

SELKIRK NEWS

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Selkirk News Issue 7

Created to allow the residents of Selkirk a central point of information, Selkirk News is produced by a sub-committee of Selkirk Community Council, and is distributed via Selkirk's High Street shops in a limited quantity.

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Or sign up to our mailing list! Email and we will send you a copy as a PDF file to read/ share.

Please send news and photos to info@selkirkcommunitycouncil.co.uk

Farmers' Market

Just a reminder that the **Selkirk Farmers' Market** will be on the **first Saturday of every month till December** in Selkirk Market Place, 9.30-1pm.

Scottish Borders Councillors Caroline Cochrane and Elaine Thornton-Nicol will be in attendance to answer queries



Darren Knox Leads In 2025

Selkirk's Royal Burgh Standard Bearer leads annual events

Following a hectic week of Dinners, Bussin' Concerts and School visits, Darren Knox fulfilled his life long ambition of being Selkirk's Royal Burgh Standard Bearer.

The official Ceremonial parts of Selkirk Common Riding got under way at 6:30pm on Thursday Night when Senior Burgh Officer Graeme Bell Cried the Burley around the Town, with large numbers turning out.

[Full Report, Page13]

Photo: Grant Kinghorn



Sports & Culture Under Threat

Live Borders Report Recommends Closure of Selkirk Icons

An independent report on proposed savings on the annual Live Borders budget has provoked concern in Selkirk, because of the report's suggestion to close Live Borders assets in Selkirk, including the Leisure Centre and Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom.

Although Scottish Borders Councillors have stressed that no closure decisions have actually been taken and the public are being consulted, the report does propose the closure of Selkirk Leisure Centre, Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom, Halliwell's House Museum, and the Argus Community Centre, as well as the sale of Victoria Park caravan site.

[Full report , Page 6]

Some useful contacts:

Selkirk Health Centre
01750 21674

Call 105 to report a power cut
and 999 for an emergency.

NHS - 111

Police - 101

SGN - 0800 111 999

Scottish Water - 0800 077 8778

Scottish Power - 0800 092 9290

Scottish Borders Council -

0300 100 1800

Scottish Borders Council emergency
out of hours number 01896 752111

Borders Buses

[https://www.bordersbuses.co.uk/
services](https://www.bordersbuses.co.uk/services)

SBC Councillors:

Caroline Cochrane

caroline.cochrane@scotborders.gov.uk

Elaine Thornton-Nicol:

e.thornton-nicol@scotborders.gov.uk

Leagh Douglas:

leagh.douglas@scotborders.gov.uk

Royal Burgh of Selkirk

Community Council

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Send stories to:

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September 5

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Thank you.

**Fleshmarket Steps Vandalism - again**

Repeated damage to the coping on the
Fleshmarket Steps Photo: Grant Kinghorn

Bikers From Vermont

Cyclists with VBT Bicycling Vacations from Vermont, USA,
set off from Selkirk on their way to Peebles.

Planters Take Their Toll

Alistair Pattullo of Brighter Selkirk waters the newly
planted blooms in the Toll planters.

= Ettrick Terrace restored by Charly Ternero

Andrew Johnstone, a Selkirk man, has been, on his own initiative, restoring ground in Ettrick Terrace since Autumn 2022, when the stretch of bank between The Glen and Ettrick Road was a tangle of wild brambles and ivy. On 24 October 2022 Andrew went out in his overalls and started clearing the piece of ground, while at the same time making the walls and ground. He made some steps, pointed the walls and then tackled the ground, creating terraces.

He worked when it was raining, snowing or with high winds, reseeding the ground with grass, planting daffodils and tulips and now there's lupins and a rose tree. Ettrick Road residents Leslie and Anne Rae have helped with the next stretch down, pruning trees and planting. Thank you for making the approach from Yarrow into Selkirk so flower filled.



A Close Thing

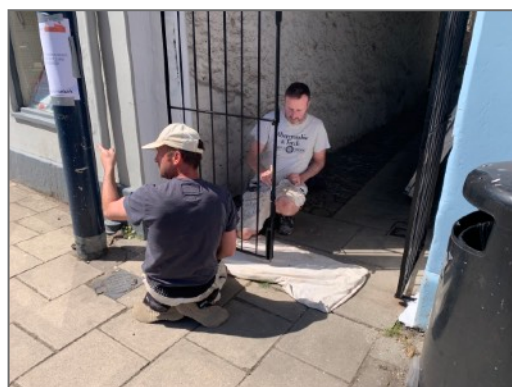
The funds collected for the BIDS (Business Improvement District) scheme have a wee bit left, so the painting of the High Street closes has continued, to good effect.

A Dandie Beano



 **The Dandie Dinmont Terrier Club**
Founded 17th November 1875

A visit of the Dandie Dinmont Terrier Club for the breed's 150th anniversary included a procession from Back Row down the High Street to The Fleece for lunch.



New Victoria Halls Notice Board

The new Victoria Halls notice board has now been installed, replacing the old version, which blew over in the recent gales. The new smaller board makes it easier to enjoy the view of the garden maintained by the Flodden 500 group, who generously shared the costs of the new board with the Community Council.



SELKIRK EVENTS IN JULY

07-10	Selkirk Tennis Club Summer Camp
10	SBC Customer Services Drop-In, Philiphaugh Community Centre
10	Happy Belly Cafe, Philiphaugh Community Centre
14	Community Council Meeting, Victoria Halls
17	Happy Belly Cafe, Philiphaugh Community Centre
19	Lions ' Breakfast, Philiphaugh
23	Bright Green Nature, PopUp Shop, 1 Tower Street
24	SBC Customer Services Drop-In, Philiphaugh Community Centre
24	Happy Belly Cafe, Philiphaugh Community Centre
30	Isn't It Byronic? Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom
31	Bannerfield Survey closes

For more details, see www.selkirkcommunitycouncil.co.uk/calendar

Events across the Borders can be found at the Live Borders events page:

<https://www.liveborders.org.uk/whats-on/>

Linglie Rd Houses Approved

A proposal to build 27 more houses by the Scottish Borders Housing Association (SBHA) in the Linglie Road area has been approved.

With more than 300 applicants for the homes, the development goes a small way towards dealing with the longstanding housing shortage across the Borders. Some residents have expressed concerns about building beside the Ettrick Water, but they have been assured that Selkirk's flood extensive flood protection facilities have reduced risks.

The scheme was presented to the public in May 2024 at the SBHA offices, to broad approval, with the public being consulted on the general design principles and specific building material details. A photo from the consultation is on the right.



