

1957 declared as Britain's happiest year of the last century

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Harold Macmillan's 1957 declaration that Britons had "never had it so good" appears to have been true as research has revealed that it was the happiest year of the 20th century.

Scientists at the University of Warwick used an algorithm to measure the nation's happiness in every year since 1776, through the use of eight million books, and found that other than a period in the 19th century, the British people have never been happier than they were in 1957.

The algorithm detects the happiness of the country at any time in history by analysing the frequency of positive words such as 'peaceful' and 'enjoyment' compared to

negative words such as 'stress' and 'unhappy'.

The research found that despite the fact people worked longer hours than they do now and many people did not have central heating, there was a sense amongst the nation in 1957 that things were getting better in the country following the end of the Second World War.

The study also showed a rise in happiness after 1945, then a fall

through the nationwide strikes and inflation of 1978's Winter of Discontent, and then a recovery towards the end of the 20th century. But happiness levels have never reached the heights of the 1950s.

■ **What was your favourite year?**
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10 things which happened in 1957

■ Norwich City Council became the first British local authority to install a computer – an Elliot 405.

■ The end of petrol rationing following the Suez Crisis.

■ The USSR launched Sputnik I, the world's first artificial Earth satellite.

■ The Toddlers' Truce, a controversial television closedown between 6pm and 7pm so children could be put to bed, was abolished.

■ The first Premium Bond winners were selected by the computer ERNIE.

■ The publication of the Wolfenden report recommended that

“homosexual behaviour between consenting adults in private should no longer be a criminal offence”.

■ The government unveils plans which will allow women to join the House of Lords for the first time.

■ Future members of The Beatles, John Lennon and Paul McCartney, first meet as teenagers at a garden fete in Liverpool.

■ Harry Belafonte reached Christmas number one with the song Mary's Boy Child.

■ The Royal Christmas Message is broadcast on television with the Queen on camera for the first time.



■ The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh visit the Royal Show in 1957.



■ Left,
People enjoy
river cruise
in July 1957.



■ A line-up of goatlings for judging at the Wayland show in 1957.



■ Heavy traffic on Prince of Wales Road in Norwich in 1957.



■ Above, Great Yarmouth Hippodrome circus elephants. Right, a dancing troupe. Their banners read "The Resorts that have Everything" and was probably taken in Great Yarmouth.



■ Dutch crewmen in Great
Yarmouth in 1957.

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