



جس کے لئے کھانا اور پانی

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مما لا يحصى

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بأجود ما في الدنيا

جودك يا ربنا

مما لا يحصى

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Handwritten shorthand for 'Moon Landing Fireworks' (row 1).

Handwritten shorthand for 'Moon Landing Fireworks' (row 2).

Handwritten shorthand for 'Moon Landing Fireworks' (row 3).

Handwritten shorthand for 'Moon Landing Fireworks' (row 4).

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Handwritten shorthand for 'Moon Landing Fireworks' (row 6).

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## Moon Landing Fireworks

At the weekend we went to two fireworks displays. On Saturday we went to Blackheath in south east London. Most of the day was heavy persistent rain but this cleared by the afternoon, and so the firework show was able to go ahead. This large heath was once a wild wasteland of gravel pits and highwaymen, a place of great danger for travellers. During the last wars, the gravel pits were filled in with bomb damage rubble, and now it is a large expanse of flat grass for recreation, criss-crossed by roads. All this history came to my mind when I saw the huge crowds that had gathered for the spectacle, for an enjoyable evening in a safe environment, a complete contrast to the heath's perilous history up until relatively recently.

To one side was a large funfair and we spent an hour there amongst the noise, music, neon lights and the screams of those on the more hair-raising rides, for which there were long queues. It was quite a festive atmosphere, children waving their light sabres of various designs, including butterflies and windmills, people eating candy floss out of the plastic bag, and others tucking into hot hamburgers and box meals of chips and fried onions. About a quarter of an hour before the start time, people began gathering around the barriers. The show started with a countdown and the first fireworks immediately drew a cheer from the crowd. The display lasted twelve minutes, to constant oohs and aahs from the spectators at the more spectacular fireworks, starbursts and screaming spirals. It ended with a large golden starburst, drawing a loud cheer and applause from everyone. Then we joined the rivers of people making their way to their homes and the railway stations.

Sunday's fireworks event was in Victoria Park, Tower Hamlets, in the north of London. This was to be an impressive display of fireworks, laser lights, music and songs, sound effects and poetic narration, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission to land men on the moon. I wondered whether this attempt to tell a story might detract from the beauty of the fireworks themselves, but that was not the case. It was very well choreographed indeed, with the fireworks matching closely the character and timing of the songs and music, and with an array of laser beams swinging about, illuminating the passing clouds with white misty spots of light. The poetic narration was very imaginative and artistic, reflecting the momentous nature of the moon landing and all that it meant for science and human achievement. All this was greatly heightened by the extremely powerful sound amplification system. There was no struggling to hear what was being said and sung, even above the hubbub of the huge crowd, and the words seemed to fill the night sky.

The highlight of the 22-minute show was about six and a half minutes in, with the soundtrack from the mission control countdown and the sudden and loud ignition of the Saturn Five rocket, a huge illuminated outline of the rocket which sprung into flame, with sparkler effect at the base, slowly rising into the sky, pulled up by a giant crane. When viewing film of the real event, one is struck by how slowly the rocket rises, and this firework representation did the same thing, until it was suspended high over the trees, continuing to burn to the end of the display. The evening was quite mild but chills went down the spine at the countdown and ignition. A little later we had the soundtrack of Neil Armstrong's "Giant Leap" statement. This was a truly wonderful show, where the fireworks added to the story, rather than being the only attraction.

## Moon Landing Fireworks

As soon as it was over, the crowd dispersed and we joined another river of people. Extensive crowd control measures were in operation throughout, with stewards everywhere in their high vis vests. Outside the park, stewards had Stop Go signs to slow down and break up the flow from the various gates, and further along there were barriers producing pinch points, which spread out the crowds even more. When we arrived at Mile End station, there were temporary manned crossings over the busy road, and the human river continued to obey its masters, even into the station entrance itself. Everyone was shuffling along patiently, happy and full of the night's wondrous entertainment.

We were only free of the crowds when we arrived onto our platform, where there were very few people going in our direction. It was an easy journey back to London Bridge station, and at our home station we only had to wait a few minutes for our bus. I took a full video of both events, and now we can enjoy it all again, although nothing is quite like being there and experiencing the sounds through ears, stomach and feet. I hope the loud cheers from the audience were appreciated and enjoyed by those who worked on and put the shows together, and inspires them to greater achievements next time. (846 words)