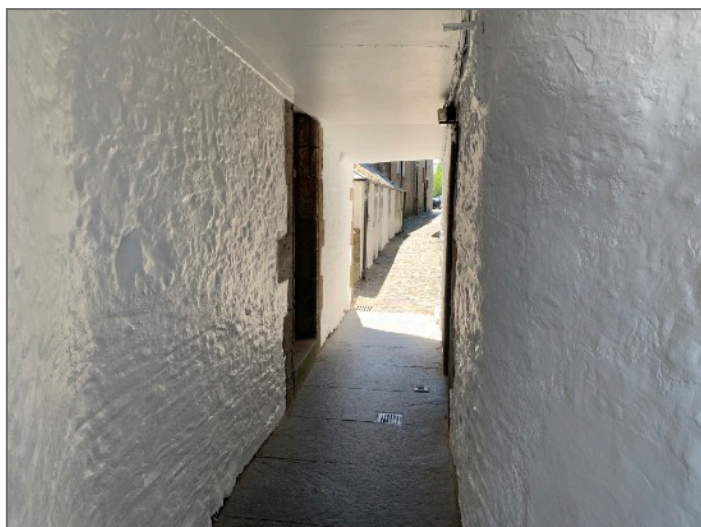
Cry Baby at the Victoria Halls

Report by Alistair Pattullo • Photos by Rob Gray

The last week in February saw Selkirk Musical Theatre Company hit the stage at the Victoria Halls with their phenomenal production of Cry-Baby The Musical. The jumpin' jivin' rebellious teen comedy set in the 1950s tells the demented story of Wade 'Cry Baby' Walker and his unruly gang 'The Drapes' versus the uptight 'Squares'. An unlikely romance between Wade and baton twirling goody-two-shoes Allison leads to some of the liveliest singing and dancing you're likely to see this or any other year. SMTC and its predecessor Selkirk Opera have been putting on the highest quality entertainment for nearly 100 years and if the energy and commitment of the current crop of performers is anything to go by that legacy is in good hands!



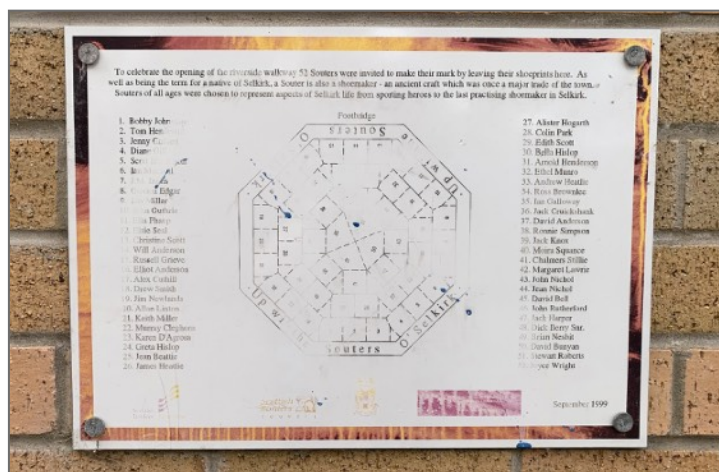
Works In Progress



Close painting has continued with the brightening of Halliwell's Close (above left), and the Market Place bus shelters. Thank you BIDS for the former, and SBC for the latter.



Some works around the town on which we are liaising with Scottish Borders Council include the schedule for grass cutting and the lifting of the cut grass (above left), inconsistent lights on Bannerfield bridge (top right), and the wear of both the concrete Millennium Souter footprints and the accompanying sign (below). All Photos by Andy Murray.



Sports & Culture Under Threat in Live Borders Cuts

An independent report on proposed savings on the annual Live Borders budget has provoked concern in Selkirk, because of the report's suggestion to close Live Borders assets in Selkirk including the Leisure Centre and Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom.

Although Scottish Borders Councillors have stressed that no closure decisions have actually been taken and the public are being consulted, the report does propose the closure of Selkirk Leisure Centre, Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom, Halliwell's House Museum, and the Argus Community Centre, as well as the sale of Victoria Park caravan site. Selkirk Library was to be retained,



The background is this: SBC has an agreed subsidy level across all Live Borders assets of £4.803 million per year, expressed as a 'management fee'. Live Borders also derives income from sports subscriptions, hall rental etc., but this is offset against costs, and in the financial year 2023-24, Live Borders had a total income of c. £9.6m, while costs rose to c. £12.5m.

This is the context in which consultants Integratis were asked to see how to save more than £2 million per year, to maintain the annual subsidy per year at £4.803m. This would also require increasing income, mostly from sports activities, but also by increasing hall rental costs. Culture (events, museums, heritage, etc.) represents 30.97% of total income, and 29% of total expenditure, which might suggest that Culture could contribute more in future.

Integratis' solutions were: cut staff; close some facilities; combine some with others, and increase subscriptions, and this has now been opened up to **public consultation via a survey, which is live until the end of August.**

The survey can be found here:

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/customer-communities/sport-leisure-and-cultural-services-and-facilitie/>

Left: Selkirk Town Hall and Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom

Both the report and the follow up survey have sparked controversy. Criticism of the Integratis report have included comment that proposals to close venues are based on usage, but no weighting has been given to local population numbers (where a larger town could reasonably be expected to use a facility more than a smaller one) or opening hours. Some SBC Councillors reported that particular facilities were closed for maintenance during the period, or that Live Borders responded to a February space booking with a statement that no spaces were available until November; yet the same venue was reported as having low usage, suggesting that actually opening hours or staffing was the issue. Selkirk Library, for instance is open only 6 hours a week (3 hours Tuesday / 3 hours Thursday).

The Integratis report suggests that users of Selkirk Leisure Centre should commute to use facilities in Galashiels, involving extra time spent travelling but also contradicting SBC's commitment to lower energy / transport use.

Peter Maudsley, Chair of Peebles Community Council, has written to the local press and to SBC, quoting the Integratis report to make the point that a fundamental lack of oversight has led to the current situation, and it is unfair to put the burden on communities to solve problems caused by others. In addition, he says: "...Further, for each facility where there is a recommendation for closure or major change, this should have been reviewed internally by officers before publication". He will be writing again to SBC to clarify his position.

Mark McDavid, Chair of West Linton Community Council, has stated that the fundamental issue with the report is what he calls its superficiality, saying that the report 'does not contain the level of factual evidence, contextual understanding, or reasoned Institute'.

In Selkirk, Andy Murray, Chair of Selkirk Community Council, had to resort to a Freedom of Information request to establish what the running costs, income and opening hours were of the Selkirk assets in the most critical year, 2023-24. The figures show that Selkirk's Live Borders assets, even in a year of large overspend, cost just over half of what Selkirk's proportionate share would be. In a year with no overspend, Selkirk's costs would still be proportionately slightly less than the Selkirk population share of the annual SBC subsidy. In other words, there is no overspend in Selkirk, although of course, across the Borders all Live Borders venues are subsidised, so subsidies may vary from town to town.

Positive Ideas

This doesn't mean that there can't be positive ideas to rethink the appeal of Selkirk's venues and increase support. Selkirk elected SBC Councillor Caroline Cochrane has submitted her own suggestions as a private citizen for consideration, as below:.

