earth. The third astronaut, pilot Michael Collins flew the command module *Columbia* alone in lunar orbit while Armstrong and Aldrin were on the moon's surface. Armstrong and Aldrin spent 21.5 hours on the lunar surface before rejoining *Columbia* in lunar orbit.

The astronauts returned to Earth and splashed down in the Pacific Ocean on July 24 after more than eight days in space.

Armstrong's first step onto the lunar surface was broadcast on live TV to a worldwide audience. He described the event as "*one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.*"

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the United States was engaged in the Cold War, a geopolitical rivalry with the Soviet Union. In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite. This surprise success led to fears that the Soviet Union had the capability to deliver nuclear weapons over intercontinental distances, and challenged American claims of military, economic and technological superiority, and so the Space Race started. The Apollo 11 Moon Landing effectively ended the Space Race as it had fulfilled a national goal proposed in 1961 by President Kennedy to land a man on the moon. The Soviet Union was never able to follow up its initial success, and fell behind in the Space Race.

Buzz Aldrin made these comments afterwards:

"This has been far more than three men on a mission to the Moon; more, still, than the efforts of a government and industry team; more, even, than the efforts of one nation. We feel that this stands as a symbol of the insatiable curiosity of all mankind to explore the unknown ... Personally, in reflecting on the events of the past several days, a verse from Psalms comes to mind. "When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the Moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

Moon landing conspiracy theories claim that some or all parts of the various Apollo missions and the Moon Landing were faked by NASA, possibly with the aid of other organisations. Various groups and individuals have made claims since the mid-1970s that NASA and others knowingly misled the public into believing the landings happened, by manufacturing, tampering with, or destroying evidence including photos, tapes, radio and TV transmissions, and rock samples

Detailed rebuttals to the hoax claims have been made, for example, photographs show items left behind on the moon by the various Apollo missions. However, opinion polls have shown that between 6% and 20% of Americans, 25% of Britons, and 28% of Russians surveyed believe that the manned landings were faked. So presumably a lot of people will not be celebrating on 20 July 2019!

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