Master’s Introduction

Fellow members, the last 6 months have been a busy, eventful and most enjoyable time for me since being appointed Master in March. Never did I imagine this time last year when reading my predecessor Neville Dundas’ Master’s Introduction in the Merchants’ View that I would find myself writing a similar script this year. As mentioned at our Dinner in March, it really is a huge honour to be asked to lead the Company for the next two years, in particular in this the 500th year since the Battle of Flodden when we reflected on the importance of the battle and the significant part it was to play in the history of Selkirk. It has been a fantastic and most enjoyable year for both Pam and myself.

The year began in March with the AGM and Dinner. There was a large turnout of members and friends to see our new Standard Bearer, Ian Main, installed. Ian was an excellent choice as Standard Bearer and he received an enthusiastic welcome from all at the Dinner. Since the AGM some necessarily enforced changes within the Company office bearers have taken place. At the Trust Meeting in May Jake Wheelans was deservedly appointed Junior Baillie, which meant a replacement Company Officer had to be found. David Heard stepped up and agreed to fill that role. Can I congratulate both these gentlemen on their appointments.

The weeks following the Dinner passed very quickly in the lead up to the Common Riding seeing our new Standard Bearer fully immersed in all his duties. Flag practices commenced with snow on the ground! Practices moved on to Stuart and Pam Kemp’s garden in early May, by which time Ian had perfected his casting skills. Ian, his right and left hand men, Mark and Jim, together with myself and many Company members then attended every function, starting with Appointment Night in April and ending with our own Bussin’ in June. Ian and Lynsey gave their full commitment to the appointment and thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience. On a personal note, Pam & I were delighted to spend time with their respective family and friends as they joined in with Company members and shared wholeheartedly in Ian and Lynsey’s experience.

The Bussin’ itself was another resounding success with a tremendous turnout of members, partners and friends present in the Victoria Halls. It was gratifying to see so many people attending to support Ian and Lynsey. Common Riding Day dawned with the hills “tipped with gold”. It continued a warm and sunny day as over 40 members followed Ian, who was wearing a new Company sash and carrying our new Ceremonial Flag on its first public outing, “doon the green”. This support from the members throughout the morning ensured a truly memorable experience for our Standard Bearer. Since he was first appointed Ian has performed his duties to the highest standard and he proved to be a first class appointment by the Merchant Company. He was, of course, ably supported by Mark Nichol and Jim Harold, and their efforts should not go without mention.

In the summer months the Company has been active on the sporting front. The golf outing to Minto in July proved to be another successful day with two new names appearing on the trophies. Ian Clapperton won the Lindsay Henderson trophy and David Nichol, at the first time of asking, secured the David Heard trophy for the best scratch score. The annual bowling match against the Ex-Standard Bearers’ Association, competing for the Shawburn Trophy, was narrowly won by the Ex-Standard Bearers. The Company also enjoyed another successful bowling and quiz night with over 40 members and partners taking part.

The next few months will see further sporting events taking place such as archery and indoor winter bowling. In the last few weeks the Company has been involved in the Flodden 500 celebrations where we have been represented at the opening of the Memorial Garden and the Church Service. Members were also on parade with the other Crafts on the return of the walkers from Flodden and the South Marches mounted cavalcade.

Our Winter Function takes place again in November at the Rugby Club where the Company will announce the winner of the Jim Oliver Memorial Award for 2013. I hope that this event will once again be well supported and before we know it, it will be March 2014 when we start all over again!

Finally can I express my sincere thanks to the committee members for their hard work and yourselves for your support to date.

Jim Cockburn
Master

Selkirk Merchant Company
Standard Bearer 2013
Ian Main

Ian Main was appointed Merchant Company Standard Bearer at our AGM in March. 38 year old Ian and his wife and Lady Busser Lynsey have 2 children, Daniel, 8 years old and his 4 year old sister Chloe. Ian, born and bred a Souter, was educated at Knowepark and Selkirk High School and went on to study accountancy at Napier University. With business partner Jim Stark he formed accountancy firm Stark Main & Co in 2006.

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Flodden Remembered

It was most fitting that SMCo should come into possession of the new banner in 2013. The story of Selkirk’s part in the Battle of Flodden and the significance of the standards, carried and cast by representatives of the town’s crafts and associations, is woven into our Common Riding traditions. This year Flodden was commemorated not only at Common Riding but not only in Selkirk, but across Scotland and beyond, culminating in a week of events in September to mark the 500th anniversary, 9th September 1513.

The Merchant Company played its part throughout. Our members were among those who walked, at various times and stages, from Flodden home to Selkirk as well as taking part in the entertaining fund-raisers dreamed up by the Flodden 500 Selkirk group. The tireless efforts of F500S over the last few years ensured that Selkirk marked the anniversary how it sees it, with the opening of the latest adornment to the town, the Flodden 500 Selkirk Memorial Garden.

