



Hello my name is Rupert
and these are my friends
Judith & Lesley...

Just like your teachers
we hope to help pupils
become:

- Successful learners
- Responsible citizens
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors

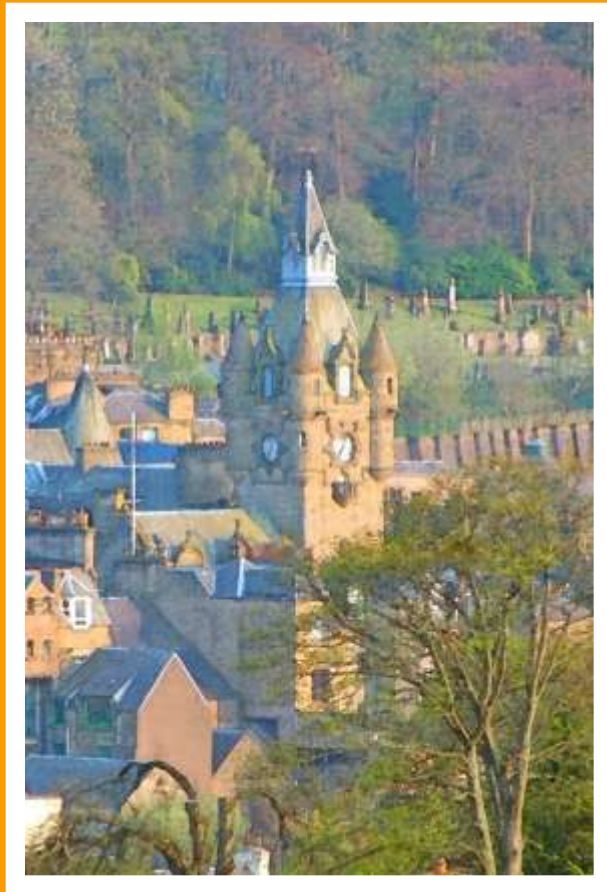


Judith & Lesley have
helped me to make this
KIDZ GUIDE TO...

Hawick Common-Riding

It takes place in May and June,
here is what happens.....

PICKING NIGHT



7pm on the first Wednesday after the first Tuesday in May, Hawick picks a new Cornet. The Honorary Provost and council meet in the Town Hall to dispatch a letter asking a young man to be Cornet.





The Drum and Fife band accompany the Halberdier, who has the letter from the Honorary Provost, from the Town Hall to the Cornet Elect's House.

A large crowd are gathered outside the house, eager to see the new Cornet.



The Cornet Elect answers the door to the Halberdier and invites him and the band in.



The house is full of Ex-Cornets and male guests, invited by the Cornet Elect, to be present when he reads the invitation to be Cornet and his reply.



A little while later the new Cornet and his Right and Left Hand Men and Acting Father come outside to meet the crowd, and they throw money, or have a "strive", as it's known in Hawick.





The Halberdier returns to the Town Hall with the letter of acceptance and a new shilling (5p), his pay for delivering the letter.



Then the Big Four come out and surrounded by bairns, walk to the Town Hall, the long way round the town, visiting the town ports and allowing the townsfolk a chance to see their new Cornet.



On reaching the Town Hall the Big Four lead the sing-song before having another strive.



After meeting the Honorary Provost, the Cornet attends a congratulatory smoker, at which he receives his Cornet's Badge.



The Lasses, who were in the Cornet's house when the letter was delivered, attend the Lasses Association dinner. Where both the Cornet's Lass and the Acting Mother receive their association Badges.



THE RIDES OUT

On Saturdays and Tuesdays, throughout May, the Cornet leads a cavalcade of horses to surrounding communities, getting the horses fit in the process.



The Rides leave from the Backdamgate, just behind Drumlanrig Tower. They pass cheering crowds on the way out of town.



The Ride continues across country to the destination, crossing fields, rivers and passing through forestry.



