

Looking back at historical events in Edinburgh in June

Each month Jerry Ozaniec, Membership Secretary of the Old Edinburgh Club compiles a list of the notable dates in history. There are quite a few in June, some pretty and some pretty gruesome.



The Floral Clock depicted Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

2nd	<p>In 1581, James Douglas, Earl of Morton, was executed on the Maiden, a form of guillotine which he himself had imported from France; In 1580, Morton was accused of being complicit in the murder of Mary's estranged husband, Lord Darnley, and was sentenced to death; his head, however, remained on "the prick on the highest stone" (a spike) on the north gable of the ancient Tolbooth of Edinburgh (outside St Giles Cathedral), for eighteen months.</p>
3rd	<p>In 1597, William Stewart killed Robert Cathcart, who was relieving himself on the wall at the head of Peebles Wynd, in revenge for his being present at the murder of Stewart's father. And in 1726, James Hutton, founder of modern geology, was born in Edinburgh. Also in 1846, Dr Thomas Chalmers laid the foundation stone of New College on the Mound, the home of the School of Divinity.</p>
4th	<p>In 1694, the Merchant Maiden Hospital, later known as The Mary Erskine School, was founded by Mary Erskine in the Cowgate. And in 1792, the most serious outbreak of the King's Birthday riots began, lasting three days and nights which coincided with the birthday of King George III; during the riots at least one person was killed and an effigy of the Lord Advocate, Dundas, was burned in protest against the 1791 Corn Laws which had led to a rise in food prices. Also in 1818, gun maker Alexander Henry was born in Leith & on the same day the first recorded inter-club golf match between Edinburgh Burgess Golfing Society and Bruntsfield Links Golf Club took place.</p>

5th	<p>In 1868, James Connolly, an Irish republican and socialist leader, was born in the Cowgate area of Edinburgh to Irish-born parents; he left school for working life at the age of 11, but became one of the leading Marxist theorists of his day; he also took a role in Scottish and American politics and was executed by a British firing squad because of his leadership role in the Easter Rising of 1916.</p>
8th	<p>In 1783, volcanic eruptions that started at the Laki fissure in Iceland killed tens of thousands in Europe as a choking sulphurous haze spread across the continent, causing respiratory failure from the poisonous gases; dark and gloomy weather hit Scotland before a sulphurous haze turned crops black; cold winters followed for the next four years.</p>
9th	<p>In 1573, Sir William Maitland, the man Mary Queen of Scots named 'Secretary Maitland', died at Leith Prison. And in 1648, Alexander Denholm, a baker, was imprisoned in the Tolbooth for a second time for his reckless behaviour and actions in making some rash comments to the Duke of Hamilton in the High Street; he was armed with a sword and a pair of pistols without permission of the magistrates. Also in 1991, the Palace Hotel on the corner of Princes Street and Castle Street was accidentally set on fire.</p>



