

## **Peter Longden**

### **...one small step for a man...**

They were engineers, working in a developing time of universal aspirations, a lunar expedition one small step...

A race between super-powers of the time, arms strong at all times, but at what cost?

The financial cost one thing, the human cost another:

They died in pursuit of the goal, while Soviet advances eclipsed theirs,

perhaps the Soviet advances were complex but in a simpler way:

docking a craft after its landing on a landscape other than Earth has to be more difficult – right?

The first man tentatively dropped to the foot of the safe place he'd return to several times before he'd prove it could be done.

Fewer words for him in situations, he was the focus of the event: would they find sanctuary on that grey surface?

He'd have to put them there first and then allow them to leave.

Even his first man words perhaps were wrong: 'one small step for [a] man, one leap for mankind' seems more fitting,

The pressure of an unsafe place may have got to him.

Bounding almost joyously around in the gravity of the situation,

Not losing the purpose of their visit: leave only footprints, take only memories – yet they were heavy when they left and returned to a solitary existence for a while,

Perhaps a taste of the medicine of those they left behind worrying whether they were going was...a safe place;

The trick about space flight is not where they go, it's how you make sure to get them back to...a safe place:

For a time though, we knew there was, actually, a man on the moon.