

Important dates this November in the history of Edinburgh

There are many things to remember this month – from the birth of Naomi Aitchison (unbelievably in 1897) to HM The Queen opening the extension to the National Museum of Scotland in 1988.

Day	Event(s)
1st	In 1695, an Act of the Scottish Parliament founded the Bank of Scotland. And in 1828, Rumford Medal-winning Balfour Stewart was born at 1 London Row in Leith, the son of William Stewart a tea-merchant, and his wife, Jane Clouston. Also in 1897, Naomi Mitchison (née Haldane), author, poet, and politician, was born in Edinburgh; Mitchison was a campaigner for women's issues and a lifelong Socialist.
2nd	In 1593, King James VI issued a proclamation that no one should trouble the papist Lords but treat them as faithful and true subjects.
3rd	In 1698, the Darien Expedition of about 1,200 persons landed at "Caledonia" in Panama; this was the first phase of an ambitious scheme to establish a Scottish colony in Panama for the purpose of creating an overland route that connected the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.
4th	In 1601, a pitched battle was fought between 2 Border families, the Kers and Turnbells, and resulted in the murder of Thomas Ker.

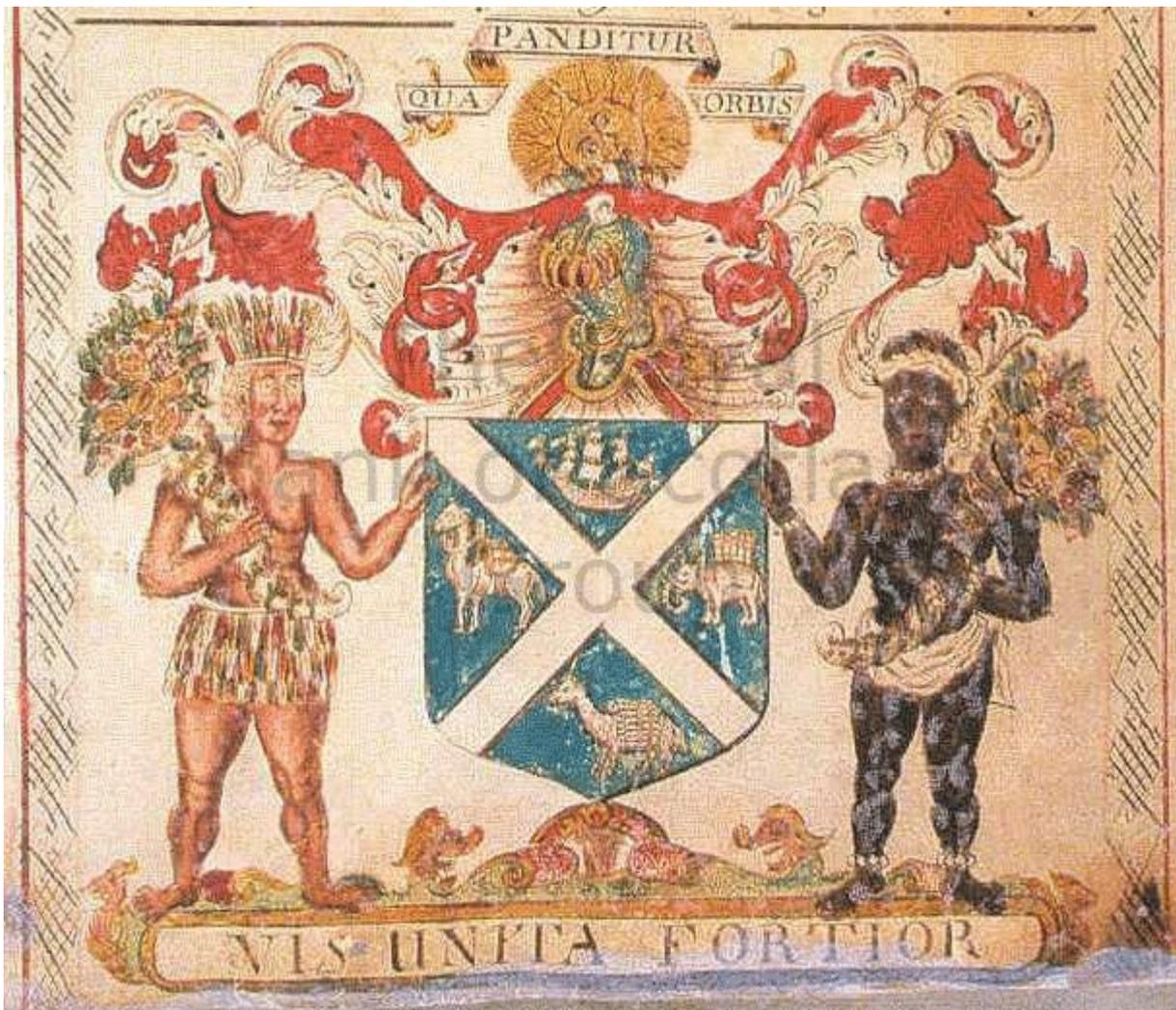
5th	<p>In 1854, Susan Edmonstone Ferrier, Scottish novelist (Scotland's "Jane Austen"), died in Edinburgh and is buried in St Cuthbert's Churchyard. And in 1879, Edinburgh-born mathematician and physicist James Clerk Maxwell, died; his most notable achievement was to formulate the classical theory of electromagnetic radiation, bringing together for the first time electricity, magnetism, and light as different manifestations of the same phenomenon. Also in 1940, six 250 pound bombs fell around Corstorphine Hill.</p>
7th	<p>In 1723, the first public advert about social dance nights in Edinburgh was published in the Caledonian Mercury about a dance which was being organised in what was then Patrick Steel's Close off the High Street, the close was subsequently renamed Assembly Close and later Old Assembly Close, whose name commemorates the Edinburgh Dance Assembly. And in 1892, the Empire Theatre opened.</p>
8th	<p>In 1736, playwright Allan Ramsay opened Scotland's first public theatre at Carrubber's Close off the Royal Mile in Edinburgh; the theatre was short-lived due to the disapproval of the Protestant kirk.</p>
9th	<p>In 1847, Sir James Young Simpson delivered Wilhelmina while chloroform was administered to her mother, Jane Carstairs, the first child to be born with the aid of anaesthesia. And in 1955, the C&A Modes department store fire on Princes Street ranks as one of the worst that the city of Edinburgh has ever witnessed.</p>
10th	<p>In 1799, Joseph Black, physicist and chemist, known for his discoveries of magnesium, latent heat, specific heat, and carbon dioxide, probably the greatest chemist of his age, died. And in 1955, fire broke out at the Carr & Aitkman shoe warehouse on Jeffrey Street.</p>