This is my favourite bit of the Common-Riding



Riding across rough ground is not always easy, some people fall off!

Going...



Going...

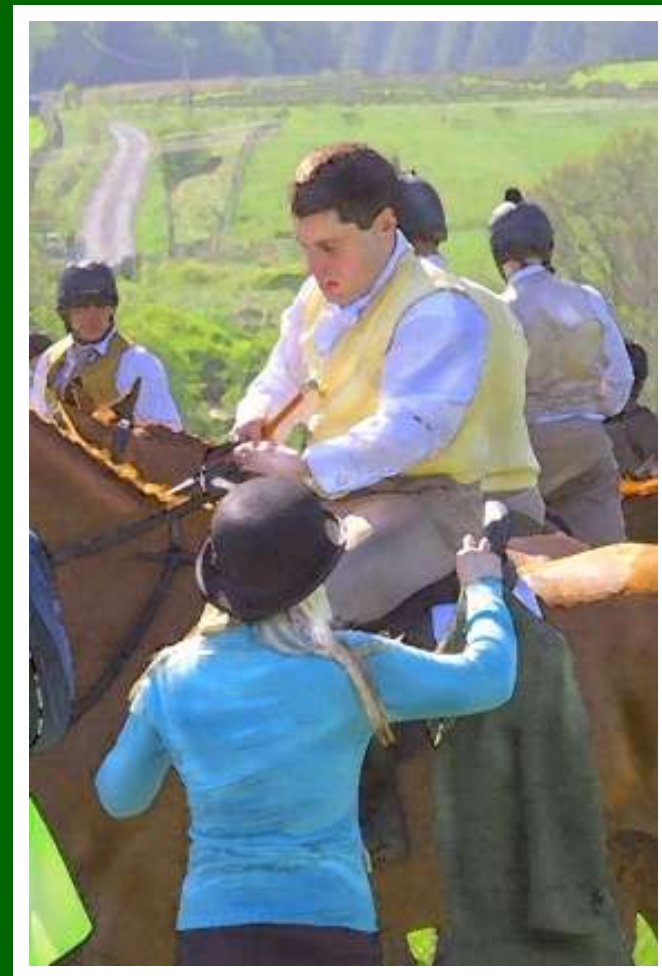


Gone!!!





At points on the ride the Lasses and public in cars meet the ride to give out refreshments or hand out coats and hats.





At the destination the riders dismount and give their horses to a boy or girl to look after, this is called "hauding" a horse.

Then the riders get a break to join friends and family for a picnic, while the horses enjoy some grass.



Sometimes after the picnic there is a sing song, the Right Hand Man asks people to get up and sing.



Before setting off for home the Big Four sing "Teribus", each standing in their stirrups as they sing a verse.

When the horses return to the town, the Big Four dismount at the Backdamgate and thank the riders for coming.



Four lucky bairns get carried round on the principals shoulders to Drumlanrig Tower, where a large crowd is waiting for a sing-song and strive.



The Big Four lead the crowd in singing a Hawick song or two, if the crowd sing well enough there is a strive, the Big Four throwing money into the crowd.





In recent years the Cornet has then given out his official photo, which is much sought after, if you are lucky he or his Cornet's Lass might sign it for you.



