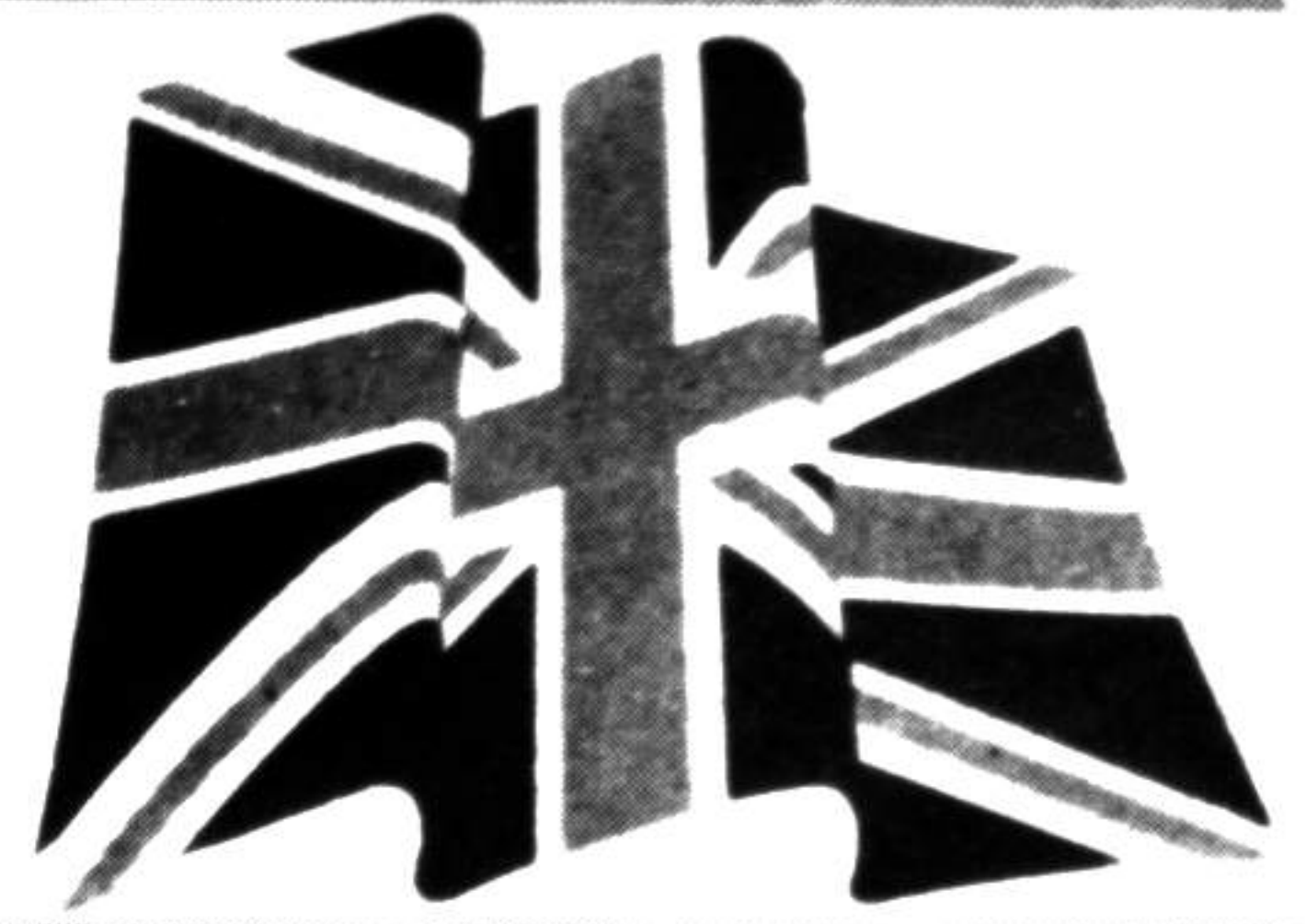




OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY OF Queen Elizabeth II



The Daily Star

Special Supplement, June 9, 1992

Queen Elizabeth II and the Commonwealth

by Adrew Walker, former Commonwealth Correspondent, BBC World Service, London

QUEEN Elizabeth II is recognised as Head of the Commonwealth by all 50 of its member countries. Although this is a purely symbolic title, it is far from meaningless. The Queen has an unrivalled experience of, and interest in, the institution.

