



# **The First Space Stations and the Space Shuttle: Travel to Salyut, Mir, Skylab, and Freedom (Springer Praxis Books)**

*David J Shayler*

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This book reviews the long, and at times difficult, path in matching the unique capabilities of the Space Shuttle with the creation of a large research station in Earth orbit. As the 1970s progressed it became clear that the Shuttle would not fly as early as hoped because of tight budgets and adjustments to the design of the space station. It was during this period that cooperation with the Soviet Union forged a new relationship in space from which emerged the Apollo Soyuz Test Project. Flown in the summer of 1975 the successful international docking mission encouraged further joint manned space programs between the two countries.

While studies and debates continued into the design of the large space stations, and Shuttle development slowly progressed, and thoughts turned to further cooperation with the Soviets in the 1980s. During the same time period plans for a possible return to renovate the Skylab space station had to be abandoned when increased solar activities forced the unmanned Skylab to re-enter the atmosphere prematurely. By 1984 the internationally supported Space Station Freedom, to be assembled from elements launched by the Space Shuttle, had been authorized.

The background to this rich history is explored in this book, together with the crucial developments in the skills and procedures that were essential to the subsequent creation of the much larger International Space Station. The book closes with a summary of the nine missions to dock the Shuttle to the Russian Space Station Mir between 1995 and 1998, what was learned from those missions and the lessons which directly applied to the far more complex International Space Station.

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