11th	<p>In 1608, the council proclaimed that bonfires should be lit on 5 November each year to celebrate the escape of the King, the Queen, their children, all the estates of the realm, and the Parliament of England from the treason intended that day in 1605 by certain English Catholics; people who did not build bonfires would be stripped of their citizenship.</p>
12th	<p>In 1869, Edinburgh University admitted female medical students for the first time; however they were not able to graduate, as women were not allowed to practice on medical wards; as an aside a woman, named Margaret Anne Bulkley masquerading as Dr James Barry, actually took a medical degree at Edinburgh University in 1812 and became an army surgeon.</p>
13th	<p>In 1850, author Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh at 8 Howard Place. And in 1968, Joe Corrie, Scottish poet and playwright, died in Edinburgh.</p>
14th	<p>In 1601, Thomas Armstrong and Adam Steill (AKA 'The Peckit') were hanged at the Mercat Cross; Armstrong had murdered James Carmichael and Steill was described as one of the most notable thieves that ever rode a horse. And in 1910, the poet Norman Alexander MacCaig was born at 15 East London Street.</p>
15th	<p>In 1824, fire broke out about 10 o'clock at night in a second floor workshop in Old Assembly Close, belonging to the engraver, James Kirkwood; this turned out to be one of the most destructive fires in the history of the city, destroying the High Street, Parliament Square and the Tron Kirk over 5 days. And in 1873, the statue of Greyfriar's Bobby was unveiled. Also in 1996, the Stone of Destiny was ceremonially returned to Edinburgh from Westminster Abbey where it had been installed by King Edward I 700 years previously, in 1296.</p>

16th	In 1093, Queen Margaret died at Edinburgh Castle. And in 1789, the Grand Master Mason of Scotland laid the foundation stone of the University of Edinburgh's Old College (then the New College). Also in 1956, a sea of spectators filled Hanover Street to watch the 'last' trams come down the Mound; later the 'last' tram entered the Shrubhill depot.
18th	In 1870, the Surgeons' Hall Riot took place as a result of misogyny shown to the Edinburgh Seven, a group of women fighting for the right to train and practice as doctors led by Sophia Louisa Jex-Blake.
19th	In 1976, Scottish architect Sir Basil Spence died; he was educated at George Watson's College in Edinburgh and the Edinburgh College of Art; one of Spence's earliest commissions was a design for the Southside Garage at Causewayside which he designed in his distinctive Art Deco style.
21st	In 1958, construction on the Forth Road Bridge began. And in 1959, the 'penny-tenement' at 6 Beaumont Place collapsed making 19 families homeless.
24th	In 1572, John Knox, a leader of the Scottish Reformation, died in Edinburgh. And in 1823, William Dick founded his veterinary school in what is now Howie's Restaurant, Waterloo Place; its location moved to Clyde Street, then to Summerhall and is now at Easter Bush. Also in 1861, at around ten past one on the morning an immense 16th century Edinburgh tenement containing at least 77 inhabitants suddenly gave way and collapsed to the street below; the building was located on the north side of the High Street between Bailie Fyfe's Close on the west and Paisley Close on the east and resulted in the deaths of 35 tenants and lodgers.
26th	In 1892, the original Jenners department store building was destroyed by fire.

29th	In 1681, the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, was granted its charter by King Charles II.
30th	In 1996, fifteen days after the return of the Stone of Destiny, thousands of people lined the Royal Mile in Edinburgh to watch troops escort it from Holyrood Palace up to Edinburgh Castle. And in 1998, Queen Elizabeth II opened the modern extension to what is now the National Museum of Scotland.

- Compiled by Jerry Ozaniec, Membership Secretary of the Old Edinburgh Club, membership@oldedinburghclub.org.uk



3rd November Coat of Arms of the Company of Scotland



9th 1955



10th 1955



15th 1824



16th 1789



18th 1870 Picture by Samuel Laurence



19th 1976



26th 1892



30th 1996