

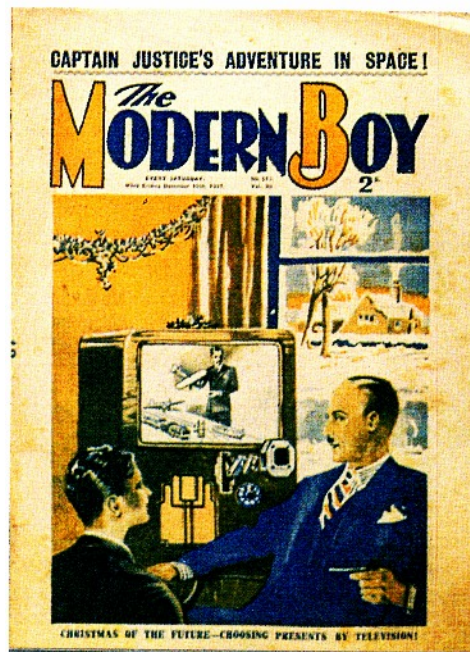
We welcome yet another New Year

Particularly interesting is the anticipation in the 1920's of the future involvement of Television in the lives of their children.

The earliest known record of a New Year festival dates from about 2000 BC in Mesopotamia, where in Babylonia the new year (Akitu) began with the new moon after the vernal equinox on March 21st.and in Assyria with the new moon nearest the autumn equinox (mid-September).

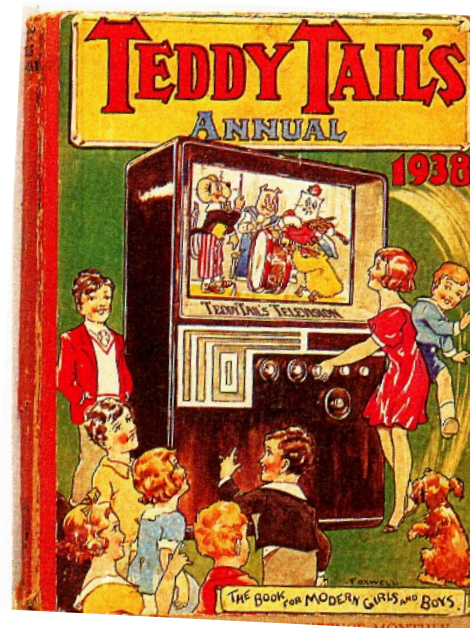
For the Egyptians and Phoenicians, the year began with the autumn equinox (September 21), for ancient Persians it began on the vernal equinox (March 21), and for the early Greeks it began with the winter solstice (December 21).

On the Roman republican calendar the year began on March 1, but after 153 BC the official date was January 1, which was continued in the Julian calendar of 46 BC. Our current calendar was introduced by Pope Gregory in 1582 to supercede the Julian.



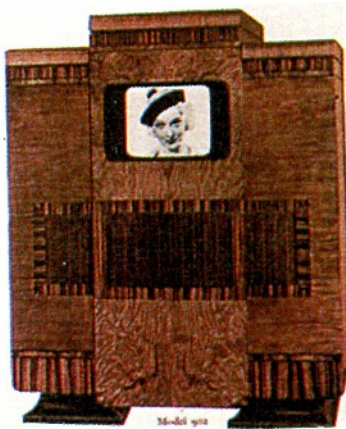
This boys' comic anticipates the time when Christmas presents will chosen using television. It also offers space adventures!

It is dated December 1927.



In 1938, the illustrator's mind has switched to the days when the television set was going to be the centre of home entertainment much as it is today, but dwarfing even the 66-inch models of today. The sort of families who

are going to be able to afford such a monster is also made clear by the artist if you look at the boy to the left. He obviously belongs to a comfortably-off family and his big sister is quite in charge!



An HMV television set of the period. This could be yours for 120 guineas. We are told that Model 902 was the most complete home entertainment ever presented. It had also a world-wide radio receiver .In addition it also had

an electric gramophone which changed the records automatically . It was introduced in 1937 and for its cost, you could buy a very stylish new car. The first scheduled T.V. Service from Alexandra Palace began in 1936 on November 2nd.