Selkirk Leisure Centre

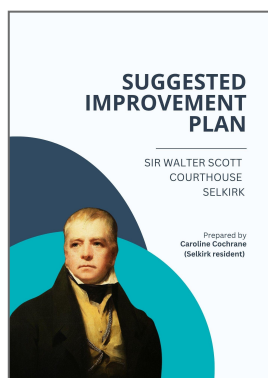
Selkirk Leisure Centre could be reimagined as a premium campervan and motorhome site serving the Scottish Borders, leveraging the region's growing appeal among nature based tourists, outdoor enthusiasts, and UK road-trippers. The goal is to become the go-to stop in the Borders for travellers seeking well equipped, scenic, and friendly accommodation with access to town amenities and natural attractions.

Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom

There could be a series of strategic improvements to transform Scott's courthouse museum into a vibrant, interactive heritage destination that attracts both local and international visitors, enhances educational value, and contributes to Selkirk cultural and economic generation. This would be achieved via modern exhibits with interactive and digital interpretation, educational partnerships and programming, improved access, signage and lighting, plus interactive touch screens, timelines, Courtroom roleplay stations and more.

Halliwell's House Museum

There could be the development of a Community-Led Heritage Hub to celebrate the town's rich cultural and social history through exhibitions, events, learning programmes, and volunteer participation, creating a dynamic space for locals and visitors alike. It could include a flexible, welcoming space for exhibitions, talks, and workshops, provide educational programmes and generate sustainable income through events, donations, and enterprise.



Left to right:

1. Mungo Park display, Halliwell's House Museum.
2. Caroline Cochrane's ideas for Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom
3. Model of Selkirk Castle, Halliwell's House Museum.

Argus Centre

The suggestion is to create a dedicated Biking Hub with self-catering accommodation, transforming the site into a vibrant, all-season facility that supports cycling tourism, local economic growth, and outdoor recreation. Designed in the style of a youth hostel with modern facilities, the Argus Bike Base would attract mountain bikers, gravel riders, road cyclists, and adventure tourists alike.

Selkirk Library

The suggestion is to create a dual-location Community Library Model, by relocating Selkirk Library services from a fixed building to two mobile library units operating twice weekly at Philiphaugh and Victoria Halls. The model addresses the need for accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and targeted service delivery while maintaining key library functions—book lending, digital access, community learning, and outreach.

See more details of Caroline's ideas on the Selkirk Community Council website's News page.

At the recent launch of the Selkirk & The Valleys Local Place Plan (see page....), Live Borders used some table space for response sheets, so that residents could express their views on the proposed Live Borders changes. Typical responses were: "A very frustrating survey. Not easy to get points across", and "No viable alternatives proposed."

Councillor Euan Jardine, Leader of Scottish Borders Council, said: "I want to reiterate that no decisions have been taken on any service or facility. Our extensive consultation and engagement activities need to conclude before any proposals are developed, and that won't be until later this summer. The proposals we develop, and which will be considered by Elected Members in the autumn, will undoubtedly be different in many cases to those put forward by Integratis, having been directly influenced by our communities."

Scottish Borders Council has announced details a series of **drop-in events**, to allow the public to have their say on the future of many of the region's libraries, leisure centres and public halls.

Selkirk's will be in **The Victoria Halls on Wednesday 13th August, from 2pm to 7pm.**

SELKIRK EVENTS IN AUGUST

01	Preloved Clothing & Toys Event, PopUp Shop, 1 Tower St.
02	Preloved Clothing & Toys Event, PopUp Shop, 1 Tower St.
02	Farmers' Market, Market Place
03	Selkirk RFC Sport Course
04	Bank Holiday
04-07	Selkirk Tennis Club Tennis Camp
06	Selkirk Hill Management Group Meeting, Victoria Halls
07	Happy Belly Cafe, Philiphaugh Community Centre
13	SBC / Live Borders Sports & Culture Drop-in, Victoria Halls
14	SBC Customer Services Drop-in, Philiphaugh Community Centre
22	Musical Theatre Company Summer Cabaret, Victoria Halls
23	Selkirk Bowling Club Triples
23	Musical Theatre Company Summer Cabaret, Victoria Halls
27	Cast a Cold Eye, Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom
28	SBC Customer Services Drop-in, Philiphaugh Community Centre
30	Tracings at Halliwell's House Gallery closes
31	SBC / Live Borders Sports & Culture future survey closes

For more details, see www.selkirkcommunitycouncil.co.uk/calendar

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Stay Safe Out There!

The photo shows a timber lorry, presumably on its way to the North of England, overturned at Kingsknowe roundabout.

Bannerfield Survey live till 31 July

Scottish Borders Council has launched the Bannerfield Locality Plan survey, open until 31 July.

The survey is being created to prompt more understanding of the issues affecting Bannerfield residents, and is designed to help organisations such as the Council and the NHS identify what needs to be improved.

Posters are being displayed around Bannerfield and at Selkirk High School. **The online consultation** is available via the QR Code in the poster (right).

Hard copies of the survey can be found at **Philiphaugh Community Centre, Philiphaugh EYC and Primary School, and Selkirk High School.**

Additional copies can be requested by emailing communityengagement@scotborders.gov.uk.

BANNERFIELD COMMUNITY SURVEY

Do you live in Bannerfield?

If the answer is 'yes' then we want to hear your views about the area.

What you tell us will help organisations such as the Council and NHS identify what needs to be improved and how we can work together to do it.

Our survey is open until 31 July 2025 and can be accessed at scotborders.citizenspace.com or by using the QR code below

Our Scottish Borders
Your community

Scottish Borders COUNCIL

Bold Bid To Save Selkirk's Historic Statues

A brand new grant, which includes the restoration of historic high streets in the Borders, could be the answer to the years-long puzzle of how to save two of Selkirk's historic statues.

The iconic statues of Sir Walter Scott, in Selkirk's Market Place and that of explorer Mungo Park, further along the High Street, have been threatened by decades of poor restoration, to the point where locals have been in despair. After a year-long survey and study by Selkirk's Stuart Davidson, a chartered architectural technologist, in collaboration with Historic Environment Scotland, a new grant may enable the restoration of the statues, if the bid for funds is granted.

Planning permission has been applied for stripping away the many years of peeling paint from the surface of the statues and returning them to the condition in which they were first created. In the case of the Mungo Park statue the bronze figurines at the base of the statue would also be restored. Selkirk-based Stuart Davidson Architecture has applied for planning permission as a first step, accompanied by detailed explanations of how the statues would be restored, alongside an expression of interest to the UK Shared Prosperity programme for 2025-26, administered by Scottish Borders Council.



© Stuart Davidson

Specific themes of the grant include 'Communities & Place: Thriving Places', which includes projects which develop the visitor economy or improve High Streets and Town Centres. Conditions of the grant include the provision that projects must be ready to begin immediately. Due to the very short timescale for delivery, there will be a single funding round which will take place in midsummer. All successful projects must be completed by the end of March 2026.

Although discussion has been had for the last two years at Selkirk's Common Good Committee, this current initiative is being spearheaded by Scottish Borders Councillor Caroline Cochrane (Chair of Selkirk Common Good), Stuart Davidson and David Anderson (both of Selkirk Means Business), Andy Murray (Chair, Selkirk Community Council), and Viv Ross of Selkirk Regeneration.

