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1 January 1973: Britain enters Europe

Britain becomes a member of the European Community

Guardian Research Department

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We're in—but without the fireworks

By DAVID McKIE and DENNIS BARKER

Britain passed peacefully into Europe at midnight last night without any special celebrations. It was difficult to tell that anything of importance had occurred, and a date which will be entered in the history books as long as histories of Britain are written, was taken by most people as a matter of course.

The principal party political figures maintained their familiar postures of hope and optimism or head-shaking despair. Mr. Heath was starting back from Ottawa, where he had gone for the funeral of Mr. Lester Pearson, at about the time that Britain, along with Denmark and Ireland, officially became members of the European Community.

Click on the article to read the full report.

Britain became a fully fledged member of the European Economic Community in 1973, after failed attempts in 1963 and 1967.



Eye of Triumph: Mr George Thomson (left), one of Britain's two European Commissioners, with Mr Duncan Sandys—who becomes a Companion of Honour in today's honours list—celebrating entry into Europe at a torchlight rally in London last night.

Click on the photograph above to read Terry Coleman's interview with Maurice Schumann.

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