

# Maggie Fair 24 June 2006 & The Origins

Monday, 05 June 2006

Last Updated Monday, 05 June 2006

## The Origins

Garmouth's Maggie Fair Day traditionally takes place on the last Saturday of June each year and is one of the few - if not the only - historical Street Fair still held in Scotland that has been celebrated annually, virtually without interruption, since it was established 419 years ago, on 30th June 1587, the village of "Garmoch" (deriving from two Gaelic words - "Gar" meaning rough and "Mach" meaning a mouth) was granted a Crown Charter by King James VI, erecting it into a Burgh of Barony and a Fair Day marked the occasion.

From the State Paper Dome stick Scottish Registry Office which states."James VI, by a Crown Charter of 30th June 1587, in favour of Robert Innes of that ilk, 19th Laird of Innes, Garmouth was erected into a Burgh of Barony, with power of creating free burgesses, a Mercat Cross and harbour and to hold two fairs, to be held annually at the aforementioned Merchat Cross, one on Saturday nearest the 30th June and the other the Saturday nearest 20th September."There is little doubt that the Mercat Cross of 1587 was on the site of the present "Cross" at Garmouth. Moving the site of Maggie Fair would invalidate the Charter of 1587 and a custom of 419 years, the oldest in the North of Scotland would be lost forever. (Committee take note) ed:

The identity of the Lady whose name became conjoined with the Fair is the subject of speculation, but could have been one of three.

Maggie Milne, who apparently caught the roving eye of Bonnie Prince Charles when he landed at the mouth of the Spey and signed the Solemn League & Covenant at the Laird's Toft, near "The Cross" in Garmouth, towards the end of June 1650. Her father was the boatman who carried the prince ashore and descendants of that family were, until the mid-19th century, called the "King Milnes".

Lady Margaret Ker, wife of Sir James Innes, 3rd Baronet, was Lady of Garmouth from 1666 - 1681 and was much loved by the local inhabitants. During this time the "Fair" became a more civic occasion and was formally opened in the morning, after a trumpet fanfare, by the Baron-Baillee of Innes and Garmouth, accompanied by four halbardiers attired in the blue and silver livery of the Laird of Innes. Sir James and Lady Margaret appeared personally and their banner, depicting their co joined Coats of Arms, is still displayed to this Day.

Prior to 1587 and as far as can be ascertained, there could well have been a Margaret Fair Day which had ceased to be celebrated but which was revived for the occasion of the granting of the Charter. The origins of this Margaret Fair Day are steeped in ancient Scottish history going back as far as the days of Macbeth and Malcolm Canmore. Malcolm's Queen was Margaret, remembered as "Patroness of Scotland". On 19th June 1259 she became Patron Saint of Urquhart Parish where her son David had founded a Priory in her memory beside the farm of Clockeasy (which means the "Stone of Jesus"). The 19th June Old Style corresponds to the present 30th June in that the new calendar altered the old by eleven days.

Although Margaret's correct identity may be in doubt, there is no doubt at all that the village of Garmouth will continue to keep her name and the occasion alive for many.

Extracts taken from the 400th Celebrating of Maggie Fair booklet 1987 .

## Maggie Fair jumble Sale Thursday 22nd June 2006

Donations needed please of clothes, shoes, boots, coats bric a brac, toys, books etc

Collections will be on Mon 19th, Tues 20th & Wed 21st

If you would like to drop off any donations they can be left at Inverspey. Lein Rd Kingston 870514 or Village Hall Garmouth.

## Maggie Fair Celebrations

Books Videos CD's Tapes Required for re-sale on the Book stall. Collections can be arranged at your convenience or during the Maggie Fair Week (June 19th - 24th) The Bookstall Convener is Mike Nunns, who can be contacted at: - Braefoot House, Spey Street Garmouth 870302

The list of Convenors is as follows

Book Stall  
Mike Nunns 870302

Crafts & Gifts  
Celia Roberts 870182

Plants  
Ginny Slater 870514

Bottle Stall  
Blair Dempsey 870653

The Park  
David Mackay 870233

Cake & Candy  
Belinda Whyte

Wheel of fortune  
Kevin Black

Jumble Sale  
Mary Macgregor

Maggie Fair 2006

Hello Folks,

Do keep your fingers crossed for fin weather for Saturday 24th June, Maggie Fair Day.

The members of Maggie Fair Ladies Committee have arranged an exciting afternoon of activities in the Children's Park, Garmouth, that when the list was read out at our last meeting, my head was in a whirl wondering which direction you will want to turn. What new attractions such as hooting owls and maybe a static fire engine on display will take your eye! There will be dancing, Judo and music from the splendid Elgin Pipe Band. If Splat the Rat doesn't appeal to you may be a lovely bunch of coconuts will. Be sure to buy your tickets for the Grand Raffle as the first prize is £50.

At the Cross will be our stalls - selling starts after the Fair is declared open by our guest of honour, Mr Eric Mudie from Bahnacoul, the former headmaster of Mosstodloch School.

The Maggie Fair Maiden will be crowned before the opening so a busy afternoon for us all.

The Children's Fancy Dress Competition will be judged in the Park beforehand after 1pm.

During the afternoon Teas will be served in the Village Hall. If there is a queue, please be patient as fire regulations allow only so many in the Hall. Why not go next door to the Church Hall and view the Art exhibition presented by our own local Art Group? The display will be open on Thursday and Friday evenings.

Oh, and don't forget the fantastic Jumble Sale on Thursday night, one of the highlights of the Maggie Fair week. If you have any articles to put in, please bring them on Wednesday night. There is to be a collection on Monday night for contributions such as books, bottles, lucky dip, toys, plenty for the stalls. Please have them ready - a list of Conveners for queries can be obtained. (See posters).

Now doesn't that all sound exciting! Please come along and enjoy yourselves. We are so lucky to have such a lovely park - I hope it is big enough for all that will be going on!

See you there folk's.

Ena Dunbar  
President of the Maggie Fair Ladies Committee.