

John Logie Baird

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Many people contributed to the development of the TV. But, John Logie Baird is credited with displaying one of the first moving images on a TV screen. Logie made use of a Nipkow disc and a Cathode Ray tube.

John Logie Baird (1888 - 1946) was a Scottish engineer and inventor, who demonstrated the first televised moving objects, the first transatlantic TV broadcast, and the first colour TV in 1941. Baird began his research into the problems of televising moving objects at the age of 18. In 1926 he televised objects in outline, using a flying spot of light to scan a cathode ray tube. He demonstrated the first transatlantic television broadcast in 1928. Early in his career, Baird made money by cleaning shoes and selling razor-blades. He called his first TV a “televisor”. It was a very simple machine inside a large wooden box.

In October 1925 Baird put a doll called Stooky Bill in front of his cameras and filmed it. The black and white image appeared on a small screen (10 cm x 5 cm) at the other end of his flat. TV was born! The reality is that most inventions fail or remain unused. However, history is peppered with the many amazing creations that succeeded. Some of these, like the steam engine, are physical solutions to practical problems. Others, like the theorems of Archimedes and the work of Tim Berner-Lee, focus on more abstract thoughts and concepts. Regardless, without these inventions, the modern world would look very different. A planet lacking email and phone communications would move slowly. Moving even slower would be a transportation system that lacked affordable, mass produced cars and the ability fly using a powered craft.

Take a moment to try and imagine a world without motor vehicles or electricity. While this seems farfetched, these and other inventions may have been delayed in their creation or completely nonexistent without the work of John Logie Baird and other ingenious men and women.

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