THURSDAY NIGHT CHASE

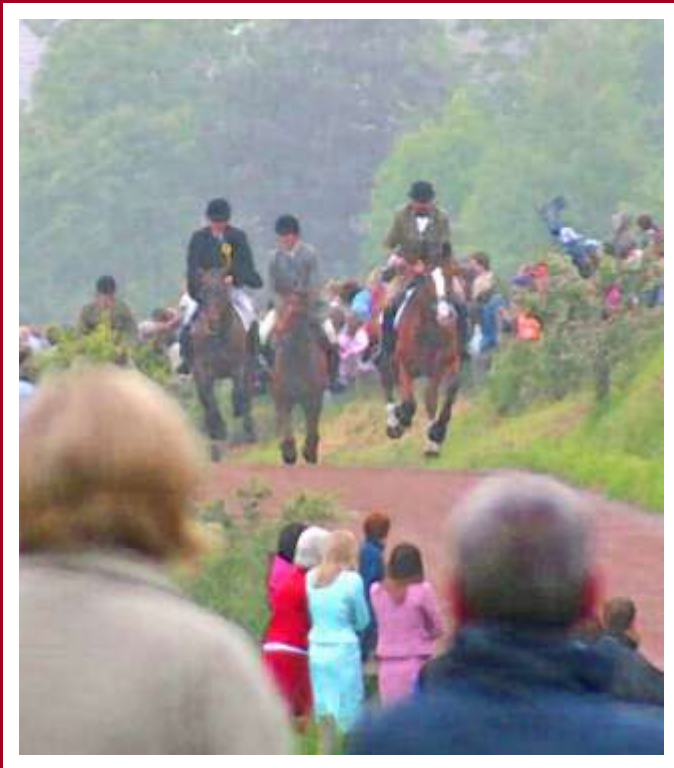
6pm on the Thursday before Common-Riding week the Cornet and male followers ride to St Leonards for the Ordering of the Curds and Cream.



The Drums and Fifes lead the cavalcade to the top of the Loan. The horses continue on to Rosebank Road where they are split into two groups, married riders and unmarried riders.



While this has been happening a large crowd has gathered on the Vertish Hill eager to see the Chases.



The Acting Father "Chases" first leading the married men up the Nipknowes. The horses hooves clattering on the tarmac as they gallop past.





Then it's the Cornet turn leading the single men. The crowd cheering loudly as he gallops past..

...his Right and Left hard on his heels...



...followed by the unmarried men. Mothers wait nervously to see their sons pass safely.



The Chases completed the riders ride to St Leonards where they leave their horses with their "hauders" and proceed to "The Hut".



There are speeches and songs and the Acting Father receives his badge of office. The Curds and Cream are ordered for the following week.



Outside the Hut the gathered crowd and Lasses, listen to what's happening, via the loudspeaker.




Once the Curds and Cream have been ordered the Cornet and the rest of the Big Eight sing "Teribus" in front of the house, the Official Song Singer taking the lead.



The Big Four have a strive for the bairns before getting back onto their horses and heading back to the town.



The Saxhorn Band meet the horses at the Tower Knowe and plays the Cornet along Hawick High Street and back to the Tower Knowe.



This is a special evening when townsfolk's spirits are high.

KIRKING SUNDAY

AND

HORNSHOLE

Kirkin' Sunday is always the Sunday before the Common-Riding and marks the beginning of Common-Riding week.

The Kirkin' itself is a service held in the Cornet's church, but as you will see there are other things that happen on Kirkin' Sunday.

The Cornet and male supporters meet at the Town Hall at 10.30am. The Halberdiers then lead the men to the Church.





The Lasses are waiting at the church, dressed in their Sunday Best.



The Big Four traditionally wear morning suites and tile hats, and carry a black umbrella and grey gloves. The Cornet's tie is worn by the Cornet and Acting Father and Lily of the Valley is worn in the lapel.

Once at the church the Halberdiers lead the men and the Honorary Provost and Bailies in.



