



The Monday Podcast



April Fools' Day (02.04.2007)

Hello and welcome to the Monday Podcast from AllThingsGerman.net and Pension-Sprachschule.de

Good morning!

It's Monday, the 2nd of April, and we're sitting on the balcony in lovely weather, with the birds singing, and you may just hear a building site in the background.

We had that once before.

We had that once before, so we'll just carry on if we hear it. And we're here to talk about April Fools' Day, which was yesterday.

Well, when you woke up in the morning, was it any different for you? Did you think about playing a joke on your wife?

Ah, well what I think about and what I do are two different things. I value a good day together!

OK.

No, but, we've done our research onto where this came from. So, what's the day called in German?

“Erster April” - we just call it Erster April.

The 1st of April. OK, so it's not got a special name like April Fools' day or All Fools' day.

Not as far as I know. When you play a joke on somebody, and after they've been caught and they realise how gullible they were, we just say *“Erster April, Erster April”*.

Or “April April”?

Or “April April”. Well, I guess maybe in Bavaria we do things differently.

We're back to different areas again for this! OK, so [the] English term [is] “April Fools' Day” or the other term [is] “All Fools' Day”. We looked into where it came from. So where did it come from?

Well, it was actually implemented by the French King, what was his name, Charles IX. And that was in the 16th Century. He was the first one to start up with the Gregorian Calender, which moved the beginning of the year to January 1st, and it still left some people who didn't really go for that, and who still wanted to celebrate the New Year on April Fool's Day, on 1st April.



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It wasn't that they didn't go with it, they didn't know about it. So in other countries, neighbouring countries, [they] were still celebrating on what was effectively 1st April...

Of course, they didn't have the internet back then, I mean, where news travels really fast, but no, I believe also some people were against changing that tradition. You always have pros and cons. So he was the first one in Europe to start up with the New Year on 1st January, and it left some people wanting to celebrate it on 1st April.

And the French have a rather nasty tradition, you know, like, traditionally they would put a dead fish on somebody's back, and say "April Fool!"

You know why? This is to do with their name, their name for "April Fool" is "*Poisson d'avril*", so April Fish, which apparently comes from the zodiac sign for 1st April being Pisces.

Right, something to do with 25th March and being born...

Being born in the sign of the fish.

But still – dead fish! Imagine that, getting that on your back.

I was going to say [that] they don't do that these days – they use a paper cut-out.

That's true, yes. But I thought that was sweet, I'd never heard that before.

OK, then we've got the Dutch. The Dutch, who have got other reasons, because it was the start of their independence from Spain on 1st April 1572. And they have this double meaning, in that the Spanish General who was defeated, was defeated in a town in Holland called "Briel", and Briel is the Dutch word for glasses as well, so they're saying [that] he lost his glasses on that day, and it basically means [that] he lost the town on that day, and that's when the Dutch started their move to independence.

So they've got this double meaning, they can make a joke out of it and it fits in with the day as well.

And I heard [that] they still like to joke about it too. It's still a popular thing to say.

The Monday Podcast is a co-operation between www.allthingsgerman.net and www.pension-sprachschule.de.

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