

# A Fascination with Anniversaries

By Mike Trippitt

IT'S A QUESTION feature writers are often asked: "How do you think of ideas for your articles?"

Journalists and writers will readily admit that it is not necessarily a command of the written word that leads to publication. Getting ideas for what to write about can often be the hardest part for anyone seeking to make a living in print.

Luckily I have always had a fascination for anniversaries. 40 years ago (there I go again), a young DJ moved from the Saturday morning slot on BBC Radio One to a weekday afternoon show. That slender, bespectacled 27-year old became a broadcasting institution and revolutionised pop radio. We know him still as Steve Wright, and an entire generation grew up on Mr. Angry, The Posse and Sunday Love Songs.

For me though, it was the anniversaries that I remember best. "On this day 20 years ago ... .." "It's 10 years today since ... .." and so on. Steve Wright was a master at filling his show with useless facts and countless anniversaries of events ranging from the earth shattering to the trivial, and I loved it.

So when I'm searching for something to say in a column or feature article I do what the young Steve Wright did. I look first at what was happening on this day, or in that month in years gone by.

It's a fascinating exercise in itself. I've learned so much (perhaps things that I should have learned at school had I paid more attention) just by looking back at history and then reading more. It invariably leads to me reflecting on what I was doing at certain times in the past and helps keep memories alive.

With just a few days to go before deadline I sit at my desk to write this column, and turn to my trusted source of anniversaries for inspiration. Did you know, for example, that 1st July would have been Diana, Princess of Wales's 60th birthday, or that 75 years ago on the 5th July the first ever bikini was unveiled at a fashion show in Paris. Fascinating though they are, neither inspire me sufficiently, so I keep searching.

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Guess what I find next. It's 50 years on 6th July since the death of Louis Armstrong. As soon as I read his name I picture his kindly face and hear his gravelly voice. I smile, and do indeed say to myself "What a wonderful world". So I'm feeling happy and even tuneful, but I'm still not inspired.

On 15th July 2006 Twitter was launched, and 4 days later Tesla launched the world's first electric sports car. 30 years ago on 22 July Prime Minister John Major launched The Citizen's Charter, an initiative intended to measure, improve and maintain public services. No inspiration there I'm afraid.

In sport, Michael Schumacher made his debut 30 years ago on 25th August at the Belgium Grand Prix, and five years later in 1996 Frank Bruno retired from professional boxing. Did he ever actually say: "Know what I mean, 'Arry?"

After a lengthy search I have once again, metaphorically speaking, ingested bucket loads of trivia, stumbled along the cobbles of memory lane and whiled away an afternoon. But now to the serious stuff. I've got a column for *SuggeStives* to write. Oh dear, it looks like that will have to wait until next time ...

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