In a week of commemorations, perhaps the most poignant formed part of the church service on the evening of 8th Sept. As 80 candles were extinguished, one by one, the Parish Church fell into darkness, lit by a single candle left burning to represent the sole survivor Fletcher of course, but also to give us pause to reflect on the human cost of war and, as we remembered 1513, to consider how we might shed light and find hope for the future in this troubled world of 2013. After the service, the flags of all the incorporations, including our own, were dipped in tribute, as a wreath was laid, bringing to a close a most moving ceremony.

The week of commemoration and celebration finished the following Sunday with the Riding of the South Marches. The returning riders, and the leaders of the last leg of the walk from Flodden, were welcomed back in true Selkirk style with flags, music and, eventually, sunshine.

Jim Oliver Award & Winter Function

The James Oliver Memorial Award was donated by Mrs Isobel Oliver in memory of her late husband, Jim, a lifelong member of the Company, past Master and ex-Standard Bearer, to be presented to a person deemed by the Company to have given outstanding service to the local community. Since the initial award was made in 2002, ten local people who have served the community in a range of areas have been recognised by the Company. Although the Award is presented by Selkirk Merchant Company, it is acknowledged by the people of Selkirk that the recipient is being recognised for their services to the entire town and community.

The deserving recipient of the Award in 2013 was Joyce Wright. Joyce, a keen sportswoman and supporter of Cancer Research was a popular choice. She has ridden the Marches since the age of 12 and is a stalwart supporter of the Common Riding. She is also founder of the Kid’s Common Riding Singing Club. This was formed to ensure that future generations of Selkirk children have a chance to learn the words and the tunes to Common Riding songs so that that most important element of the Common Riding, community singing, would continue and thrive. The classes run from appointment night to the Common Riding week and are enormously popular, supported as they are by local singers and musicians.

The award was presented at the Winter Function at Philiphaugh where a capacity audience was entertained by IDEOMS Theatre Company, John Nichol, Hilary Bell and Lucy Cowan, performing their acclaimed production ‘Soddin’ Floidden’. John’s historically accurate but hysterically irreverent version of the Battle of Flodden.
The Company has once again enjoyed a full calendar of events during the year and the results from the various competitions were:

**Curling 2012/13** Winning rink Ian Clapperton (skip), Dave Amos, Pat Clapperton and Stuart Davidson.

**Golf 2013** Ian Clapperton won the Stableford competition and David Nichol the scratch event. The team prize went to GR Thomson, JR Cooper, R Robertson & JC Wheelans.

**Winter Indoor Bowling 2012/13** The Company entered two teams in the pub league with one team (David & Merle Heard, Pat & Ian Clapperton, Tug & Moira Wilson) finishing a very creditable second.

**Summer Bowling 2013** Once again the Company took part in the pub league with the playing pool of Ron Robertson (skip), David Hoggan, Tug Wilson and Ian Clapperton finishing joint top of the league along with three other teams. Unfortunately on shots count back, the team were placed fourth overall.

**Shawburn Trophy** By a margin of three shots the trophy was retained by the Ex-SBs.

**Social bowling and quiz** The event was attended by 44 members/partners. In the bowling competition the team of Ian Clapperton (skip), Jake Wheelans, Irene Henderson and John Purves took the honours. The quiz was won by Agnes Mitchell, Chris Clapperton (skip), Jake Wheelans, Irene Henderson and Jim Henderson.

**Archery** – the competition takes place this year on 27 October. Plans are well underway for the 2013/14 curling and indoor bowling activities.

**Golf Day**

On Friday 12th July 16 members of the Company headed off to Minto Golf Club for their annual golf day. The course was found to be in immaculate condition and the weather was the best that the golfers have experienced at Minto in many a year. The players were again competing for the usual two pieces of silverware, the Lindsay Henderson Trophy and the David A. Heard Scratch Cup.

Scoring was tight in the Stableford and the winner had to be determined by the better inward half. Winners were as follows:

- **Lindsay Henderson Trophy**
  1) I Clapperton 35 points BIH
  2) GR Thomson 35 points
  3) JD Cockburn 33 points

- **David A Heard Scratch Cup**
  1) D Nichol 32
  2) DA Heard

The winner of nearest the pin at the 8th was David Nichol and the winner at the 17th was Grant Gill. The longest drive at the 18th went to George Thomson, whose golfing tour of Ireland the week before obviously helped prep him for the day.

Only one person, David Nichol, was good enough to hole out in two and he duly walked away with the sweep money. The team prize went to G.R. Thomson J.R. Cooper R. Robertson and J.C. Wheelans. The Master Jim Cockburn presented the prizes to all the winners.

A big thanks to everyone who donated a prize for the day and also to David Heard and Jake Wheelans for organising the day, the handicaps and the prize giving.

**Archery**

The highlights and memories are too numerous to list here but include Skip Houston’s support, Bryan Hoggan’s poem at the Bussin’, the school visits and the Spurs Night foot race all feature strongly in their happy recollections.