Stuart said: "It has taken a lot of careful and dedicated work to address all the issues that affect these statues, but it has been a labour of love, because of the meaning that these statues hold for every local person. We have assessed each element individually, focusing on the importance and the overall impact the proposed changes would have, both on the character and inherent fabric of each monument, so as to ensure that historically important elements are preserved and enhanced as part of the proposal."

The Sir Water Scott monument, by Alexander Handyside Ritchie, dates from 1839, with later alterations in 1932 by Dick Peddie and Walker Todd. It was Category B listed by Historic Environment Scotland in 1971. Located on a double plinth, its pedestrian statue facing West commemorates the world famous author Sir Water Scott who sat as Sheriff (shira) of Selkirk within the Courthouse located behind the statue from 1800-1832. Following Scott's death in 1832, the statue was erected by the "Gentlemen of the County" after a competition, and is located on the spot of the former Tolbooth.

The Mungo Park monument, by Andrew Currie, dates from 1859, with bas reliefs from 1905 and bronze statues from 1913 by Thomas Clapperton. It was also Category B listed by Historic Environment Scotland in 1971.

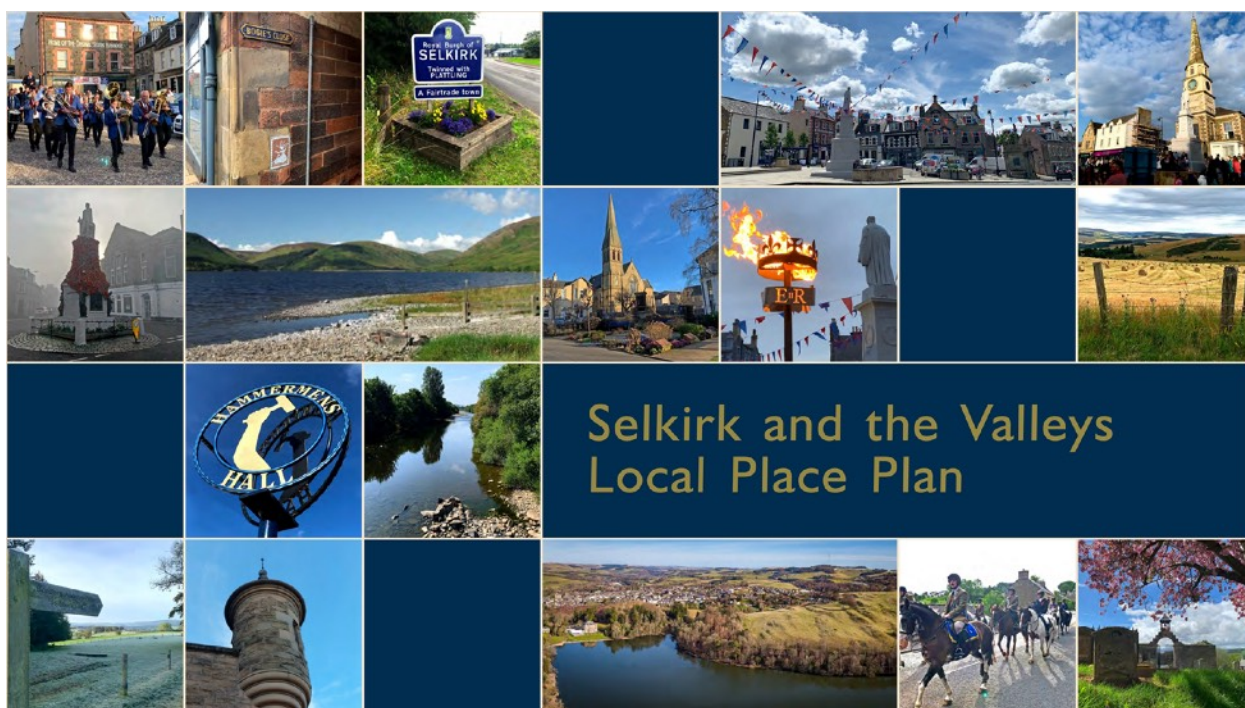
The grant bid may require 'match funding' from other sources, but every effort will be made to qualify. Photo: Andy Murray



Selkirk And The Valleys Local Place Plan Published



The first draft of the Local Place Plan for Selkirk & The Valleys has been published on the Community Council website. The 70-page draft document can be found at www.selkirkcommunitycouncil.co.uk under 'Selkirk & The Valleys'.



Public consultation event (right), Victoria Halls, 19 June

After two years of consultation meetings, in which more than 100 ideas were reduced to 16 of the most practical, work by the Selkirk & The Valleys group, alongside Edinburgh consultants Ironside Farrar, has led to the the first draft of the Local Place Plan. It was presented to the public on June the 19th at the Victoria Halls, and leaflets and banners across the town prompted a good attendance. Comments gathered there will be used to complete the final version of the plan, which is due to be published in July.



Instituted by the Scottish Government and managed by Scottish Borders Council, Place Plans are a list of possible improvements to local areas, which can be used as a framework for collaboration and a catalyst for community-led development. Other Borders towns who have completed their Place Plans include Peebles, Hawick, Jedburgh, Eyemouth and Galashiels, some of which can also be seen on the Selkirk Community Council website.

Place Plans are not a guarantee of funding, but they serve as a vital first step for grant applications in that they can demonstrate that ideas conform to National Planning frameworks and also have the support of the community.

Souter Stormers News

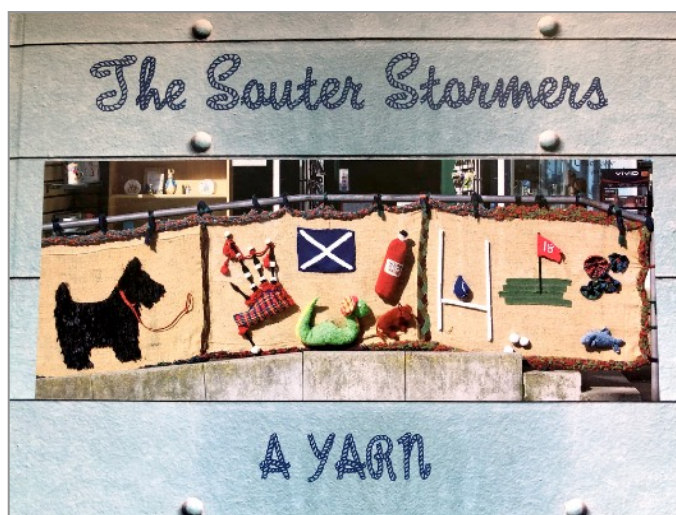
by Jane Pearn

It's ten years since a group of anonymous stealth crafters transformed Selkirk and the Valleys, decorating bridges and shops, trees and railings, lamp-posts and churches, statues and phone boxes. Since then, the **Souter Stormers** have continued to surprise and delight, turning a pop-up shop into a 'Fully Woolly' home and garden, holding a hat competition, contributing 70 metres of banners for COP 26 in Glasgow, and marking special occasions in the town.

