

SELKIRK COMMON RIDING

SAFE OUT SAFE IN

Common Riding is an annual event celebrated in Scottish Border towns and in some other places, to commemorate the times of the past when local men risked their lives in order to protect their town and people.

The Selkirk Common Riding is a celebration of the history and traditions of the Royal and Ancient Burgh. It originated in the need to guard the boundaries of the land held in common by the town. The annual Riding of the Marches has continued to this day and continues the tradition of those who rode around their town's boundaries throughout the centuries checking for encroachments by neighbouring landowners. The job was one sometimes brimming with danger, with risk of murder or kidnapping perhaps not too distant at times from the minds of those who rode out.

Selkirk Common Riding also remembers how after the disastrous Battle of Flodden Field tradition, perhaps a little shaky, has it that only one man from the town (the Town Clerk, Fletcher) returned, bearing a captured flag. Legend has it that he cast the flag about his head to indicate that all the other men of Selkirk had been cut down and then promptly died. At the end of the Selkirk Common Riding when everyone, riders and folk on foot, have returned to the Market Square the Royal Burgh Standard and the flags of the various participating trades and other organizations are ceremonially cast, the last being for those who fell in war. There follows a minute's silence and the playing of the Liltin (a version of the Flo'ers o' the Forest).