

A photograph of actress Maggie Smith. She is wearing a light-colored straw hat with a dark purple ribbon and a matching purple shawl over a dark top with lace detailing. She is sitting on a white metal chair outdoors, with a green lawn and trees in the background. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Today in History

December 28, 1934

▲ **British actress Maggie Smith was born. A double Oscar winner, she is now best known as the waspish Dowager Countess of Grantham in Downton Abbey**

1869: William Finley Semple, a dentist from Ohio, was the first person to receive a patent for chewing gum

1908: Up to 100,000 people died in the most destructive earthquake in European history, in Messina, Sicily

1989: Alexander Dubcek returned to public office after 21 years, as chairman of Czechoslovakia's parliament

2009: Russian premier Vladimir Putin launched the East-Siberia – Pacific Ocean oil pipeline