Many Commonwealth leaders have testified to the detailed knowledge she has of their country and its problems — a knowledge gained from her extensive travels and meetings over more than 35 years. In that time, the Commonwealth has developed to an extent that hardly seemed possible when the Queen ascended the throne after the death of her father King George VI in 1952. Then it had only eight independent members. Now it has six times as many.

They vary in all sorts of ways — in population for example. The Pacific island territory of Tuvalu has only a few thousand inhabitants, while India's population is approaching 800 million.

They cover a wide spectrum of economic development; some are among the poorest countries of the world, others among the richest. Their political systems vary from the libertarian to the intransigent, as one Commonwealth leader bravely put it.

They have a wide range of international attitudes. Many are non-aligned, others members of their own regional groupings, such as the European Community, or the Caribbean Community, but they do not see this as conflicting with their membership of the Commonwealth, which cuts across regional ties. Namibia is the newest member in the Commonwealth.

Pragmatic Approach

Although they are so diverse, they are also united by shared principles, heritage, working methods and the English language. It is this unity in diversity, bringing together in a divided world people of different races and creeds, that makes the

Commonwealth so distinctive. It has been called a new kind of experiment in international relations.

It was never planned in advance but developed through a pragmatic approach to a particular problem which would then become a guide for action when some later problem arose. The origins lie in the 19th century, when the British Government granted the Canadian provinces what was known as responsible government. This was in effect, internal self-government based on majorities in the local legislature instead of arbitrary rule by British officials.

The idea seems obvious now, but in those days it was a novelty. It was successful and was soon extended to other colonies of European settlement such as Australia and New Zealand.

Two world wars hastened the process of independence for colonial territories. By the 1970s most of what had been the British Empire had become a community of independent states. Nearly all of them elected freely to stay in the Commonwealth.

Some continued to recognise the British monarch as their head of state. Some adopted a republican form of government, often with an executive president. All are regarded as equals.

Commonwealth Day

As the visible symbol of this association, the Queen has travelled vast distances around the world, fostering goodwill and affection. She makes a point of receiving Commonwealth leaders when they are in London and at meetings of the heads of government. These always used to be held in London, but since the early 1970s they have taken place in different capitals as a demonstration that the institution is no longer centred on the United Kingdom.

The Queen has been present at every one of these meetings except that in Singapore in 1971. She does not, as is sometimes supposed,

open the meetings or attend them but receives the heads of government individually and hosts a banquet for them collectively, taking no part in their formal discussions.

The Queen is a strong supporter of Commonwealth Day, celebrated in every member country on the second Monday in March.

The Commonwealth established its own Secretariat in 1965. By that time the process of decolonisation had produced a number of new independent members, and they felt it was no longer appropriate for the British Government alone to administer a multilateral institution.

The Secretariat has taken on many tasks during its life. For example, it manages a fund for technical cooperation which member countries find particularly useful because of its flexibility and speed of response. It organises the meeting of heads of government and those of other ministers — health, law, and finance, for instance — held from time to time. It fosters cooperation in such fields as science, youth training, women's rights, agriculture and food production.

Family of Nations

There are many official links, too. The Commonwealth Foundation, established at the same time as the Secretariat, encourages cooperation between the professions. It has set up, with financial help, a number of Commonwealth-wide professional associations, from nurses to journalists, and from librarians to land surveyors. Commonwealth parliamentarians also have their own association, as do sportsmen and women. Every day, somewhere in the world, somebody is engaged on a task involving Commonwealth cooperation.

So, Queen Elizabeth II presides over a family. Its members may sometimes disagree — strongly at times — but they manage to do so without rancour because they feel that more unites them than divides them. And they work together in many unpublicised ways towards creating a Commonwealth of peoples.



Queen Elizabeth II

High Commissioner's Message

TODAY we celebrate the official Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Our "National Day," this year has a special significance for us and for the Commonwealth. Her Majesty has been Britain's Head of State, and also head of the Commonwealth, for 40 years. She became Queen on 6 February, 1952 on the death of her father, King George VI. Her coronation took place the following year on 2 June at Westminster Abbey in London.