In the course of all this activity, they have raised funds for several local charities. To celebrate their first decade, they have put together a **coffee-table photobook**. It contains more than 150 photos illustrating their work.

Extra copies are available, at £40: enquiries to Jane at jane.stitches21@gmail.com

The Stormers recently welcomed the 105th Anniversary of the Dandie Dinmont breed with a special Dinmont-themed tableau (bottom right), and have just unveiled their 'Woolly Wanderland' tableaux of figures to be discovered outdoors in walks around The Haining - not to be missed. **See p17.**



John Jeffrey appointed Lord Lieutenant

Borders Rugby Legend John Jeffrey appointed as His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale

It has been announced that **John Jeffrey** will be the next Lord Lieutenant of Roxburgh, Ettrick, and Lauderdale. Mr Jeffrey will succeed the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, who has held the position since 4 July 2016.

Born in Kelso, John Jeffrey is a former Scottish rugby union player and coach. During his playing career, Jeffrey was a flanker and earned 40 caps for Scotland; in 1989 he was a member of the British and Irish Lions tour of Australia. His contributions to rugby extend beyond his playing and coaching career. He has been a prominent figure in promoting the sport and ensuring its growth and development in Scotland.

John Jeffrey said of his appointment: "I am deeply honoured to take on the role of Lord-Lieutenant for Roxburgh, Ettrick, and Lauderdale following in the footsteps of the Duke of Buccleuch. Having known the Duke for many years, I have witnessed first-hand the numerous engagements he has overseen with dedication and grace.

I and my wonderful team of Deputy Lieutenants look forward to working with all of you to continue that legacy of service and support and to earning your trust and confidence. For all of us there is nowhere more special than the Scottish Borders"

The Duke of Buccleuch
congratulates John Jeffrey



Selkirk Common Riding 2025

by Grant Kinghorn



Photo Captions (clockwise from left):

1. Ex-Soldiers SB Darren Gibson lays a wreath at 5:30am.
 2. Weavers SB Kieran Thomson casting.
 3. Ex-Soldiers SB Darren Gibson casting.
 4. Selkirk Silver Band leads the procession into the Market Place for the casting.
 5. Safe In at the Toll
 6. Fleshers SB Bruce Robertson
 7. Hammermen SB Lewis Sanders
- All photos by Grant Kinghorn



Selkirk Common Riding Day Report by Grant Kinghorn

Following a hectic week of Dinners, Bussin' Concerts and School visits for Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Darren Knox fulfilled his life long ambition of being Royal Burgh Standard Bearer.

The official Ceremonial parts of Selkirk Common Riding got under way at 6:30pm on Thursday Night when Senior Burgh Officer Graeme Bell Cried the Burley around the Town, with large numbers turning out.

The United Crafts Bussin' took place in the Victoria Hall, which saw the Incorporation of Hammermen and Corporation of Weavers Flags bussed. At 8pm, members of the Royal and Ancient Burgh Ex-Standard Bearers Association marched in silence to the Flodden Memorial Fletcher statue at the front of the Victoria Halls, where Chairman Alasdair Craig laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.

Selkirk Flute Band were up at the crack of dawn to rouse the town at 4am, walking in turn to wake the Provost and the Royal Burgh Standard Bearer. Members of the Selkirk Ex-Solders were led by the Pipe Band to Selkirk War Memorial for

The First Drum was sounded at 6am by John Nichol and Selkirk Silver Band played Hail Smiling Morn around the town.

The Royal Burgh Flag was bussed by Gail Pow, wife of Provost Rodney Pow and Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Darren Knox was charged with carrying out his duties, along with his Attendants and the Burleymen. The Procession, both on foot and mounted, then made its way to the Market Place for the Second Drum at 7am. A cavalcade of about 200 horses followed Standard Bearer Knox.



The foot procession and mounted cavalcade made its way over the Green to the River Ettrick, where the riders forded the river and on to Linglie Farm, before following the Traditional Route, stopping off at Tibbie's and the Three Brethren.

Following a short stop and a hearty rendition of Hail Smiling Morn by The Standard Bearer and Attendants at the Three Brethren it was time to start the homeward journey. The foot procession was making its way from the Market Place by this point to meet the returning Riders.



Photos: Grant Kinghorn

Standard Bearer Knox cantered up the Toll, which was lined with hundreds of spectators. Once the horses had all returned, the Procession made its way up Bleachfield to Selkirk's ancient Market Place for the spectacular finale, the Casting of the Colours. In front of thousands of people, Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Darren Knox cast his colours, followed by Hammermen Standard Bearer Lewis Sanders, Weavers Standard Bearer Kieran Thomson, Fleshers Standard Bearer Bruce Robertson, Colonial Standard Bearer Brenton Barbian, Merchant Company Standard Bearer Rob Gray and Ex-Soldiers Standard Bearer Darren Gibson, who then dipped the flag in remembrance, the silence broken by the haunting *The Liltin'* played by the Selkirk Silver Band.



Provost Rodney Pow then received the Burgh Flag back in the time-honoured way 'Unsoiled and Untarnished' from Standard Bearer Knox. Following a short reception in the Town Hall, the Standard Bearer and Attendants visited the various Common Riding Foyes, before heading to the Gala Rig for the Race Meeting and on to the Selkirk Common Riding Ball in the Evening.

Colonial Bussin' report 2025

The Exiles Return by Ian Clapperton

Selkirk Colonial Society welcomed a great many returning Souters and visitors to their annual Colour Bussin' Concert in the Victoria Hall on Wednesday 11th June. It was certainly a case of "a' the airts" as the visitors were introduced to the audience by Guest Chair Angela Williamson, with countries ranging from Canada and the USA to Australia, and from Sweden and Norway to France and Germany all getting a mention. The "exiles" were gathered to witness the installation of 2025 Colonial Standard Bearer Brenton Barbian, from USA.



Society Chairman Ian Clapperton presided alongside Guest Chair Angela Williamson, the Lady Busser from 2002. The Standard Bearer's wife Marta bussed the flag and Brenton thanked the Society for allowing him the opportunity to fulfill his long-term ambition of carrying the "golden banner" of the Colonial Society. Although American by birth, Brenton married into a "weel kent" Selkirk family, and he now considers himself an adopted Souter.

Honorary Provost Rodney Pow, the Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Darren Knox and his Burleymen and Attendants attended the Bussin' Concert. Alan and Bev Elliott from the Edinburgh and Midlothian Souters Society presented RBSB Knox with their Society Medallion, strengthening the century-long links with the Colonial Society and Common Riding.

Entertaining the audience were local singers Ian Wilson, Julie Craig and Lewis Hislop, accompanied by Derek Calder and Hilary Bell. Music was provided by the Silver Band. The concert concluded with a vote of thanks from Colonial Society Chairman Ian Clapperton. He thanked everyone for coming and wished everyone a Hail Smilin' Morn and, for the riders, Safe Oot, Safe In, before the exiles and overseas visitors retired upstairs for the traditional Society Reception.