9 June – fire at Palace Hotel



11 June Mary of Guise died at Edinburgh Castle Painting attributed to Corneille de Lyon

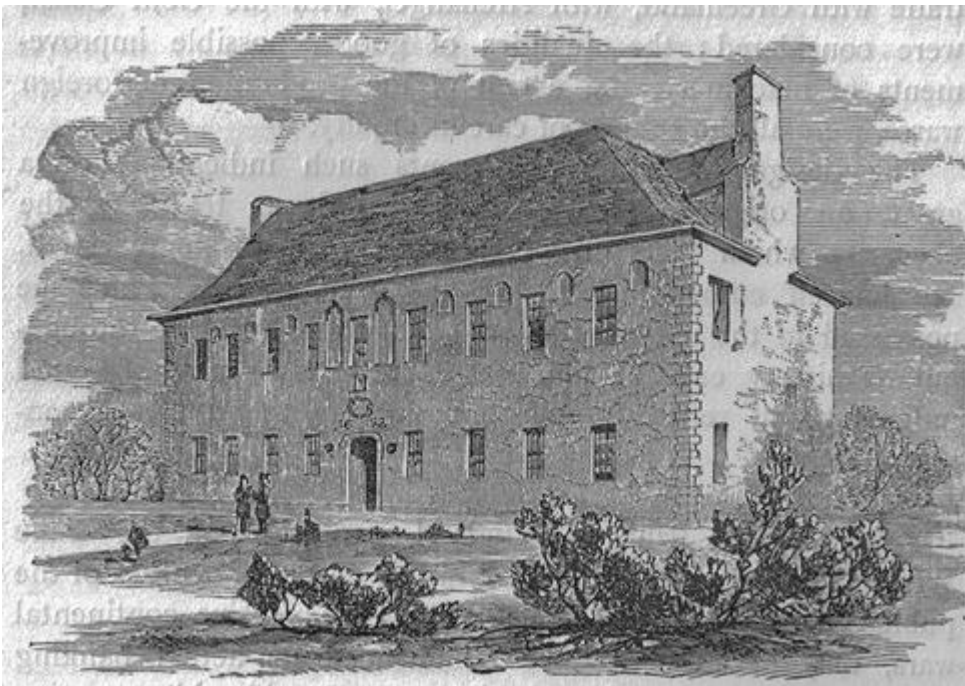
10th	In 1903, the floral clock in Princes Street Gardens began operation – driven by clockwork and with only an hour hand, it was the first of its kind in the world.
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11th	In 1560, Mary of Guise died of dropsy in Edinburgh Castle
12th	In 1754, the contract for the construction of the Royal Exchange (today's City Chambers) was settled, work commencing the following day.
13th	In 1831, scientist James Clerk Maxwell was born at number 14 India Street, Edinburgh; on his arrival at the Edinburgh Academy in 1841, he was nicknamed 'daftie' by his classmates, due to his home-made clothing and rustic accent; despite the teasing, he excelled at the school, producing a paper on mathematical curves at the age of fourteen – this impressed scientists of the day so much that it was presented to the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
15th	In 1567, the Queen (Mary of Scots) handed herself over to the Lords of the Congregation who took her to the house of the Lord Provost, Sir Simon Preston, in Edinburgh; his house was known as the Black Turnpike (pictured) which stood at the head of Peebles Wynd; it was demolished in the 1780s to make way for the South Bridge and Hunter Square. And in 1698, the council authorised the Town Treasurer, Samuel McClellan, to arrange stonemasons and carpenters for the construction of a Bedlam house; this was constructed in the New or South Greyfriars yard.
16th	In 1890, the Caledonian Rail Station, built of timber with a pitched, slated roof and which had been called the "wooden shanty", was destroyed by fire.
17th	In 1605, a battle was fought in the High Street at the Salt Tron between the Laird of Ogle of Perthshire, the younger & his associates and Wishart, the young Laird of Pitarrow in the Mearns; the fight lasted 2 hours and a number were hurt on both sides; the following day they were imprisoned; also William Thomson was killed by John Waterstoone who was beheaded the next day on Castlehill.

18th	In 1633, Charles I was crowned King of Scots at St Giles Cathedral. And in 1815, Ensign Ewart captured the French Ensign at the Battle of Waterloo as commemorated in the pub in the Lawnmarket.
19th	In 1566, James VI was born in Edinburgh Castle. And in 1633, the coronation of King Charles I took place at Holyrood.



15 June – the Black Turnpike



Darien House in Edinburgh now commemorated by a plaque in Bristo Place)

20th	<p>In 1941, one of Edinburgh's most serious and tragic public transport accidents happened at Inchview Terrace when a bus swerved and collided violently with a tramcar, which was travelling in the opposite direction; the side of the bus was ripped off and those on the affected side were either killed or injured; a kitten escaped from a basket and jumped on the face of the bus driver causing him to lose control.</p>
23rd	<p>In 1829, the new Royal High School was formally opened with a procession from the old High School when Deacon Lorimor, the contactor, handed the keys over to the Lord Provost. And in 1954, George Robertson, convicted of murder, became the last person hanged in Edinburgh.</p>
24th	<p>In 1562, the provost, bailies, and council ordered that the idol, St Giles, was to be cut out of the town's flag and a thistle put in its place.</p>
26th	<p>In 1695, the Company of Scotland, which was behind the ill-fated Darien Scheme (an attempt to establish a colony in the New World), was founded; the Company had its headquarters at Darien House in Edinburgh but the company was ruined within five years after the failure of the scheme within which up to a third of the country's wealth became entangled; attempts to trade with local tribes proved almost impossible and after a run of disease and the refusal of help from the existing Spanish and English colonies, the settlement was abandoned; the failure of the Company led to the political union of Scotland and England in 1707.</p>
27th	<p>In 1936, folk singer Robin Hall was born in Edinburgh; he studied at the Royal Academy of Music and Drama and recorded more than twenty albums, which included well-loved tunes such as The Mingulay Boat Song and Ye Cannae Shove Yer Granny aff a Bus.</p>

28th	<p>In 1571, the Earl of Morton conducted a body of Scots, who adhered to the King (James VI), from Leith to Restalrig, where they drew up in order of battle against the Queen's forces who had marched from Edinburgh to confront them; about 50 of Queen Mary's men were slain whilst only 2 of Morton's were killed.</p>
29th	<p>In 1610, thirty-six pirates were brought to Edinburgh from Orkney of whom twenty-seven were hanged in Leith within the sea-mark. And in 1871, the tramways bill was passed enabling a horse-drawn system of trams to be established. Also in 1916, the Senate of Edinburgh University recommended to the University Court that the classes in the Faculty of Medicine should be open to women.</p>

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