There have been many changes in the world during the 40 years of Her reign. In 1952 Britain was still recovering from the ravages of the Second World War. At that time it could still be said that the sun never set on the British Empire, so many were its territories around the world. But the relationship between Britain and those nations in the old Empire which now make up the Commonwealth had begun to change — and to change significantly. India and Pakistan had become independent in 1947; Sri Lanka in 1948; Ghana followed in 1957, and 24 other countries during the 1960s.

In 1972 Bangladesh became the 31st member to join. Namibia is the most recent newcomer. There are now 50 members of this voluntary association of sovereign states. Each nation is responsible for its own policies and consults and cooperates with the others in their common interests and in the promotion of greater international understanding. The special strength of the Commonwealth lies in this combination of the diversity of its members with their shared inheritance in language, culture and the rule of law. At the time of Her Accession, the then Member Nations agreed to recognise Her Majesty as Head of the Commonwealth. The position is not vested in the British Crown.

40 years on, there have been many changes elsewhere on the international scene. The world is no longer locked in the grip of the Cold War. Totalitarianism is giving way to the search for democracy and justice in many parts of the world; particularly in the new Commonwealth of Independent States — now the other Commonwealth. Significant changes are under way to end "apartheid" in South Africa. The Commonwealth took up the new tasks and challenges presented by these changes in Harare, Zimbabwe last year. The Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental Principles of the Commonwealth, when they issued the Harare Declaration. In this they pledged to work with renewed vigour to strengthen processes and institutions; to encourage the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary; to pursue just and honest government; and to recognise fundamental human rights.

Britain is committed to that Declaration. We offer financial, technical and professional help to those countries which show that they are following the Harare principles. Our bilateral aid programme is increasingly shaped by our good government policy. Our Parliament is committed to keeping the performance of individual recipients under close scrutiny. Governments which actively promote the principles of the Harare Declaration in tackling their problems are given priority in our development partnerships.

Bangladesh's change to democratic government last year was warmly welcomed in Britain. We held our own parliamentary elections exactly two months ago today. The results surprised most observers (including Mr Justice Rouf, the Bangladesh Election Commissioner) and confounded all the opinion polls. The Conservative Party retained power. The same ministerial team remains responsible for our bilateral and aid relations with Bangladesh. The watchword therefore is continuity: continuity of our policy of partnership in promoting good government and ensuring respect for human rights while increasing aid effectiveness and enhancing development.

In 1991 Britain disbursed over £50 million in development aid and £11 million in emergency aid to Bangladesh (in addition to her contributions to multilateral fundings). Bangladesh has now moved up to be the second largest recipient of British development assistance in the world. This demonstrates our commitment to offering help and encouragement to Government of Bangladesh in pursuing the economic and social development of the country.



Mr Colin Imray CMG, British HC to Bangladesh

An epoch of achievement in science

by John Delin, former Science Correspondent "Sunday Telegraph" London

FORTY years have passed since the accession of Queen Elizabeth II to the throne of the United Kingdom. To many it was seen as the beginning of an era, an impression reinforced by a magnificent coronation capped, as if symbolically, by the simultaneous announcement of the world's first ascent of Mount Everest by the New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tensing Norgay.

Science in Britain soon celebrated its own Everest conquest, although it was some while before its impact was fully realised and the accolades were forthcoming. Working at Cambridge University, Francis Crick and the American James Watson proposed the double helix structure for the DNA molecule, the carrier of all genetic material. Later, John Kendrew and Max Perutz worked out and modelled the structures of myoglobin and haemoglobin, again at Cambridge.

These breakthroughs, and the development of X-ray crystallography by Maurice Wilkins at Cambridge and Dorothy Hodgkin at Oxford, are widely accepted to have generated the modern development of molecular biology.

Over the years in Britain, progress has continued apace. At the National Institute for Medical Research, in north London, Sir Peter Medawar was working on the interferon antibody, a necessary precursor to successful transplant surgery.

Massive Project

Meanwhile, from molecular biotechnology there stemmed the whole concept of genetic engineering and modern research into heredity. Applications have ranged from plant hybridisation to experiments with irradiated cells to inhibit their growth and stimulate immune systems in the treatment of cancer.