A Curious New Year's Day custom.

THE Queen's College, Oxford, is the scene of a remarkable old ceremony on the first day of the year. Under the will of the founder of the college, the Bursar on that day gives to every Fellow a small needle threaded with coloured silk uttering these words: 'Take it and be thrifty !'

This quaint custom is based on the English translation of a French pun *aiguille et fil* on the name of Robert de Egesfield, the man who founded the college in 1341. Robert de Egesfield was chaplain to Queen Philippa, the Consort of Edward III and the first patron of the college. The Queens and Queen Consorts of England have been patrons ever since, and by ancient custom, on the accession of a new Queen or Queen Consort, the Provost of the college presents a petition to Her Majesty praying her to undertake the office of Patroness of the college.



When de Egesfield established the famous seat of learning in Oxford, he provided for a Provost and twelve Fellows, in honour of Christ and the twelve Apostles. He also ordained that they should wear crimson mantles as a reminder of Christ's blood, and that at meals they should always sit on one side of the high table only, with the Provost in the middle, after the traditional manner of the Last Supper. When dinner is over on New Year's Day, the Bursar distributes among the guests needles threaded with black, blue and red silk. The first are given to Theologians, the second to Legists and Medical Graduates and the last to Artists.

Some students of antiquity link the custom with a story dating back to the time not long after the foundation of the college, when Henry V, as Prince of Wales, on one occasion is said to have appeared at Court in 'a gown of blue satin full of oilet (eyelet) holes and out of every hole a needle hung by a silk thread.'

A Collection of PASTWORDS

To **Add Insult To Injury** suggests a second remark or action makes an already bad situation worse by adding another problem. It is suggested the origin of the saying dates back to 25 BC and a book of fables by the Roman writer Phaedrus. In his story 'The Bald Man And The Fly', Phaedrus describes a fly stinging a bald man on the top of his head. Angry at being bitten the man attempts to kill the fly with a hard slap, but the insect sees this coming and jumps off, leaving the man to slap only his head. The fly then insults the man for trying to kill it over a simple insect bite. The bald man had not only received an injury, in the shape of a bite on the top of his head, but also suffered the indignity of making it worse and being insulted by the fly.

To keep something **At Bay**, such as danger or illness, means to fend it off and not be affected by it. In ancient history the bay tree was thought to possess great protective powers, as they never seemed to be struck by lightning. Romans and Greeks would seek shelter under a bay tree during storms and warriors took to wearing bay leaves as a means of protection

against both the enemy and thunderstorms in an attempt to keep them 'at bay'.

During the Great Plague of London in 1665 city folk did the same in the hope they would avoid the disease and keep the plague 'at bay'.



To have the **Bit Between Your Teeth** means to go about a task with such enthusiasm and determination that nobody can stop you. This term relates to the metal bar in a horse's mouth attached to the reins enabling a rider to steer and control the

animal. This bar is known as the 'bit' and needs to be positioned at the softer back of the mouth where the horse can feel it. If the bit gets caught further forward, between the teeth, the horse becomes insensitive to a rider's instructions and therefore uncontrollable. The expression dates back to the year 470 BC and Greek culture when Aeschylus remarked, 'You take the bit in your teeth like a new-harnessed colt.'

The Editor comments: This item appeared recently in the *Hereford Times* newspaper. I thought how genuinely imaginative someone has been to think up such an endearing idea. The naming of such vehicles as gritters is quite unique I imagine, though no doubt in due time, motorists may well offer their own suggestions to be applied to them! Balfour Beatty is the name of the Contractors employed by the Council.

HEREFORDSHIRE locals will now know what to call their gritting lorry, thanks to the efforts of local children who have named nine Herefordshire Council gritting lorries. Herefordshire Council ran a special competition for primary school pupils in October and received almost 100 entries. The winners were invited to attend the Balfour Beatty Living Places depot to meet their gritters. They were also presented with a mocked-up registration plate with their gritter's name on.

