

R. S. R. S.

Newsletter

No. 74

June 1967

UK-Ariel 3

"Look it's raining" said the waitress in the coffee shop and in just the same surprised tone that we might use to say "Look it's stopped". This was on our first visit to Sunny California for the launch of UK-3, but unfortunately the rain did not stop and by the time we returned on our second visit the state had earned the name of "Soggy California". In the north, the Yosemite National Park was covered with several feet of snow.

We lived in motels in the small towns of Lompoc and Santa Maria close to the giant Vandenberg Air and Missile Base and it was in this area that we had our first taste of the American way of life - of pancakes and maple syrup for breakfast in the coffee shops, of vast American cars with limitless engines and gas tanks to match; of 24-hour supermarkets with American-size trolleys left in the car-parks and of garish neon signs which flank every main road and turn night into day.

The Californians we found to be most friendly and it was with their helpful co-operation that we set about our task of preparing UK-3 for launch.

We worked in an air-conditioned building of aircraft hangar proportions in which clean assembly areas, a screened room and photographic dark room facilities were available. A tracking facility, similar to that at Winkfield was also located in the building.

The thorough preparation of our ground handling team then showed in the way that three models of our satellite were assembled, installed in large mobile plastic housings and made ready for test. While this was in progress we visited the spin balance facility and had this demonstrated to us and also visited the launching pad and blockhouse to gain experience of the area where the last and most important of our operations would take place. Emblems on the pad recorded 26 out of 28 successes and we speculated on the

/fate

fate of the 29th.

All the preliminary electrical and screened room checks were completed on our first visit so that on our return there remained only the final electrical and mechanical checks on all packages, the cleaning of the interior, and finally, the cleaning of the individual solar cells - all 7,400 of them. Very great importance was attached to ensuring that all operations were completed in the presence of and to the satisfaction of all specialists and experimenters.

So the day arrived when our flight model began its slow journey to the spin balance facility and the launching pad. It travelled with two members of the ground team on a low trailer and with an escort of Air Force police cars all carrying flashing lights. Because of the possible danger from flying stones no vehicles were allowed to overtake the trailer and all on-coming vehicles were signalled to stop, the leading police car being driven straight across the road at any vehicle which showed any disinclination to conform.

The final spin balance was carried out with the satellite mounted on its live fourth stage motor and all observations were made remotely and with the aid of closed circuit television. We were told that UK-3 had been very well balanced at B.A.C. prior to shipment to the Western Test Range.

At the launching pad the satellite was carefully mated to its Scout rocket which, at that time, was lying horizontally in a large enclosure which could later be drawn away in order to erect the rocket. The experimenters were then called upon to make their final adjustments after which the heat shield was closed and transfers of the British and American flags added.

Rehearsals of the count-down procedure were also held daily; initially they involved spacecraft personnel only but as our technique improved a trailer containing ground equipment, the blockhouse and pad, and the Mission Direction Centre, all became involved as well as the building in which the experimenters and specialists had print-out facilities. Two days before launch we held the dress-rehearsal which, in the best traditions of the stage, was chaotic and this gave us our first assurance that it would be "all right on the night". All the troubles were due to radio frequency interference from the vehicle and radar systems which had not been activated in previous tests, but with the patient co-operation of the Americans we were able to pin-point all the sources of interference and to proceed satisfactorily.

The following day was allowed for recovery and so it was in the early hours of Friday, May 5th, that we motored out to the Base and took up our positions for the launch. The count-down started at 3 a.m. and went quietly and smoothly, evenly monotonously, without a single call of "HOLD". Eventually, at a few seconds to 9 a.m. we heard the count, so beloved by space-fiction writers of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, ZERO and an excited cry "We have a lift-off".

On the TV monitor we watched the Scout rise from the pad, then dashed

/outside

outside to see a flash in the sky as the Scout entered low cloud and a few seconds later dashed in again to watch the data printing normally until we lost contact.

First reactions were: four years work gone up in smoke; it's successful; and now we're out of a job. There was a feeling of relief that all appeared to be well with the satellite but there was no great sense of jubilation.

Gradually reports came in from Madagascar, Alaska and Johannesburg and all reported good signals, the anticipated spin rate and a satisfactory orbit. Later we heard the news that the first playback had been successfully recorded at Winkfield during the fourth orbit and later still we heard that the satellite had been commanded to its second operational mode.

So all was well; the first completely all British satellite UK-3 was in orbit and in its new environment had assumed the more graceful title of Ariel-3.

Celebration parties at the N.C.O. and Officers' Mess followed, where we received profuse and insincere apologies from our launch co-ordinator because the launch was a few hundredths of a second late and at which au revours were said in a warm haze.

