

# Historical dates of note in August

## Looking back at historical dates in August with The Old Edinburgh Club

1 August

In 1821, Sir James Gowans, architect and builder, who lived the major portion of his life in Edinburgh, was born.

2 August

In 1885, It appeared that between twelve and one o'clock, the wife of a neighbour was in Angus Beaton's house in Simpson's Court, Greenside Row, Edinburgh; a discussion arose as to the relative merits and demerits of Mary Queen of Scots, John Knox, and Queen Elizabeth; like others before them, the disputants were unable to settle the knotty historical point, and quarrelled; Beaton championed the cause of the unfortunate Mary, and was alleged to have put out of his house and afterwards assaulted the woman who spoke disparagingly of the Scottish Queen. And in 1922, Edinburgh-born Alexander Graham Bell died at his estate in Nova Scotia, Canada.



The original North Bridge during dismantling circa 1896  
3 August

In 1573, Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange was executed after defending Edinburgh Castle on behalf of Mary from May 1568 to May 1573. And in 1769, the side walls of the south abutment of the new North Bridge suddenly gave way, causing a partial collapse of the structure and tragically claiming the lives of five people.

4 August

In 1870, entertainer Sir Harry Lauder was born in Portobello. And in 1940, five unexploded bombs fell on Portobello.

5 August

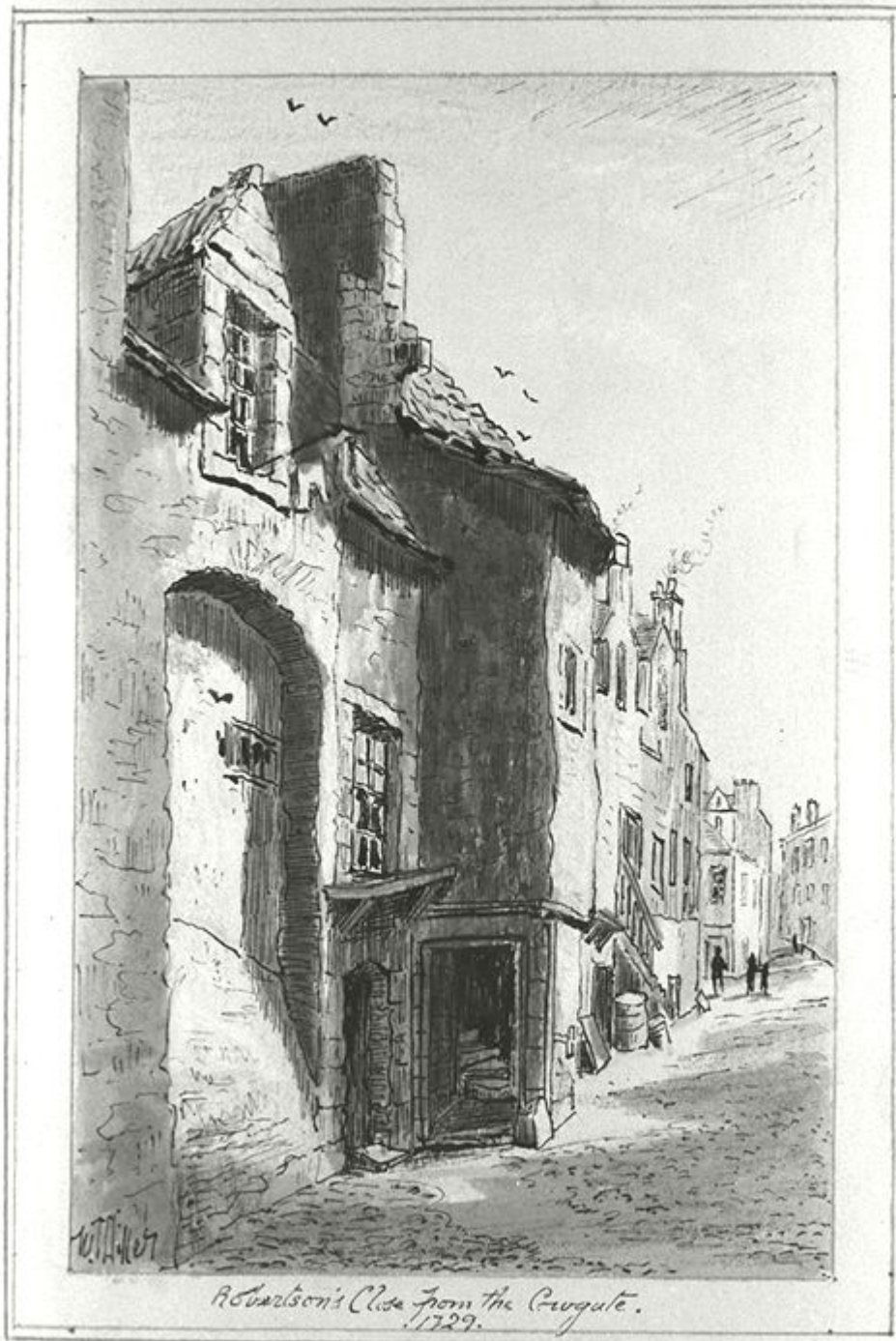
In 1878, John Lunny assaulted a policeman in Silvermills Lane the previous night for which the magistrate sentenced him to 20 days' imprisonment.