In recent times there has been the first combined heart, lungs and liver transplant, carried out at the Papworth Hospital, Cambridge; Britain's participation in the massive international project to map the human genome (the complete sequence of genes in the human cell); and the invention at Leicester University, in the English Midlands, of genetic fingerprinting, a powerful method of identifying the source of human tissue with a very high level of accuracy, now widely used in forensic medicine and genetic research. Potentially highly important to agriculture are investigations into benign microbial pesticides and the molecular genetics of wheat proteins used in breadmaking.

Two further British medical advances emerged in the 1970s with major implications for the human condition. The gynaecologist Patrick Steptoe and his physiologist colleague

Robert Edwards, working at the Bourn Hall Clinic near Cambridge, pioneered techniques of human in-vitro fertilisation, and the world's first test-tube baby was born on 25 July 1978, providing a beacon of hope for many infertile couples.

Three-Dimensional Scanner Work at the Hammersmith Hospital, London, and Nottingham University, in the English Midlands, led to the development of the magnetic resonance scanner, an important, harmless alternative to X-rays in the examination of the human body.

Moving from magnetism to electronics, there has been a steady stream of developments during the Queen's reign. One manifestation was the Cambridge Instruments Stereoscan, a scanning electron microscope that provides three-dimensional images at very high magnifications.

Throughout this period, the country maintained its place in the competitive race that developed internationally in computing and communications.

The important early Atlas computer was operational in London in the 1950s. The National Physical Laboratory at Twickenham, west London, developed the Cyclops 3 computer in the 1960s, capable of reading (neat) human handwriting directly. At the same time, the Royal Signals Establishment at Malvern, in western England, was developing fibre optics for communications.

In the late 1970s the British Government's Warren Spring technology laboratory introduced what was then the world's most advanced computerised chemical process control system. In the 1980s the Rutherford-Appleton laboratory near Oxford produced a spallation neutron source ten times more powerful than its predecessors, providing powerful beams of neutrons to investigate structures ranging from virus particles to silicon chips.

Harsh Environment

Engineering is another discipline well-rooted in the British tradition. During the period under review, British engineers were responsible for the structural engineering of the Sydney Opera House and of the Thames Barrage across the river at Woolwich, designed to prevent flooding in London. Nearby stands the Canary Wharf Tower, currently Europe's tallest building, the centrepiece of the Docklands redevelopment project.

In the stormy waters of the North Sea stand Britain's oil rigs, designed to withstand probably the harshest environment so far encountered by man-made structures. Across northern England, from Hull

to Liverpool, runs the M62, a major motorway crossing the Pennines, England's rocky backbone, much of it impressively engineered stilts. Dwarfing them all, both as a feat of engineering and in its implications for the country, is the Channel Tunnel, now nearing completion, which joins England and France under the sea and ends Britain's physical isolation from continental Europe for the first time in 10,000 years.

Aeronautical engineers have also played their part in maintaining Britain's leading role in scientific advance. The 40 years started with the development of variable geometry aircraft in Britain, the design and production of the Vickers Viscount passenger plane, one of the most successful ever built, and the emergence of the de Havilland Comet, the world's first jet airliner.

Seafaring Links

Pride of place today is reserved for two aircraft, the British Aerospace Concorde supersonic airliner, developed in cooperation with Aerospatiale, France, and the Harrier jump jet, the world's most successful vertical take-off and landing military aircraft. Both have provided a wealth of technical experience for the international aircraft industry. They will inevitably be superseded but not before they have laid the groundwork for the even more sophisticated air vehicles of the next century.

As an island, however, Britain's most persistent links are with the sea. From seafaring came the science of navigation, with its early growth in the times of Queen Elizabeth I, and from that astronomy, which has advanced dramatically during the present Queen's reign.

In the 1950s emerged the massive bowl of Manchester University's Jodrell Bank radio telescope, in northwest England, seeking out radio sources in space and, incidentally, tracking both American and Soviet rockets during the early days of space exploration.