Lottie Wooles, who attends Sutton Primary School and won with 'Taylor Drift' said: "I was over the moon when I heard that my name had won! I like Taylor Swift, so thought about how I could create a name from that, and the word 'drift' came to me. I enjoyed the naming event, and especially the chance to sit in Taylor Drift and be shown around and find out how the gritting all works."

Robyn Stevens who attends Kingsland Primary School said: "I loved seeing the gritter lorries as I like the colour yellow and bright lights. They keep our roads safe for me to go to school and other nice places. When I grow up I hope to drive the quad or maybe a gritter. "I enjoyed the hot chocolate, biscuits and the people were very nice to me. I will look out for Humpfreeze on cold days."



Herefordshire primary school pupils were given the chance to name one of the council's new gritters. (Image: David Griffiths)

THE WINNING NAMES.

Snow-way! – named by Theo Bezant,
 Ice-a-saurus Rex – named by Harry Attwood,
 Sprinkle – named by Benji Rowlands,
 Humpfreeze – named by Robyn Stevens,
 Sir Grit-a-Lot – named by Daisy Hardman-McCabe,
 Julius Freezer – named by Lucy Harris,
 Ready Salted – named by Eli-Jacob Howard,
 Taylor Drift – named by Lottie Wooles,
 Who Dares Grits – named by Sienna Stead,

Jodrell Bank

By Patric Dickinson



Who were they, what lonely men
 Imposed on the fact of night
 The fiction of constellations
 And made commensurable
 The distances between
 Themselves, their loves, and their doubt
 Of governments and nations ?
 Who made the dark stable

When the light was not ? Now
 We receive the blind codes
 Of spaces beyond the span
 Of our myths, and a long dead star
 May only echo how
 There are no loves nor gods
 Men can invent to explain
 How lonely all men are.

Jodrell Bank Observatory is in Cheshire. It hosts a number of radio telescopes as part of the Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics at the University of Manchester. The main telescope at the observatory is the Lovell Telescope. Its diameter of 250 ft (76 m) makes it the third largest steerable radio telescope in the world.



This item is taken from an account of a passenger who travelled on the Graf Zeppelin airship on its regular fortnightly flight to South America from its base at Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance, in 1934. After the disaster which ended the R101 project in England(November Vol.2) it is salutary to record the fact that the 'Graf Zeppelin' showed that such travel was safe and for its time, luxurious. The airship at 776 feet long and 113 feet high, was capable of lifting 15 tons. It was powered by five 560 horsepower each. It averaged a speed of 65 mph and had a crew of 40.



There is a choice of ways to South America; you can go by steamer, but it means two or three weeks, and it took the old explorers of the fifteenth century long, weary months to get there. By airship in 1934 it is a different matter. Travel by air has a freedom and a fascination unknown on the ground. The whole sky is the road, and there are no time-tables, tiresome corners, or limits of speed. The earth is restricted, but the air is everywhere, and is free.

You might be on the magic carpet of the Arabian Nights that carries you in two and a half days over two continents and a mighty Ocean to Brazil. It seems like a race with Time, for you have left the shores of Britain after breakfast on Saturday morning; at ten o'clock on the Sunday you are over Gibraltar, and half an hour later are sailing majestically, and at a height of 400 feet, above Tangier, where it begins to get decidedly warmer.

Throughout Sunday we looked down on North Africa. We were passing over the western edge of the Sahara desert; it is not a region nor a country, but a continent of sand hot enough to burn shoe leather—and It has never been fully explored. Viewed from the airship it was a boiling expanse of shimmering sand and shifting dunes. Below we could make out the figures of men and camels; they must have been the Tuaregs, whom I had met elsewhere, and who are scornful and suspicious of the moves of modern science. On Monday morning we woke to find the Equator ahead of us.