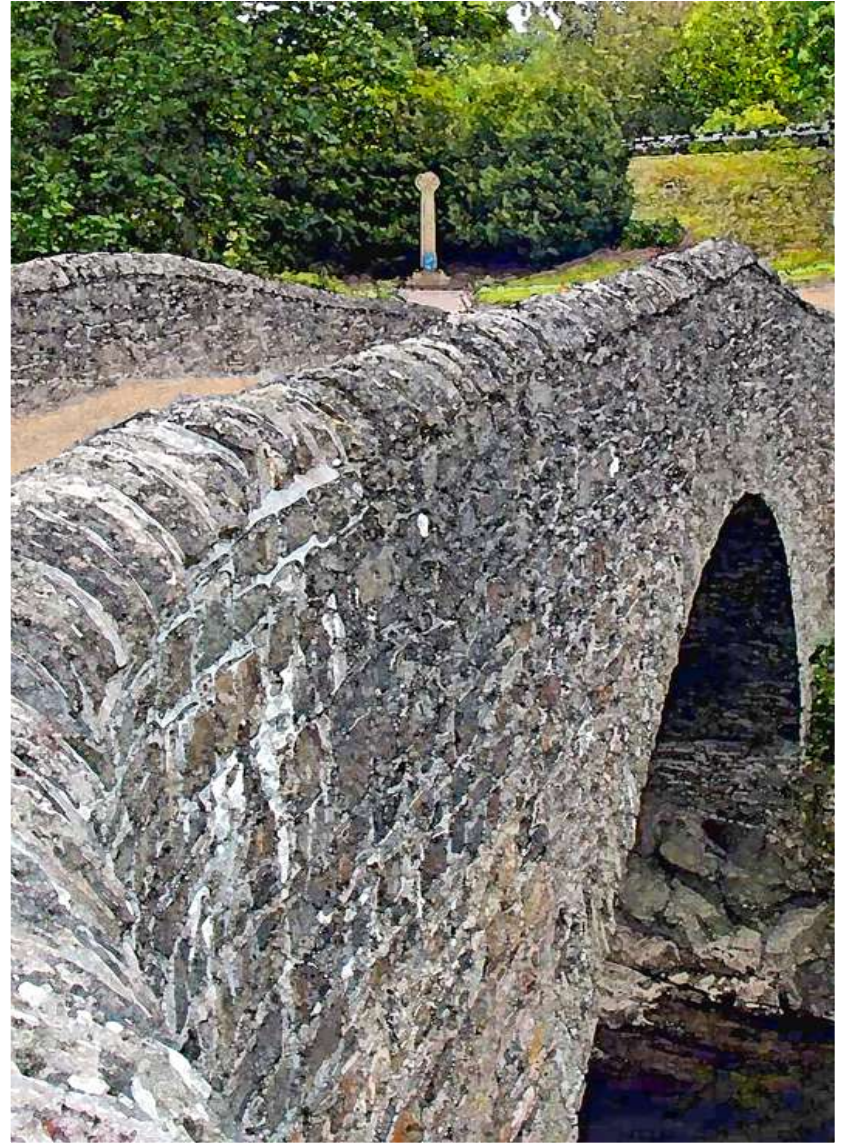
The service includes a reading by the Cornet and a presentation of bibles to him and his Lass. Once it's completed they leave the church in a similar manner to which they entered and the Lasses rejoin the men.



The eight principals then walk, in two pairs, to the Cornet Lass's lunch at a local restaurant. They walk along the High Street it is traditional for the crowd clap politely as they pass.

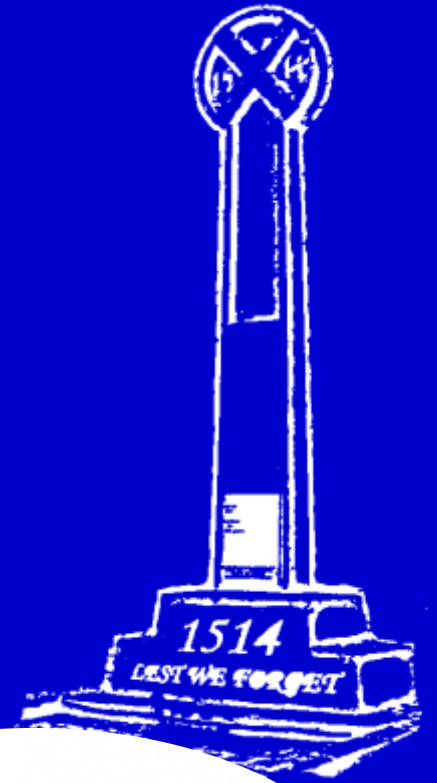
After lunch the Big Eight
travel to **Hornshole**.