The launch of UK-3 was now officially over and so, one by one, we made our travel arrangements, packed and left for U.K., just as the Californian poppies were coming into bloom.

V. HARRISON

(It is hoped to describe the remaining experiments in a future edition Ed.)

Obituary

We are very sorry to report that Mr. G. V. D. Strange died suddenly, at his work, on the afternoon of 22nd May.

George Strange served in the R.A.F. during the War and after holding various posts, including being self-employed, he joined the Staff at Ditton Park in 1962.

For a number of years he coped with a serious heart illness in a way which was admired by all who knew of it. The death of this conscientious colleague is a shock to us all and our deep sympathies go to Mrs. Strange. A number of Staff attended the funeral and a wreath was sent on behalf of all at R.S.R.S.

STAFF NEWS

Congratulations to :

Tony and Sylvia Legg on the birth of their son
Jonathan Andrew on 21st May 1967

/Continued

Congratulations to :

Dr. P. G. Davis	now S.S.O.
Mr. D. Eccles	" "
Mr. M. P. M. Hall	" "
Mr. M. C. W. Sandford	" S.O.
Mr. A. T. B. Abayaratna	" E.O.
Mr. R. J. Powell	" "
Mr. M. A. Tracy	" "
Mr. S. K. Wee	" Tech. Officer
Mrs. B. McFadden	" Grade I Typist
Mrs. E. P. Paterson	" " " "
Mrs. I. M. Wells	" " " "
Mrs. H. K. Wood	" " " "

Welcome to :

Mrs. C. E. Place	N/P C.O.
Mrs. I. W. Gibson	N/P Typist (II)
Mr. J. A. Rae	N/P S.A.
Mr. Ten Yong Leo	N/P Tech. Officer (Singapore)
Mr. D. Walters	N/P Storeman

Other Changes

Mr. A. Peake, E/A.E.O., now N/P A.E.O. (E.S.R.O. Staff)

SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB NEWS

Jolly Boating Weather

On Tuesday, 6th June a party of 24 station members and wives assembled at Turk's boathouse, Cookham for an evening on the river. In bright sunshine and a light breeze the fleet of six boats cast off in various degrees of disorder for a row upstream towards Bourne End.

The hostelry was reached without serious mishap except that one of our Australian visitors proved too strong for the landing stage which promptly collapsed, the boat receiving a share of the river. The ladies took a turn at rowing and although there were no complaints about women drivers the yachts on the river required more than a weather eye open.

All boats returned successfully to Cookham without damage after a very enjoyable evening. Our thanks to Miss C. Seabrook for organising the event and for choosing such suitable weather.

W. BELLCHAMBERS

/Cricket

Cricket

After three postponements due to rain, the first internal match was played on June 1st. Each side was restricted to 20 overs, and after a close finish the result was a win for Thomas' XI over May's XI. The respective scores were 61-8 (Davies 18) and 54-4 (Hopkins 13 n.o.).

The first external match was played on June 8th when the visitors were the Ministry of Technology. This was also a 20-over match, and MOT, batting first, were all out for 52. Moosajee bowled well and was denied a hat-trick only by a dropped catch (by someone who prefers to be nameless!). R.S.R.S. failed to score quickly enough and were 45-5 at the close, Tyler having made 20.

The next match is against the A.C.O. on June 15th, and the first Smith-Rose Cup match will be played on June 22nd.

GRAHAM THOMAS

Camera Club

The A.G.M. was held on 23rd May 1967, nine members attending. The purchase of further darkroom equipment was discussed, and possible destinations for the annual outing were considered.

The Club's slide shows and black-and-white print exhibition, will again be staged next winter. Messrs. Newman, Rishbeth and Dickinson continue in office as President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

HENRY RISHBETH

Motor Club

Progress has been made with the site for the club building - the topsoil has been removed and we now want a layer of hardcore for foundations. If anyone has any good hard rubble or knows where to find some please let us know or preferably bring some and dump it on the site.

It is hoped to organize a club evening at the end of June when future plans can be discussed.

E. GOLTON

WHICH

Our bulk subscription for 'WHICH', the magazine of the Consumer Association is due for renewal immediately after the July issue arrives in a few days time.

