



NEWSLETTER

No. 129

February 1972

SPACE RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

The Space Research Management Unit was formed as a unit in 1963 in Chester Gate, by Regents Park, although for several years before this a small group had resided in University College, London, in Sir Harrie Massey's department. The Unit has had overall management of the scientific space programmes carried out using satellites and rockets, at first on behalf of the Royal Society's British National Committee for Space Research, and since its formation, for the Science Research Council. The Unit moved to State House when S.R.C. was formed in 1965 and has had responsibilities for Space Research Grants and also Secretarial responsibilities for the Space Policy and Grants Committee and its Working Groups.

The latter functions remained at State House when the programme management staff transferred to R.S.R.S. on February 1st.

The latter comprise three groups responsible for satellites, Skylark rockets and (latterly) the growing balloon programme, and Petrel and Skua rockets, including Commonwealth Collaborative Programmes.

The satellites concerned are the "Ariel" series (called "UK" before launch) which are collaborative programmes with N.A.S.A. Ariels I and II were American satellites with British experiments, whereas Ariel III was built in this country. Ariel IV was a development based on Ariel III with increased control capability and an attitude control system. It also had, for the first time, an American experiment on board. UK5 is now under construction and will probably be launched from the Italian San Marco platform off the coast of Kenya by a N.A.S.A. Scout rocket in late 1973. The project group has overall responsibility for the programmes starting with the co-ordination of the experimenters' requirements, through the procurement of the spacecraft by MOD, to post-launch control and data processing, including of course liaison with N.A.S.A.

/Skylark

Skylark is a 17-inch sounding rocket which has been developed over the years in payload/attitude capability and for reliability. Sophisticated attitude stabilised rounds, with parachute recovery systems, are now available as well as the unstabilised version. More than 200 Skylarks have now been fired mainly from Woomera but ranges in Sardinia and Sweden have also been used. The payloads carried cover all aspects of space science from, for example, X-ray astronomy to upper atmosphere winds. Several Skylarks have carried experiments from R.S.R.S. The Skylark group has overall responsibility for payload co-ordination, vehicle procurement through MOD and for launch arrangements.

The Petrel rocket, which is 7.5 ins. in diameter, has been developed from the Skua (5 ins diameter) meteorological rocket comparatively recently, and has met the requirement for small, lighter and more quickly prepared payloads carried to lower altitudes i.e. 150 km or so. 130 Petrels and Skuas have been launched for S.R.C. mainly from the South Uist range, but also from Pakistan, India and Sweden. Some of these were launched synoptically and nearly all made measurements of ionospheric or neutral atmosphere phenomena.

The project group has responsibilities similar to those of the Skylark Group, these extending to the Commonwealth Collaborative programmes of rocket firings from India, Pakistan and also for the High Latitude campaigns in Scandinavia.

J. F. Smith, G. W. Eastwood and E. W. V. Acton

STAFF NEWS

Congratulations to:

Martin and Carol Hall on the birth of their son on 22nd February.

Welcome to:

Mrs. E. S. Faulkner	C.O.
J. McN. Flint	S.C.S.
D. C. Griffiths	A.S.O.
R. J. Berry	S.C.S.
R. F. Hufton	S.O.
F. S. H. Feldbrugge	Vacation Worker
D. L. Hirst	Craftsman I (Chilbolton)

Resignations:

J. E. Cole	A.S.O.
Mrs. M. D. Harrison	S.O.
R. B. Bent	S.S.O.
T. R. Hougham	Craftsman I

Other Changes:

P. H. McPherson	H.S.O. Transferred to work at R.R.E. Malvern
A. F. Smith	H.S.O. Returned to duty at R.S.R.S. from Singapore

During the emergency the "Newsletter" will consist of a single article and Staff News only.

EDITOR