Towards evening you pass over St. Paul's Island, a desolate rock out in the Atlantic where the British Government keeps a supply of food for shipwrecked sailors. At dawn on Tuesday morning, only seventy hours from London, the coast of South America loomed up on the horizon; there is the shore with its silvery sand, the waves breaking in continuous rollers, with the surf boats riding

on the crest, altogether just the tropical shore we read of in the story books. Here are the beach, the palms and the coconut trees which have figured in many a tale for boys. The shore is lined with them, they come right down to the edge, for the coconut is only happy when within sound of the sea. Behind them are the palms which, in turn, give way to other trees, clothing the downland country that completes the picture's background.

The first sight of Brazil is a pleasing one; as the mighty airship glides over the shore you see huts with thatched roofs, and houses of red brick and tile in the old Portuguese architecture of the fifteenth century, with other relics of the time when adventurers came across uncharted seas to the New World. At Recife (Pernambuco) we came to earth as gracefully as a seagull alighting on the water. This was the headland of the early Portuguese explorers, and hard by it Magellan first sighted the New World. Here I left the airship to continue my voyage to the South by seaplane.

Quiz Time

Puzzles

1. You must transport a wolf, a goat and a basket of cabbages by boat across the river Wye. It can only hold one of these three items at a time. If you take the cabbages, the wolf will eat the goat. If you take the wolf, the goat will eat the cabbages. So how do you get the three across safely?
2. You are in a dark room with a candle, a wood stove and a gas fire. You only have one match, so what do you light first?

Quiz.

1. What agricultural occupation is mentioned in the first line of Psalm 23?
2. What kind of farming is known as 'Arable farming'?
3. In which sport would you find a 'Brakeman'?
4. Who wrote the story, *The Ugly Duckling*?
5. In which year did the Battle of the Somme take place?
6. What geographical feature is known as 'The Somme'?
7. In what play by Oscar Wilde is Jack, the hero, found as a baby in a handbag?
8. What scientific unit is used to measure levels of sound?
9. '*West Side Story*' is based on which play by Shakespeare?
10. In motor racing, which colour flag signifies "Danger, no overtaking"?
11. If you buy a Samovar for the kitchen, what are you going to do with it?
12. Before he became a well-known writer, what was Dick Francis' occupation?
13. When did Adolph Hitler come to power in Germany?
14. In which year did Rudolf Nureyev seek political asylum in the West?
15. Which is the largest desert in the world?
16. What do 'Cirrus' and 'Autocumulus' have in common?
17. In 1215, King John signed a significant document. What was it?
18. In which Shakespearean play is King Duncan murdered?
19. Of which country was he king?
20. In motorcycle racing what do the letters 'TT' stand for?



Property Laws (according to my Black Lab)

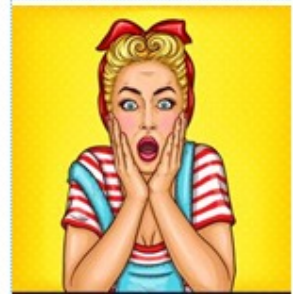


If I like it, it's mine
 If it's in my mouth, it's mine
 If I had it a moment ago, it's mine
 If I can take it from you, it's mine
 If it looks like mine, it's mine
 If I saw it first, it's mine
 If it's on the floor, it's mine
 If I've licked it, it's mine
 If you put it down, it's mine
 If I've chewed it, the bits are mine
 If it's broken, it's yours
 If I want it back, it's mine!
 (NB: Possession is nine-tenths of the law)



SOMEBODY'S DODGY PRESENT AT CHRISTMAS?

THE Hereford Times has obtained data revealing the five makes of car most targeted by thieves in Herefordshire this year. Figures from West Mercia Police show that at least 58 vehicles were stolen between January 1, 2024 and November 7, 2024, which was the date the Hereford Times' Freedom of Information request was submitted. This is the equivalent of one car, van or motorbike being stolen around once every five days in Herefordshire, on average.



According to the data, which covers vehicles reported as stolen, Herefordshire's most stolen makes of car were Land Rover and Ford. 12 Land Rovers and nine Fords were stolen this year. The Discovery was the most stolen model of Land Rover, making up a quarter of the Land Rover thefts.