Photos: Grant Kinghorn

Children's Common Riding Picnic

Saturday the 7th of June saw the Selkirk Common Riding Children's Picnic take place at a very damp Selkirk Rugby Club. The races were run, the bands played and the kids had a ball. A massive congratulations to **Shona Grieve** and her committee for managing to get the Picnic on, despite the best attempts of the Scottish weather. Thanks to the foot marshalls and the bands for making everything run so smoothly and contributing the music of the afternoon, till Bojangles Disco took over.



United Crafts Dinner

Friday the 6th of June saw the United Crafts Dinner take place in the Victoria Hall. Hammermen's Deacon David Main chaired the Dinner, while Selkirk Silver Band played a few Common Riding Tunes at the start of the evening.

Hammermen Standard Bearer Lewis Sanders introduced the Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Darren Knox, with the Royal Burgh Standard Bearer replying before leaving to attend Hawick Ball. The Toast to the Royal & Ancient Burgh was given by Ex-Braw Lad Cameron Pate with Provost Pow replying.



The Toast to the Crafts was given by Ex-Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Rory Monks with Ex-Hammermen SB Neil Purves replying. The Toast to the Crafts Standard Bearer was given by Weavers Deacon Hughie MacDonald with Weavers Standard Bearer Kieran Thomson replying. The Vote of Thanks was given by the Crafts Padre, Rev. Lesley Penny. Entertainers for the evening were Craig Monks, Tommy Knox and Jimmy Gibb, while Ian Wilkie was the Accompanist.

Fleshers Bussin'



The evening of Saturday 7th of June saw the Annual Incorporation of Fleshers Bussin' take place in a packed Victoria Hall, Selkirk. Deacon Keith Hermiston chaired the Bussin Concert. The Toast to the Royal & Ancient Burgh was given by Ex-Fleshers' SB Lyndsay Grieve with Provost Rodney Pow replying.

The Colours of the Incorporation were Bussed by the Standard Bearer's Mum Lorraine Robertson. The Toast to the Fleshers Standard Bearer was given by Lewis Sanders, this year's Hammermen Standard Bearer, with Fleshers Standard Bearer Bruce Robertson replying. The Fleshers Standard Bearer's dad Kenneth Robertson presented Fleshers Standard Bearer Bruce Robertson with his Fleshers Standard Bearer's medal. Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Darren Knox addressed the company before last year's Fleshers SB Colin Sandilands proposed the Vote of Thanks. Singers for the evening were Tommy Knox, Jimmy Gibb and the marvellous Selkirk Silver Band.

Photos: Grant Kinghorn

Royal & Ancient Burgh Ex-Standard Bearers Dinner

A packed Victoria Hall was the setting for the Royal & Ancient Burgh Ex-Standard Bearers Association Annual Dinner on Monday 9th of June, with Association Chairman Alasdair Craig in the chair. Ex-Longholm Cornet Billy Young proposed the Toast to the Royal & Ancient Burgh, with Provost Rodney Pow replying. Chairman Craig proposed the Toast to the Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Darren Knox and presented him with the George Kinghorn Memorial Badge, his badge of office. The Royal Burgh Standard Bearer then replied to the Toast.



The Toast to the Common Riding was in the capable hands of Past Musselburgh Honest Lad Alistair Barclay. Ex-Standard Bearers Vice Chairman Peter Forrest gave the reply. There were also remarks from a very proud Standard Bearer's Father Tommy Knox. Chairman Alasdair Craig made a presentation to Diamond Jubilee Standard Bearer Harry Russell, who said a few words. The Vote of Thanks was in the hands of last year's Standard Bearer Mathew Stanners. Entertainers for the Evening were Ex-SB Craig Monks, Jimmy Gibb and Ian Wilson with Derek Calder as Accompanist.

Selkirk Merchant Company Bussin'

The Annual Selkirk Merchant Company Bussin' took place in the Victoria Hall on Tuesday 10th of June, chaired by the Master of Selkirk Merchant Company Falconer Grieve. The main business of the evening was the Bussin' of the Merchant Company Flag by Norma Graham and Sashing of her Standard Bearer Robert Gray. John Nichol gave the Toast to the Merchant Company Standard Bearer, with Standard Bearer Gray replying. The Master of the Company then introduced the Royal Burgh Standard Bearer Darren Knox, who addressed the Company.



The Toast to Selkirk Merchant Company and The Royal & Ancient Burgh was proposed by Fiona Armstrong, Lord Lieutenant of Dumfries, with a reply from Provost Rodney Pow. The Vote of Thanks was given by Ex-Merchant Company Standard Bearer Elliot Henderson. Entertainers for the evening were Imogen Hoppe, Tommy Knox and Jimmy Gibb, and the Accompanist for the evening was Ann Witherington.

Photos: Grant Kinghorn

Knitted Art at The Haining



'Woolly Wanderland' is a collection of figures to be discovered outdoors in walks around The Haining - not to be missed. Sadly and unbelievably, the Stormers report that some figures have been vandalised or even stolen. See P. 11 for more about the Souter Stormers.

Photos by the Souter Stormers.

'Tracings' at Halliwell's House Museum till 30 August

Tracings is a newly-curated exhibition bringing together the work of four contemporary artists: Nicky Sanderson, Ann Louise Kieran, Sheila MacNeill, and Mary T. Johnson. Based in Edinburgh, the Scottish Borders and Glasgow, the artists first connected during the Scottish Society of Artists' 2023 mentoring programme. Their year-long collaboration revealed shared themes in their practices: a love of printmaking and a deep engagement with place, ecology and personal/collective memory.

From now till - Aug 30. Halliwell's House Museum & Gallery
Free- Donations Welcome

Artwork (right) by Sheila MacNeill



Art legend Richard Demarco visits Selkirk at age 94

Scottish art legend Richard Demarco visited Selkirk recently in support of his recent exhibition 'In 1972' at Burnside gallery. Still going strong at the age of 94, he reminisced about his time as a co-founder of the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, as well as the highly influential Richard Demarco Gallery.

Burnside's next exhibition will be paintings and paper sculptures from **James Hutcheson: Wed 27 Aug - Sat 20 Sept.**

Photo: Andy Murray

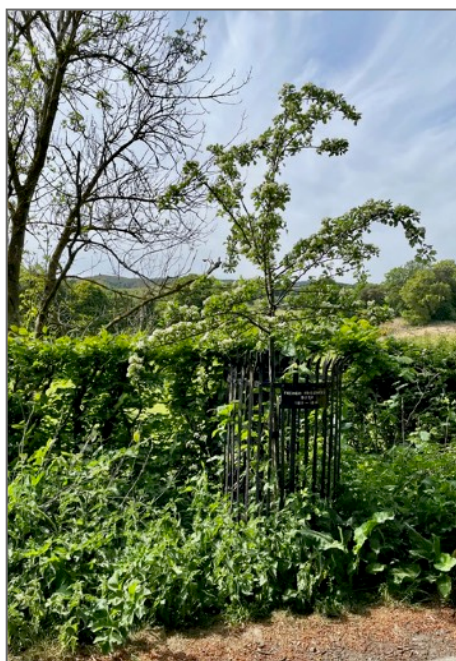
The French Prisoners' Bush 1811-1814

During the Napoleonic Wars, French Prisoners that were kept in Selkirk, were trusted to go for a walk and not to try and escape. They could walk as far as the parish boundary and a Bush (which became known as the French Prisoners' Bush) marked the limit for the captives.