The cost has varied slightly over the last two years and final details of next years subscription are not yet available. However it should be in the range :

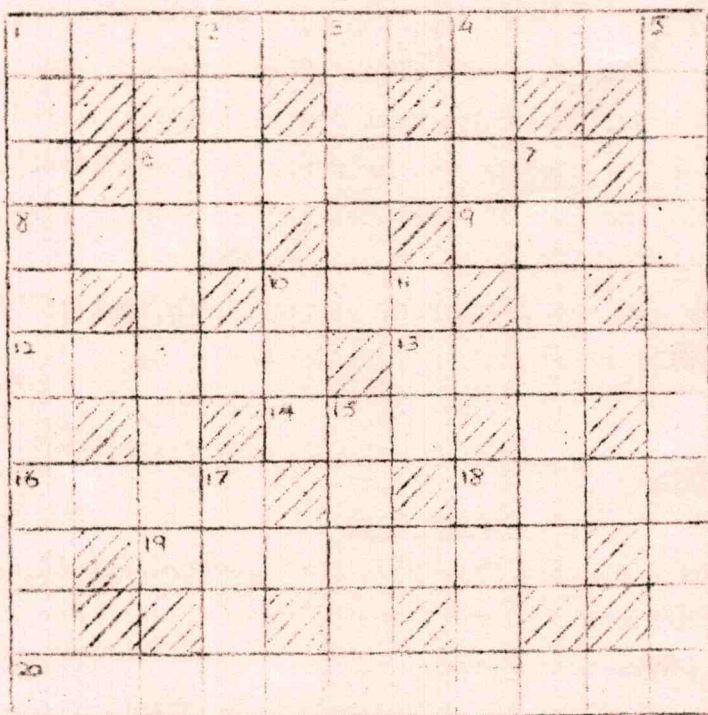
Which	1 gn. - 25/-
Which & Motoring Which	2 gns - 50/-

Renewals and new subscriptions should be paid to me as soon as possible, and no later than Monday 24th July - otherwise cancellation of the order will be assumed.

At this time it is possible to order back numbers of Which, Binders, Good Food Guide and the various supplements and publications issued by the Consumer Association. These must be paid for in advance.

VERONICA LOVELL

SPACEWORD II



CLUES ACROSS

1. Keeps your feet on the ground (11)
6. A Satellite will only sink so low (7)
8. Ripe upset at the seaside (4)
9. Huskies led this (4)
10. U.S. equivalent of the B.S.I. and vice versa (3)
12. See 1 down
13. For space research these go up but don't come down! (5)
14. The edible part of 8 Across (3)
16. Letters of debt (4)
18. Designer in audio receivers (4)
19. Cast in a devil's mould (7)
- (20, 18 down The sun looks like this (11, 4)

CLUES DOWN

- (1, 12 across The first of these was 1957-1958 (11, 5)
2. A change from active erosion for the wind (4)
3. The heavenly ones are a constellation (5)
4. Mostly found in shoes! (4)
5. Princes don't look undistinguished (11)
6. A mythical computer? (7)
7. A long stretch from Castile (7)
10. Snake slips from your grasp (3)
11. A winner twice in the Space Race! (3)
15. Real public or virtual? (5)
17. Dress made up from hairs (4)
18. See 20 across

LETTER TO THE OUTSTATIONS

Dear Colleagues,

We have had a month of May in which many splendid antique rainfall records were broken, you know the sort of thing - 'Wettest Tuesday afternoon in Highgate since 1787'. Things at Ditton Park looked distinctly spongy and it was rumoured that Barker's farm was considering rice as a suitable crop. With June, however, came compensation. For the first two weeks we enjoyed a prolonged anticyclone with its attendant sunshine and swimming parties at lunch time, now, alas, it seems to be on the way out, but it was good while it lasted.

Some months are gone by since last the embryo E spur was reported on; it grows apace. Much brickwork has been accomplished; shuttering has been filled, let stand in a cool dry place, removed and - behold - pillars of reinforced concrete dominate the foreground.

It is just possible to view these pillars against a background of blue sky and trees in such a way as to suggest classical ruins. They lack those interesting graffiti which, travellers say, do so much to bring the past to life. At least none can be seen from here, but perhaps the site might be worth a closer look on the part of,

Yours sincerely,

The Editor

Careers Advisory Service

If you want to get on at this station,
('Though its doubtful you'll win any cup),
Each time you are wrong, boy, admit it,
But whenever you're right, then shut up!

Anon Entity

Examples may be left to the Student

'Three thousand parameters would be installed
in each aircraft to make recordings

The Times 25th May

Obituary

We regret to say that we have just heard of the death of Mr. M. V. Walden at the age of 44. The following appreciation has been written by a colleague at Winkfield.

All staff will be shocked to hear of the death of Mel. Walden on 22nd June after a long and distressing illness.

He joined Winkfield after service with B.E.A. on 18th March 1963 and was a member of 'A' shift for 18 months before joining the maintenance crew.

He enjoyed all his work and it was always a pleasure to work with him. Many a tiring shift was enlivened by his tales of travel in the mysterious and rather unreal world of an airline radio operator. We all feel we have lost a friend and we offer our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Walden and family at this tragic time.