This is the site of the 1514
battle between Hawick Youths
and English soldiers. The
youths were the winners and
returned home to Hawick with
the English soldiers flag.



The Big Four ride to Hornshole the previous day on the way home from the ride out. They pay their respects by quietly singing "Teribus" before returning to the rest of the riders.

This is a quiet, emotional and quite private moment for the Four.



"The horses were so calm... it was like they could 'smell' something in the air"
AF2005



There is a very
sombre
atmosphere when
this ceremony
takes place as
everything is
quiet and still.



At 3pm the
Cornet's Lass
lays the wreath
and a moments
silence is
observed.



How did it feel?

"I remember the silence. I had never been to the wreath laying before and you could almost touch the seriousness. I remember thinking what an honour it was for me to lay the wreath." CL 1986

"The calmness together with the silence of everyone present demonstrated what respect we have for the young callants who gave their lives for our town."
AM2005





The wreath laid the Cornet's party are driven to the Mair for Exhibition Sunday. This is when the Big Eight walk the race course inspecting it before the racing later in the week. Dress shoes are often swapped for wellies!

THE HOSPITALS

The Principals visit the Hawick hospitals and nursing homes on the Tuesday of Common-Riding week. The Lasses wear their Kirkin' outfits. They spend a short time talking to residents at each home and are accompanied by some of the Drums & Fifes and singers who entertain the residents, for many of them this is the only part of the Common-Riding they will see.





“The Hospital and Homes visits will be the events that I will remember forever. It was really lovely going to visit the elderly people that wouldn't make it up the Mair. Having the 'Big Eight' in to see them and getting a few songs from the singers that come along too really makes their day and they love to inspect the Lasses outfits and hats!”

