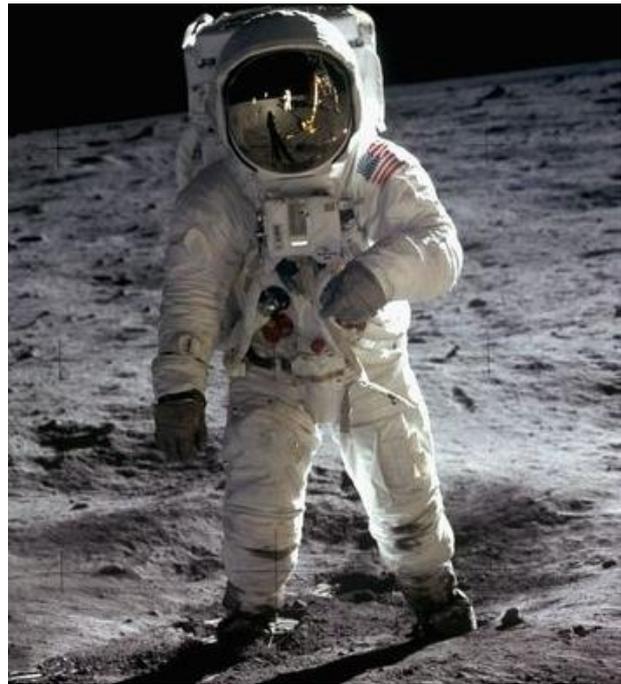


Today we are going to talk about the first time that a man walked on the Moon. The man was NEIL ARMSTRONG, and he was a member of the three man APOLLO 11 space crew that launched into space from CAPE KENNEDY in Houston, Texas on July 16 1969, and returned safely to Earth on July 24 1969. The other two members of the crew were BUZZ ALDRIN and NEIL COLLINS. As they approached the Moon, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin entered the Apollo Lunar Module, which detached from the Command Module that Neil Collins was controlling, and descended to the Moon. Having safely landed on the Moon, Armstrong was the first to leave the Lunar Module and became the first man ever to walk on the Moon, saying as he touched the surface 'That's one small step for man, a giant leap for mankind.' This is what everyone all around the world could see on their televisions as Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCt1BwWE2gA>

So when did he land on the Moon? It depends on where you were on the Earth, as different places on the Earth have different time zones. In the British time zone - called GREENWICH MEAN TIME - Armstrong walked on the Moon at 2.56 am on July 21 1969, and that's why we can say Armstrong walked on the Moon on this day (July 21) 51 years ago. But America is a few hours behind the UK - New York is five hours behind the UK, and Los Angeles is eight hours behind. So for the Americans, Armstrong walked on the Moon on July 20 1969. But we're British, so we stick with July 21 1969!

The second man to walk on the Moon was Buzz Aldrin, and later on in life he found it difficult to cope with not being the first man to have walked on the moon. Together Armstrong and Aldrin planted an American flag on the surface of the Moon, and collected some samples of rocks from the Moon which they would take back to Earth for analysis. Just over two hours after landing on the Moon, Armstrong and Aldrin returned to the Lunar Module, so that it could take off from the surface of the Moon and rejoin the Command Module that was circling (or ORBITING) the Moon above the Lunar Module. The world held its breath: would the Lunar Module safely take off, or would Armstrong and Aldrin be stranded on the Moon and left there to starve to death? Well, if you have been paying attention at the start of this email you'll know that didn't happen - the Lunar Module made a safe return to the Command Module, and everyone got home safely four days later. Here's some silent film of the heroes' reception that they got after returning safely to Earth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t70sAxBDelc>

By sending two men to the surface of the Moon and getting them back safely, the American space agency NASA had fulfilled the challenge set for by PRESIDENT JOHN F KENNEDY that before the decade (the 1960s) was out, that the Americans should land a man on the moon:

<https://youtu.be/TuW4oGKzVKc?t=523>

'We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy but because they are hard.' Of course, Kennedy did not get to see his challenge fulfilled - as you know from my email about MARTIN LUTHER KING, he was shot and killed in 1963. But had he lived, he probably would have been disappointed that the United States did not make much more of the fact that it had managed to land someone on the moon. Armstrong and Aldrin included, only 12 men have ever walked on the Moon. The last man ever to walk on the Moon was an astronaut called EUGENE CERNAN, on December 14 1972, as a member of the APOLLO 17 space crew. Cernan knew that his was going to be the last mission to the Moon for some time, and as he left the surface of the Moon he said, 'We leave as we came and, God willing, as we shall return, with peace and hope for all mankind.': <https://youtu.be/pTmZGSU4Hm8?t=116>

And the Americans have never been back. Recently, PRESIDENT TRUMP has set NASA a new goal of landing on MARS - and returning to the Moon will be part of that project, as it will be easier to get to Mars from the Moon than directly from Earth. So one day the Americans (or some other country?) might go back to the Moon - but until then, we live in a world where since 1972, human beings could have walked on the Moon, but have preferred to stay on Earth instead.