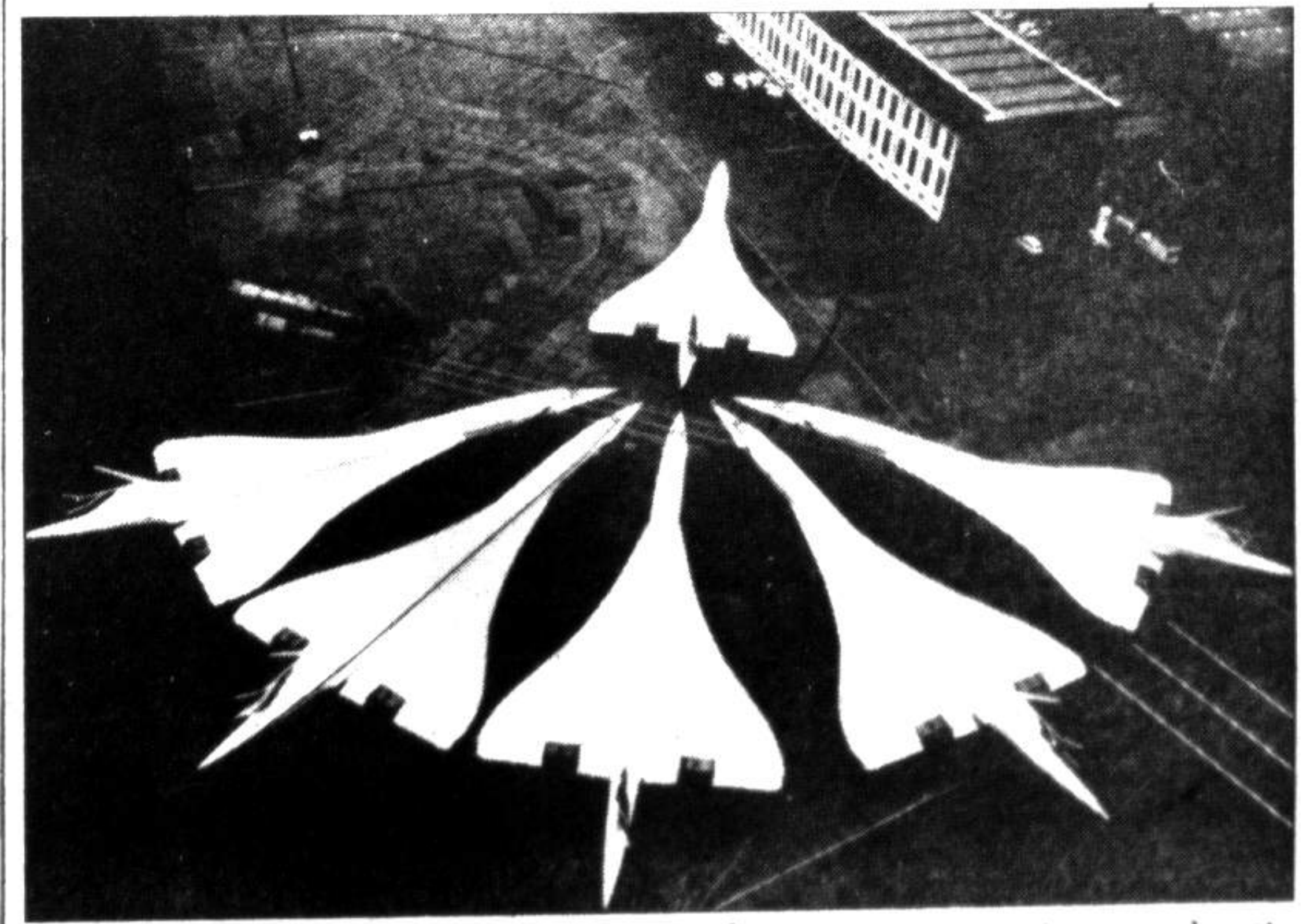
It was followed in the 1970s by the Mullard Observatory's mobile radio telescope near Cambridge, with its 5-km row of eight saucer shaped dishes, four fixed and four on railway tracks. This telescope could focus on sources one-third the size of any previously observed, working on pulsars associated with supernovae.

Major Contribution

During the four decades, the centre of optical astronomy in Britain moved from Greenwich, in London, the ancestral home of modern navigation, to Herstmonceux in southern England, and thence to Edinburgh in Scotland, the range and sophistication of (Continued on Page 9)



Queen Elizabeth II and Duke of Edinburgh



Six British Airways Concorde form the fan-tail shape characteristic of their own elegant design.