The Selkirk community displayed an admirable generosity and a gratifying amount of good feeling in their dealings with the French officers and prisoners of war on parole, who were quartered in the old town from during the freezing winter of 1811 to 1814. Indeed, it appears from records that none of our Border towns can be said to have been lacking in 'hospitality'. One of these French prisoners (M. Doisy de Villargennes) afterwards, when an old man, writes of his involuntary hosts with appreciation, and almost with affection. In 1811, when the accumulation of prisoners of war in England had become very great, it was decided to distribute a large part of them throughout Scotland. To Selkirk, as its share, came 190 men.

Tales from these times remain and reminiscences of the prisoners tell innumerable tales of the strange habits of "thae Frainch." "They made tea oot o' dried whun. (furze) blossoms, an' they skinned the very paddas (frogs)," said one old man. There is also mention that "a lake in the neighbourhood supplied abundance of very delicate pike."

M. Doisy de Villargennes, tells us that some of the prisoners were "passionately fond of fishing,"— and that they used to fish in the Ettrick and Tweed. Part of the former, close to the town, would be within their "bounds," but the Tweed is far outside the mile radius which was their limit of liberty.



On every road, one mile from the town, was placed a post bearing the words "Limit of the Prisoners of War". Down the road which leads towards Bridgeland there is still a memorial of these unfortunates, — a thorn bush (sadly now a replacement), called the Prisoners Bush, which marked their limit in that direction. Any prisoner found outside the boundary was liable to be fined one guinea—a process, something akin in certain cases to getting blood from a stone—and the fine was supposed to go to the person who informed on the delinquent.

To the credit of Selkirk it must be recorded that no one ever claimed this reward; even when a prisoner uprooted a notice post and carried it a mile farther along the road, it was, we are told, only "to the amusement of the inhabitants," who, M. Doisy adds, "never on any occasion took advantage of a regulation in virtue of which who-ever might see us outside the fixed limits was entitled to one guinea, payable by the delinquent." He himself, he says, "frequently went fishing several miles down the Tweed," and was never fined, never in any way molested.

In fact, great and small in Selkirk, from the Sheriff Depute of the county down to the town's bellman, and the "drucken" ne'er-do-weel who is to be found in every small town, and whom one would scarcely expect to be proof against a bribe that would provide him with the wherewithal for a royal spree, all combined to wink at these infringements of the regulations.

Sir Walter Scott himself, indeed, who was then living at Abbotsford, used frequently to have some of the prisoners to dine and spend the evening there. It is interesting to read the account of these visits, and to note how Sir Walter impressed his foreign visitors. "There was one person just at this time whom I did not then appreciate as I afterwards did—Sir Walter Scott, then plain Mr. Scott. Probably no one knew, unless his publishers, or ever suspected him of being "The Great Unknown," the author of "Waverley." As for us we only saw in Mr. Scott, the Sheriff of Selkirkshire, a lawyer of some repute in Edinburgh. As sheriff he frequently came to Selkirk from his home at Abbotsford, which is little more than three miles distant from Selkirk.

Adelbert Doisy and a small group of his fellow officers found themselves at Abbotsford House, near Melrose, one February evening in 1813. Their host was Sir Walter Scott, then plain Mr Scott, the Sheriff of Selkirkshire. They found Scott to be, "A gentleman full of cordiality and gaiety, receiving his guests in a fashion as amiable as it was delicate." Several other visits followed and it was a welcome relief for the Frenchmen. Ten years later Scott published a book that produced a furious outcry from Doisy and his fellow prisoners (by now repatriated) who had attended the gathering many years before. "We little suspected that our host was gathering material for a work published under the title of the *Life of Napoleone*. Sir Walter Scott distorted each incident told by us with malevolent insinuations. It remains a stain on the name of the illustrious author."

Food and drink have long been a Gallic passion and frogs are considered a delicacy. That Frenchmen in their own land lived chiefly on a diet of frogs was the firm belief of a majority of Selkirk's inhabitants, ("French frogs" of course was a term of contemptuous reproach) and that the prisoners went to the Pot Loch for any other purpose than to obtain supplies of what seemed to the townsfolk to be a very loathsome dainty, would never occur to them. The fact that the edible frog did not exist there, would make no difference in their belief. That was no difficulty - frogs were frogs all the world over; and frogs of course included toads. The French ate them all.

During their years of captivity, the French military men introduced many a Borders family to the doubtful pleasure of the little green amphibian cooked in a fricassee and served at the dinner table.

A tale from Hawick tells us of an officer's introduction to the 'hot toddy' a wonderful drink made from whisky, sugar or honey and hot water. "The farmers in those days freely partook of toddy in the long winter nights... and introduced this Scotch drink to their alien acquaintances." One of these French 'gentlemen' clearly under the influence of the toddy was perspiring so freely he remarked to his host in broken English, "Dese be melting moments."

"The weather" said the Scotsman, "must be very uncomfortable to you who have been accustomed to a more genial climate." "It is the Devil's weather" replied the Frenchman but you have the heaven country for all that, you have the cold, the snow, the frozen water and the sober dress but you have a grand constitution and the manners and equality that we French fight for so long. I see in your street the priest, the shoemaker, the banker and the baker all meet together are companions and happy."

The conversation turned to the officer's experience as a prisoner in England before being sent north. "The English told me that the Scots were a nation of naked savages. It was a lie - it is the English that are savages."

The French Prisoners' Bush can be found on the west verge of the Bridgelands Road, to the north of Selkirk



Escapes were relatively rare. However, a reward of one guinea was offered for the capture of J H Parnagan, an ensign of the French vessel Hautpoul, and a local newspaper quaintly announced that he "took his departure." It seems he was never recaptured. One young officer took the hard way out. In September 1812 Louis Journeil a lieutenant from the 27th Regiment swallowed a quantity of sulphuric acid. His agony was heard a long way off and letters he left behind tell of a lonely young man desperately missing his home and family.

By the beginning of 1814, the war was going badly for the Emperor. Germany was fighting hard to push out the French and regain its liberty and consequently Britain encouraged prisoners of German origin to return home and fight for their country.

Accordingly, the eleven native Germans who had been paroled in the small village of Lauder were given £5 by the Transport Board to return home and fight this time for their country against the French. In March 1814, Paris fell and Napoleon went into exile on the Mediterranean Island of Elba. For the Frenchmen of Selkirk, it was time to return to their families and a ship duly arrived at Berwick Upon Tweed to take them home on 26 April 1814. Within a few weeks, others too began to leave.

There was one last thing for the Selkirk prisoners to do before they left. They had spent over £120 on fitting out the theatre and decided to hold an auction to recoup some of their money.