Of the Fords, the most stolen were Rangers and Transits, together making up two thirds of the Ford thefts.

Volkswagens have also been popular with Herefordshire thieves, with eight VWs being stolen this year, half of which were Golfs.

Another make seeing several car thefts in Herefordshire was Renault, with two Clios and two Meganas being stolen this year. Honda motorcycles and Mercedes vehicles were the joint fifth most stolen vehicles.



Your toast's ready!

Here is a collection by Michael Green from the 'Daily Telegraph' of quirky examples of Official material from various sources and occasions.

Family likeness

Sir Patrick Macrory, the military historian, sent me this story about the late Sir Gerald Templer during his days in Malaya. Templer wanted to rebuke some villagers for weak behaviour towards the trouble caused by Communist insurgents of the time. He addressed them in blunt, soldierly terms, but, of course his words had to be translated:

Templer (in English): You're a pack of useless bastards!

Translation: The General says he knows none of your fathers and mothers were married to each other.

Templer: I'll show you I can be an even bigger bastard!

Translation: But the General says his father and mother were not married either.

Mind you, he won in the end; but not with words.

Blazing row

From a hotel bedroom in Grasse in the south of France:

'If you hear the alarm, quickly leave the room, shut the door, and go downstairs without losing your temper.'

After two years in Britain the scion of a very rich Chinese family now realises why his, experience on arrival makes English friends laugh. Speaking very little English, he was asked repeatedly by an immigration officer: 'Have you got any money?' Understanding at last, the visitor leaned over and whispered confidentially: 'How much do you want?'

A visitor to Italy who prided herself on her efforts to learn the language was the only member of a party of tourists able to read a notice on the staircase of a Naples monument. It said: 'This staircase is in a dangerous condition. It will be closed at the end of the tourist season.'

Heavenly

When the steward on a recent British Caledonian transatlantic flight announced that 'high tea' would be served, an American passenger inquired if that term was used because of the altitude at which they were flying.

A recent visitor to Peking tells me that the literal retranslation from Chinese for parking meter is 'steel, coin-eating tiger'.

Love's brief chord

Miriam Makeba, the intriguing South African singer, has had a new record album issued in Paris under the title, 'Comme une symphonie d'amour'. The first track is 'Malaisha', which I am told when translated from Xhosa into English reads: 'Bring the axe.'

The Christmas Spirit!

During the long strike of rubbish collectors in New York, years ago, one young man seems to have solved the problem at Christmas time. He filled a box with rubbish, wrapped it in festive paper, then put it on the car's passenger seat. He parked in a likely spot, walked away and left the car doors unlocked. He reported that it was such a success that thieves gleefully made off with their trophy every time and he managed to clear his rubbish quite quickly during the festive season by this method.

BEER TRICKS POTTER



AMONGST THE BOOKS I'D HAVE LIKED FOR CHRISTMAS.

TRY PARASAILING THEY SAID



IT'LL BE FUN, THEY SAID...

Solutions to the Puzzles.

1. This quite well-known puzzle solution is;
Take the goat across first and leave it. Then bring the wolf and take the goat back with you. Leave it there and carry the cabbages back. Finally, bring the goat back again. Thus the goat and the wolf are never left alone together.
2. Light the match first. Until it's lit, you can't light anything else.

Quiz Solution.

1. The shepherd.
2. Growing crops.
3. Bobsleigh.
4. Hans Christian Andersen.
5. 1916.
6. The Somme is a river in Picardy, Northern France.
7. 'The Importance of Being Earnest'
8. The decibel.
9. 'Romeo and Juliet'
10. The yellow flag.
11. It is a Russian tea-maker.
12. Horse racing.
13. 1933.
14. 1961.
15. The Sahara.
16. They are both cloud formations.
17. The Magna Carta.
18. 'Macbeth'
19. Scotland.
20. The Tourist Trophy.

TALLOORN



*With my best wishes to all the readers.
My thanks for all their kind comments
and I hope to continue to deserve them!
Brian.*



Why can't you read a newspaper at breakfast like everyone else?

