

## On This Day – 6<sup>th</sup> July 1732

Charles Bruce, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Elgin and 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kincardine, born

Bruce was born in 1732, and is probably most well-known for overseeing the construction of the planned community of Charlestown, located just west of his family's Broomhill House. Charlestown – which is also notable for having its streets laid out in the letter E for Elgin – was built to house workers and act as a harbour for coal shipments from Fife, as well as to produce limestone at the Limekilns.

The town was constructed on an area known as Whalebank, which was cleared and formed into a sandstone plateau. Work on the buildings themselves started in 1756, with the full plan of the village coming to fruition in 1775. The harbour was enlarged in 1840, by which time this small village was one of the major industrial sites on the Forth, if not all of Scotland. The Limekilns were one of the earliest industrial-scale sites for limestone burning, and the works were exporting so much that there was often a queue of ships waiting on the River to be loaded to transport quicklime for construction use across Britain and down into Europe.



*Charlestown and harbour today*

As well as a brief ship-building spell, Charlestown was also one of the locations where some of the German Imperial Fleet, refloated after their scuttling at Scapa Flow, were dismantled. The kilns closed by 1956 and have undergone restoration work as part of an IFLI project, while Charlestown itself remains a fascinating example of an 18<sup>th</sup> century village. Only two original structures have been knocked down – part of a railway bridge which took supplies to the kilns, and a wash house across the road from what's now the village shop.

Charles Bruce died in 1771, after rising to the level of Grand Master of Scottish Freemasons, and also helping to found the illustrious Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. He had eight children, the most famous of whom is Thomas Bruce, who was also born in Broomhall and oversaw the removal of the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon in Athens

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