The local residents knowing that they could not take anything with them except a miserly £6. The prisoners, now free to leave, had the last laugh. "Some of us were supplied with steel, flint and tinder and at a pre-arranged signal set fire"

In 1815, after the Battle of Waterloo, a Kelso resident remarked poignantly that the time of their (prisoners of war) stay, "Was the gayest that Kelso had since fatal Flodden."

That sentiment was echoed around the Borders, which was never quite the same again.

Summarised by Ian King - May 2025

Coming Up



Selkirk Tennis Club Summer Camps
– July & August



Live Borders Sports & Culture future
consultation event, 13 August



Autism-friendly Sports Course
– Selkirk RFC, 3rd August

Rantin' Rovin' Romantics at Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom

Rantin' Rovin' Romantics is a series of Literary and Local History Events and Talks held monthly until October 2025 at the historic **Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom**. Each event offers a unique opportunity to dive into Scotland's rich literary and local heritage through fascinating discussions, show and tell activities, and insightful talks. To find out more about Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom, click [HERE](#)



The next events are:

Wednesday 30 July: 7pm-8pm (£5 per ticket)
Isn't It Byronic? - Lord Byron: Rock Star Poet

Readings from his poetry, letters and memoirs will reveal the fascinating life-story and work of a leading voice of the Romantic Movement. (Presented by Fiona McDonald-Colton, with readings by Julian Colton.)

Wednesday 27 August: 7pm - 8pm (£5 per ticket)
Cast a Cold Eye: Poetry of W.B. Yeats

A selection of glorious lyrical verse written by William Butler Yeats, of one of Ireland's greatest-ever poets. (Presented with readings by Julian Colton)

Wednesday 24 September: 7-8pm (£5 per ticket)
Wild and Wonderful: The Natural World in Poetry

From Armadillos to Zephyrus, the West Wind. A special evening of poems inspired by nature in all its forms. (Presented with readings, by Julian Colton.)

Tickets available from Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom, Selkirk or by emailing museums@liveborders1.org.uk or calling 01750 720761 (Thurs-Sunday, daytime).



RECORD BOOKS BEING REWRITTEN IN SELKIRK'S 2025 SEASON

Cricket Club Update

by John Smail

Having just passed the cricket season's halfway point, Selkirk's players find themselves in the lower half of East League Division 3, having recorded four wins and six defeats from their 10 league fixtures.

Michael Fenton (331 runs), his brother Greg (268) and Rory Banks (243) are amongst the top five batters in the league, with Rory having the added distinction of scoring a century this season (103* v. Haddington).

Greg Fenton comes eighth in the 3rd Division's list of wicket-takers, having notched 14 dismissals in nine matches. He is followed by Rory Banks and skipper Daniel Heard (13 each), while Michael Fenton has 12 wickets to his name.



John and Gregor Borthwick



Blaine and Michael Gillie



Bob and Shaun Wilkinson

A red letter day for the club came on May 17 in the away match against Leith FAB. At just nine years of age, Michael Gillie became the youngest player ever to appear in a senior Selkirk team. That same afternoon another record was set when no fewer than three fathers lined up alongside their sons in the same Selkirk side – John & Gregor Borthwick, Blaine & Michael Gillie, and Bob & Shaun Wilkinson. No wonder the Leith scorer had his work cut out!



Selkirk RFC Announce New Main Sponsor

by Jim Harold

Selkirk RFC are delighted to announce a new main sponsorship agreement with local forestry, building and scaffolding company Elliot Henderson Group, in a substantial deal that will see them take over as main club sponsor for a three year period from season 2025/26.

Managing director Gavin Henderson said: "Henderson Group are delighted to support Selkirk RFC in a deal that reflects the club's success over recent years and will hopefully be mutually beneficial to both organisations. As a past player at Philiphaugh, I am particularly pleased that we have been able to enter into this long term arrangement, following my discussions with former chairman Dennis Henderson."



Selkirk RFC Chairman Jim Harold said: "The club are thrilled to have secured this sponsorship deal with an established local firm that has grown in stature since it was set up nearly 40 years ago by founder Elliot Henderson. Elliot is a former player and president of the club and has shown huge commitment over many years, having built the appropriately named Elliot Henderson Pavilion as well as the gym complex, which was funded through the legacy left to the club by the late Willie Lyndsay.

Elliot was also at the forefront of the clear up operations when the club was flooded in 2003/2004, so he has been a stalwart supporter of the club for a very long time. The board of SRFC are looking forward to a long and fruitful arrangement with Henderson Group and thank them for their ongoing support of the club."

Selkirk RFC Chairman Jim Harold and Sponsorship Director Dennis Henderson shake hands on a new deal with Gavin and Elliot Henderson of Henderson Group (Photograph by Grant Kinghorn)

Preview of The Rig Racing 2025

by Stuart Hogarth, Clerk of the Course at the Rig

Horse racing at the Rig is now back under starter's orders for 2025, with the Common Riding Meeting proving to be a roaring success on Friday 13th June. The people of Selkirk turned up in their droves to support the racing, with good fields in each of the professional races. There were full ballots for the amateur sprints also, with some phenomenally close finishes across all 8 races on the card.

As we look forward to August, Selkirk Flapping Association will hold their annual race meeting on **Saturday the 9th of August**, with the first race under starter's orders at 2pm. The races will cover the same distances as professional races at the Common Riding Meeting, and there are four on the card. The August meeting has run successfully since 2014, which was the first time since 1947 that there had been two race meetings on the Gala Rig in one year.

Craig Stanners, Convenor of Selkirk Flapping Association, said: "We are once again really excited to hold our late summer meeting on one of Scotland's oldest race courses. The meeting itself has turned into a real family day where the people of Selkirk come together for an afternoon of fun, and an evening of entertainment. As well as the professional races, we have a disco immediately after the racing, and a band to bring in the evening in the tent; another great event I'm sure.

It is our plan once again to continue to support the Young Souters Association, the September Charity Ride, and other local causes as we are able, and I would like to thank all race sponsors and financial contributors in advance, as without your support none of this would be possible".



The gates open at 12 noon and entry is £10 (Adults), and £5 (concessions) which covers the evening entertainment too.

Rig Racing, 2024. Photo: Grant Kinghorn

All Those Years Ago

Repair of the spire • Photos by Caroline Cochrane



Recent focus on the Town Hall and Scott's Courtroom reminds us of the substantial remedial work that went on to repair and upgrade the spire, clock and cockerel weathervane all those years ago.

Many thanks to Councillor Caroline Cochrane for providing these photos, taken on a vertiginous trip up to the spire via the scaffolding.



Photos: Grant Kinghorn
Photos: Grant Kinghorn



Royal Burgh of
Selkirk
Community
Council



Scottish
Borders
COUNCIL

Working For You

SBC Councillors and
Selkirk Community
Council Members

**Meet SBC Councillors
Caroline Cochrane and
Elaine Thornton-Nicol**
at the Selkirk Farmers' Market,
Market Place, Selkirk
**First Saturday of each month*,
10:00-12:00**
caroline.cochrane@scotborders.gov.uk
e.thornton-nicol@scotborders.gov.uk
*except Jan/Feb

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