

A close-up portrait of actress Maggie Smith. She has short, wavy, light brown hair and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a dark blue or grey jacket. The background is blurred.

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

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

2009: Thailand began repatriating 4,000 ethnic Hmong to Laos, despite international criticism

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