

Looking back with The Old Edinburgh Club

The Old Edinburgh Club collates a list of notable dates for us from the month of September in history.

On 4 September 1964 HM The Queen and Prince Philip opened the Forth Road Bridge



1st	In 714, St Giles, patron saint of Edinburgh, died. And in 1558, a Protestant demonstration broke up the annual St Giles' Day procession through the streets of Edinburgh, seized the saint's statue, and ritually drowned it in the nearby Nor' Loch.
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2nd	<p>In 1561, Mary, Queen of Scots, made her formal entry into Edinburgh after her return to Scotland 2 weeks before. And in 1724, Maggie Dickson was hanged for the crime of concealment of a pregnancy; however, she did not actually die and revived on her way to burial; she survived and became known as 'Half Hangit' Maggie. Also in 1887, the Scotsman reported that the broken and stormy weather affected Edinburgh since the downpour was so sharp and sudden as to cause flooding more or less serious in many parts of the city; the houses in Greenside experienced the most serious effects of the storm; a number of small houses lie there at the foot of two steep hills—Greenside on the south and the Calton Hill on the east—and at this spot, owing to the converging of the two streams of rain, and to the surface drains becoming choked and ultimately covered to the depth of a few inches by the large quantity of earth washed down from the Calton Hill, the rain rapidly accumulated, and at length rushed down the stairs leading to the underground houses; in half an hour, even after the rainfall had ceased, the floors were deluged to a depth of from six inches to nearly two feet; altogether the houses of eight families were flooded; all the people affected were poor and could ill afford to sustain the damage caused to their belongings.</p>
4th	<p>In 1611, the council ordered the burgh treasurer to plan the construction of a school for Mr Patrik Henrysoun, master of the song school. And in 1808, Edinburgh-based John Home, Scottish playwright, historian and kirk minister, died; among his most famous works is Douglas, a verse tragedy which enjoyed such a successful run in his native Edinburgh that it was transferred south to Covent Garden. Also in 1964, the Forth Road Bridge was opened by the Queen. At 6,156 feet long and a centre span of 3300 feet, it was the longest in Europe at that time.</p>

5th	<p>In 1513, preparations for battle against the English were made; the provost, bailies, and council ordered all combatants to rejoin the King's army and all inhabitants due to bear arms to present themselves in order to ensure King James IV's victory and safe return. And in 1750, poet Robert Fergusson was born in Edinburgh.</p>
7th	<p>In 1736, John Porteous was lynched by a mob in Edinburgh; people protesting the execution of smuggler Andrew Wilson the previous April were fired upon by troops commanded by Captain of the City Guard, John Porteous; he was sentenced to death but was reprieved following an appeal; a furious crowd stormed the jail where Porteous was held and dragged him to the Grassmarket, where he was hanged. And in 1782, Susan Edmonstone Ferrier, Scottish novelist (Scotland's "Jane Austen"), was born in Edinburgh. Also in 1842, Queen Victoria visited Edinburgh for the first time.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✘</p>
8th	<p>In 1519, the Lords of Council sent letters under the Royal Seal to the provost and baillies directing that all four-pence coins (called placks) should be accepted by the general public regardless of the metal of which they were made; further, searchers were to be appointed to find and destroy all false placks. And in 1675, the council granted a salary of £20 sterling to Mr James Sunderland who was to conduct instruction in the history of plants as part of the University's Natural Philosophy course.</p>
9th	<p>In 1758, painter Alexander Naysmyth was born in Edinburgh.</p>

