

The Hanging of Margaret Dickson – an Edinburgh tale

Contributed article

Here is some news about my new novel – The Hanging of Margaret Dickson – published by Thames River Press on 1 June 2013. I first came across this amazing story over ten years ago and made it a personal quest of mine to write a novel about her incredible life – and death!

I researched for this novel many, many years (travelling to Musselburgh, Edinburgh, Duddingston, National Archives etc.)

The novel tells the true tale of the Musselburgh fishwife, Maggie Dickson, who was hanged at the Grassmarket, Edinburgh, 1724.

In an age when women are expected to know their place, be submissive, dutiful and chaste, Maggie Dickson, a Musselburgh fishwife, is often in trouble. She's outspoken, promiscuous and vituperative. While her husband's at sea, she sells her fish, sleeps with men for pleasure or money and looks after her two children. In time, her husband abandons her. Maggie quits Musselburgh and heads for Newcastle to stay with relatives.

During the winter of 1723, a fisherman finds the dead, naked body of a baby boy. Fingers are soon pointing in the direction of a stranger working in a local tavern, a woman recently estranged from her mariner husband. It is rumoured that she's been having a passionate affair with the innkeeper's young son, William Bell, and that he is the father of the dead child.

Maggie is arrested and taken to Edinburgh tollbooth to await

trial, is found guilty and is sentenced to death. The news spreads like wildfire and, as Maggie languishes in jail, the whole city speculates whether or not she killed her child. Will she take her secret to her grave?

'The Hanging of Maggie Dickson' is a heartrending tale of obsession and unrequited love.

[The book is available now on Amazon.](#)

Submitted by [Alison Butler](#)