Bomb damage



White Horse Close, Canongate, Edinburgh, 1887. Photo: The Cavaye Collection of Thomas Begbie/City Art Centre/Capital Collections.



*Robertson's Close from the Quaygate.  
1729.*

## Little House

6 August

In 1678, the first Glasgow/Edinburgh coach service began from White Horse Inn, Edinburgh. And in 1729, the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh opened after an appeal for funds by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh; the original building, known as the 'Little House', was at the head of Robertson's

Close and contained just four beds; it was the first voluntary hospital in Scotland. Also in 1796, painter David Allan died in Edinburgh; Allan became famous for both his portrait work and historic scenes; he was also responsible for a number of fine works to illustrate the work of well-known authors, including Robbie Burns. Finally in 1942, four 500 pound bombs fell near Craigentenny.



Margaret Tudor  
8 August

In 1503, King James IV married Margaret Tudor at Holyrood Abbey in Edinburgh. And in 1860, an accident took place on the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Railway's short section of track on the southern side of the Firth of Forth which claimed 4 lives and injure 6 people.

10 August

In 1784, Edinburgh-born painter Allan Ramsay died at the age of 70; Ramsay was famed as a fine portrait painter and among his subjects were Flora MacDonald, King George III, David Hume and Queen Charlotte.

11 August

In 1897, the King of Siam, Chulalongkorn I, arrived at the Balmoral Hotel (at that time situated at 91, 93, 95, 98 Princes St and 3 Frederick St) at about 7PM; after dinner his Majesty attended the Theatre-Royal where he saw a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream. And in 1949, Ian Charleson, British stage and film actor, was born in Edinburgh.

12 August

In 1856, John Henry Lorimer, portraitist, was born in Edinburgh. And in 1929, The Playhouse opened as a cinema. Also in 1990, Edinburgh-born Roy Williamson, singer with the Corries and writer of the hit Flower of Scotland, died.



14 August

In 1827, the foundation stone of George IV Bridge was laid; it was not completed until 1836 due to lack of funds. And in

1902, Lillian Mary Pickford, FRS, FRSE, a pioneering British neuroendocrinologist was born; she was the first woman to be appointed to a medical professorship at the University of Edinburgh.



Painting by JMW Turner  
15 August

In 1771, author and poet Sir Walter Scott was born at College Wynd, Edinburgh. And in 1822, the visit of George IV to Edinburgh commenced. Also in 1840, the foundation stone of the Scott Monument was laid.

16 August

In 1864, Elsie Maud Inglis, doctor, surgeon, and teacher, was born.



17 August

In 1947, the first Edinburgh International Festival began.

19 August

In 1513, James IV mustered part of his army South of Edinburgh on Burgh Muir (today its remains include the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links) before heading for the Battle of Flodden. And in 1561, Mary Queen of Scots landed at Leith on her return from France, after the death of her husband, King Francis II. Also in 1808, engineer James Nasmyth, inventor of the steam hammer, was born in Edinburgh; Nasmyth was the son of painter Alexander Nasmyth.

20 August

In 1669, a Virginia merchant was admitted as a burghess of the city.

21 August

In 1844, the foundation stone of the Political Martyrs Monument, located in the Old Calton Burial Ground on Calton Hill, was laid by Joseph Hume MP with 3,000 people gathered for the occasion.

22 August

In 1847, Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie (composer, conductor, and teacher best known for his oratorios, violin & piano pieces, Scottish folk music, and works for the stage) was born in Edinburgh.