10th	<p>In 1547, the Battle of Pinkie Cleugh was fought between Scottish and English forces; the battle, which was fought close to Musselburgh, was fought as part of the 'rough wooing' in which England's King Henry VIII tried to demand a marriage between his son Edward and the young Mary Queen of Scots. And in 1883, Mr Henry Irving and the London Lyceum Company opened the Lyceum Theatre.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✘</p>
11th	<p>In 1851, a report was unanimously approved by the Council embodying certain regulations for the protection of East Prince's Street Gardens.</p>
12th	<p>In 1423, a document of indenture was drawn up between Dean John of Leith (former Abbot of Holyrood) and the officers of the burgh making over the Canons' Mills and their associated revenues to the city for a period of five years. And in 1848, Scottish horticulturist William McNab, curator of the Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh, died; McNab was passionate about plants and was responsible for the re-emergence of Edinburgh's Botanic Garden into one of the world's greatest gardens, after it had been neglected for decades; under his curatorship, more than 4,000 plant species were transferred from the Garden's site on Leith Walk (which had become very polluted) through to Inverleith, site of the current gardens; the Garden was founded in 1670, originally to house medicinal plants.</p>
13th	<p>In 1753, the foundation stone of the Royal Exchange (now the City Chambers) was laid by George Drummond, Grand Master of the Freemasons; a triumphal arch was constructed along with viewing stands for the magistrates and officers of the Lodge as well as for other spectators.</p>

14th	<p>In 1128, on the Feast of the Holy Cross (Hali Rude), against the wishes of his chaplain and the tradition of his family, King David I rode out to go hunting where a huge stag unhorsed him; his survival inspired him to invite the Augustinian canons to Scotland and provide them with a monastery of the Holy Rood as well as extensive lands. And in 1507, Edinburgh merchants were granted the exclusive privilege of running a printing press. Also in 1745, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Charles Edward Stuart, occupied Edinburgh.</p>
15th	<p>In 1595, Bailie John MacMorran was killed by Willaim Sinclair, a protesting scholar at the High School, when he tried to overcome the student's barricade; the students had rioted when they had been refused a holiday by MacMorran. And in 1897, the new North Bridge opened.</p>
17th	<p>In 1745, Prince Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) occupied Edinburgh and took up residence at the Palace of Holyroodhouse.</p>
18th	<p>In 1643, historian Gilbert Burnet was born in Edinburgh; his first book, A History of the Reformation of the Church of England, was published in 1679.</p>
21st	<p>In 1745, the Battle of Prestonpans took place where the Jacobite army of just over 3,000 under Bonnie Prince Charlie heavily defeated the Hanoverian Royal forces led by Sir John Cope.</p>
22nd	<p>In 1497, the King (James IV) proclaimed measures to prevent imminent danger of infection of the community by syphilis (known as grandgore); this involved removing all those infected to Incholm Island in the Forth. And in 1896, Czar Nikolai Aleksandrovich of Russia and Czarina Alexandra of Hesse disembarked at Leith en route to Balmoral to visit her grandmother, Queen Victoria.</p>
24th	<p>In 1959, the top coat of tanny grit was put over the wires of the Mound electric blanket.</p>



26th	<p>In 1357, a Council held in Edinburgh confirmed the obligation of the three estates to provide a ransom for King David II. And in 1506, the provost and council ruled that no pigs should be kept within the burgh under pain of slaughter and confiscation. Also in 1857, the extensive cabinet and upholstery works of Mr R. Sandeman, situated at Greenside, were entirely destroyed by fire; the premises, consisting of four flats, and a wood yard, were situated at the north-west corner of the Calton Hill, and behind Blenheim Place; in addition to Sandeman's property at Nos 8–9 Greenside St, 13 other tenements were destroyed and 60 families displaced – it was the worst fire in Edinburgh since 1824. Finally in 1950, the Sun over Edinburgh turned blue!</p>
27th	<p>In 1509, Thomas Johnston and John Brown were contracted to clean the High Street from Castlehill on both sides to the top of Leith Wynd on the north and St Mary's Wynd on the south. And in 1940, a bomb fell near Holyroodhouse.</p>
28th	<p>In 1660, the council granted 'liberty and tolerance' to William Woodcok, a former officer in Leith, to set up and operate a hackney coach service between Leith and Edinburgh.</p>
29th	<p>In 1940, more bombs fell near Holyroodhouse.</p>
30th	<p>In 2017, the Queensferry crossing opened.</p>

- The list is compiled by Jerry Ozaniec, Membership Secretary of the Old Edinburgh Club, membership@oldedinburghclub.org.uk