With Right and Left Hand Men, Mark Nichol and Jim Harold, and their wives Nancy and Alison and Master Jim Cockburn and wife Pam to advise and guide them and accompany them to the dinners and functions ahead of the Common Riding, they were able to enjoy every moment of the lead up to the 14th of June. Of the Bussin’ Lynsey describes how she was actually on the verge of bailing out of the ceremony as the panic set in and her moment drew closer, if it hadn’t have been for the calming words of Master Jim Cockburn she might have quietly slipped away and hoped no-one would notice! But if she wasn’t prepared for the nervousness of the Bussin’ nothing had prepared her for the sheer emotional impact of the Casting as Ian proudly took his place on the dais to perform the perfect cast.

Following the usual Merchant’s Foy hosted by Dily Wheelans in Shoeworld for the last time due to her retirement, Ian, Mark and Jim attended all the Craft and Incorporation Foys. The day ending, as Common Ridings do, at the Ball where a very fine time was had by all. Ian’s duties as MCSB didn’t end there though as he represented the Company at The Flodden 500 memorial service at the Parish Church and carried the flag in the procession on the day of the South Marches ride-out. There will never be a year like 2013 and Ian, Lynsey and their family will have memories of it to last them a lifetime.

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New Members in 2013

Two new members were admitted to the company in 2013: Euan Pritchard (left) and Andrew Douglas (right). They are pictured here with retiring Master Neville Dundas and new Master Jim Cockburn.

MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS
All proposals for membership in 2014 must be in the hands of the Secretary or Master by 31st December 2013

Merchants’ Spotlight Jim Henderson

A member of the Merchant Company since 1974, Jim Henderson can lay claim to having had greater involvement with Selkirk Common Riding than most people. I visited Jim and his wife Irene shortly after they’d celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary to have a chat about that long involvement.

A native of the town, Jim’s family lived in Scott Crescent and later moved to Spion Kop when the ‘new’ houses were built there, prior to that he recalls playing there in the woods with his chums. Jim played rugby at centre for all the Selkirk teams from his first year at SHS to SRFC 1sts and carried on his rugby career playing in teams including London Scottish and Osterley (Middlesex).

When he left the High School Jim went to work in the mill; he got a job as Management Trainee at Gibson & Lumgair where he worked in every department as part of his training. He’d just finished this training when he was made redundant, possibly the first textiles worker in Selkirk that this had happened to! The chance spotting of an advertisement in the paper took him to the Clyde Paper Company in Rutherglen and thus started his drift towards exile when his work took him to London and eventually Toronto, Canada and then Foxford, Ireland pursuing his career in management.

While he was in Ireland he was approached by the Colonial Society, of which he had long been a member, to understudy for that year’s Colonial Standard Bearer. The opportunity passed him by that time and it wasn’t until 1980 that Jim got the chance to cast a flag, although it was for the Merchants rather than the Colonials. He tells the tale of how he had been asked by the Rugby Club if he would take on the secretary’s job at Philiphaugh. He went to the AGM but didn’t get that job, instead he became selector for the 2nds and it was while he was leaving the meeting that Willy Grieve, then Master, approached him: “we’re wondering if you’ll be Standard Bearer for the Merchants next year?” The situation was a bit complicated as Jim and Irene had only recently found out that Irene was expecting and they were a bit concerned about taking on such a momentous role. With Irene’s encouragement Jim accepted the appointment and their daughter Karen was born shortly before the Bussin’ that year.

Jim had his busy, enjoyable, eventful year as Standard Bearer and then carried out his duties as Right and Left Hand Man, which took him through 1981 & 82. Then in 1983 the Colonial Society came back to him and asked him to carry and cast the golden banner, which he duly did. The next year Jim was appointed as Secretary of the Society, a job he undertook for 12 years before becoming Chairman of the Society for another 12 years!

Jim was appointed to the Common Riding Trust when Jack Harper stood down in 2005. He tells how disappointed he was not to have been made a Baillie; Jim’s father Tom had been a Baillie on the old Town Council and was Master of the Merchant Company when the Merchant’s flag was cast for the first time by Bill Ainslie. He didn’t have the chance to be Bailie because two years after joining the Trust he was appointed as Honorary Provost, which he describes in his typically modest manner as “kind of deep end stuff”. His duties as Honorary Provost meant another 3 years of immersion in the Common Riding, attending dozens of dinners and functions, replying to numerous toasts and making many fine speeches as well as attending all the other local Festivals and Ridings. This has not diminished in any way his and Irene’s enthusiasm for all things Common Riding related and they look forward to supporting Common Ridings for years to come, albeit in a slightly less prominent role!

MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS
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MERCHANDERS’ VIEW

Jim and daughter Karen at Common Riding, 1982

Jim and Irene and the “top table” at the Bussin’

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 10th November 2013
REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE
Assemble in the Valley 10am
Wednesday 19th February 2014
SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING - Philiphaugh
Friday 7th March 2014
AGM & DINNER - Philiphaugh
Tuesday 10th June 2014
MC BUSSIN’ - Victoria Hall
Friday 13th June 2014
SELKIRK COMMON RIDING
Saturday 7th November 2014
WINTER FUNCTION

Editorial Team:
Alistair Pattullo & Judith Thompson
Thanks to members for their contributions and permission to use photos

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