

# Looking back with The Old Edinburgh Club

This month The Old Edinburgh Club has highlighted one of the most recent and devastating fires in Edinburgh as its main event in history.

- **3 December**

- In 1894, Edinburgh-born author Robert Louis Stevenson died in Samoa, at the age of 44.

- **7 December**

- In 2002, in the evening, a fire started above the Belle Angele nightclub off the Cowgate; it swept up through the eight-storey structure to other buildings on Cowgate and above it on South Bridge; it took more than a day for the fire, to be brought under control, and several days for it to be completely extinguished; thankfully no lives were lost. Pictured below is some of the aftermath.

- **8 December**

- In 1669, the Council granted a warrant to Robert Clerk to organise the Pricing Book Lottery.

- **10 December**

- In 1768, the first volume of the Encyclopaedia Britannica edited by William Smellie went on sale in Edinburgh.

- **16 December**

- In 1601, Andro Turnbull was beheaded at the Mercat Cross for the murder of Thomas Ker the previous month.

- **18 December**

- In 1661, the SS Elizabeth was lost off the coast of Burntisland along with her cargo of historical documents being returned to Scotland which Oliver Cromwell had earlier taken to London. And in 1780, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland was founded.

- **19 December**

- In 1887, Rumford Medal-winning Leith-born scientist Balfour Stewart died during a journey from Scotland to his country estates in Ireland. And in 1904, the "Scotsman" newspaper moved to new offices on North Bridge.

- **20 December**

- In 1789, the architect William Burn, FRSE, was born in Edinburgh. And in 1862, surgeon and anatomist Robert Knox died; Knox became notorious as one of the men to whom the murderers Burke and Hare delivered corpses for dissection.

- **21 December**

- In 1965, Stuart Mitchell, Scottish pianist and composer, best known for his Seven Wonders Suite, was born in Edinburgh. And in 1989, the City Bypass was completed.

- **24 December**

- In 1650, Edinburgh castle surrendered to Oliver Cromwell.

- **27 December**

- In 1794, Major Alexander Gordon Laing, the first European to reach Timbuktu via the north/south route, was born in Edinburgh.