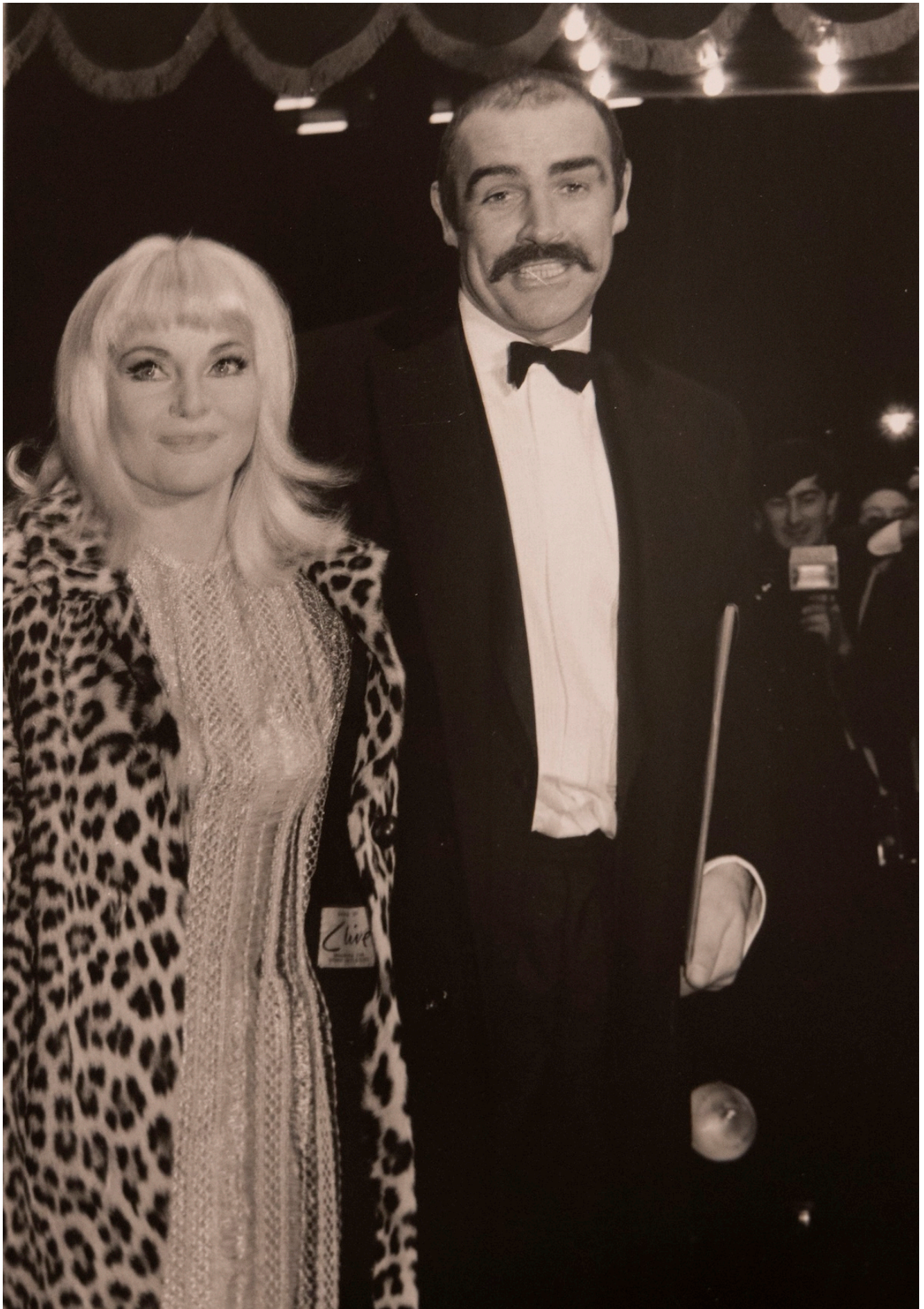
24 August

In 1945, the centre of Edinburgh was rocked by a colossal explosion which tore up 120 yards of Queen Street; man-hole covers were blown out and a stretch of pavement along the north side of Queen Street was shattered by the blast; the

explosion was due to a fault in the main electric cable buried beneath the pavement.

25 August

In 1513, the Council ordered that after 9 PM no fruit seller should sell fruit or other goods at the Mercat Cross or in their homes; punishment was confiscation of the fruit and physical chastisement. And in 1776, Edinburgh-born philosopher David Hume died in the city. Also in 1930, the New Victoria cinema (later the Odeon) opened on Clerk Street and Sean Connery was born in Fountainbridge.



Sir Sean Connery photographed by Stanley Reilly at a film premiere in London



THE TOLBOOTH OF OLD EDINBURGH.

<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/460293>

The Tolbooth [since demolished], the site of Brodie's execution

27 August

In 1429, Alexander Macdonald, Lord of the Isles and self-styled 'master' (i.e. heir) of the earldom of Ross, clad only in shirt and drawers and on his knees, offered and rendered to the king a naked sword before the high altar of Holyrood as a humiliating submission to King James I of Scotland. And in 1463, Pope Pius II (Enea Silvio Bartolomeo Piccolomini [Latin: Aeneas Silvius Bartholomeus]) granted a 'plenary indulgence' to all who would visit Trinity Collegiate Church during the festival of its dedication (10 July) every year for five years. Also in 1784, James Tytler, editor of the second edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, made the first balloon ascent in Britain from Holyrood Park. Finally in 1788, the trial of Deacon William Brodie, a skilled and trusted cabinetmaker, councillor, and deacon of a trades guild, began in Edinburgh.

28 August

In 1491, the bailies and sherriffs ordered a search for William of Bog, John of Schele (a shield-maker), and skinner John Tait, the murderers of the cordiner Robert Malyson, who had fled the city; they were also denounced at the Mercat Cross.

29 August

In 1623, in reaction to several complaints, the town council fixed the prices the undertakers (called Bellmen) and grave diggers were allowed to charge for their services.

31 August

In 1385, Richard II of England began an invasion of Scotland during which the English burned Holyrood and Edinburgh.

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