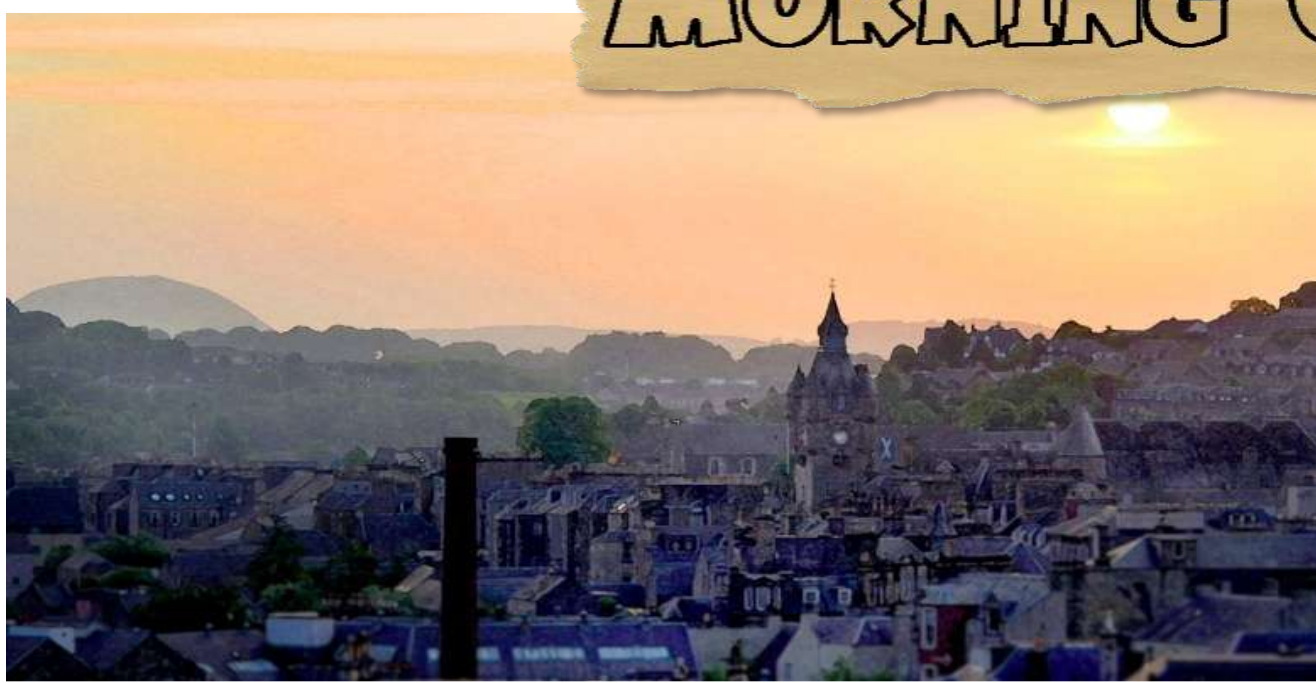
CL 2008

“I found the hospital and homes visits very humbling. The Elderly people were obviously very pleased to see “the Big 8” and some became rather emotional. It was the looks of sheer joy on some of their faces that I found so humbling. That short visit was probably going to be the highlight of, if not the whole extent of, their Common-Riding.”

C 2008

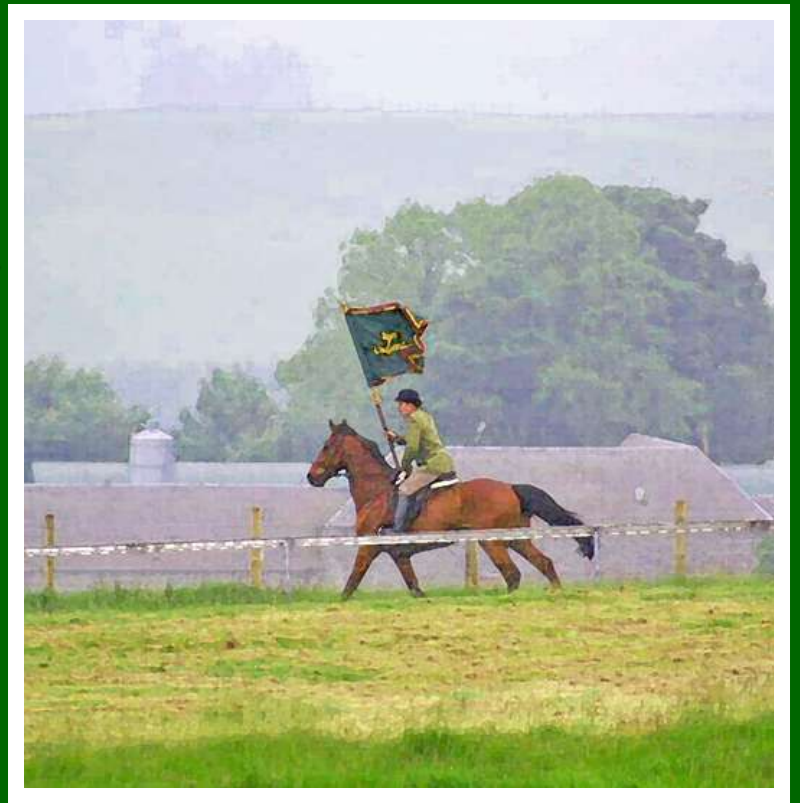


THE MORNING CHASES



On the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Common-Riding week there are Morning Chases. They are official rides, but unlike the Thursday Night Chase the principals quietly ride their horses to St Leonards. There are only a handful of followers these mornings.

The Wednesday morning is slightly different as the Cornet receives the practice flag at St Leonards and carries it to the Mair...



...and round the race course.



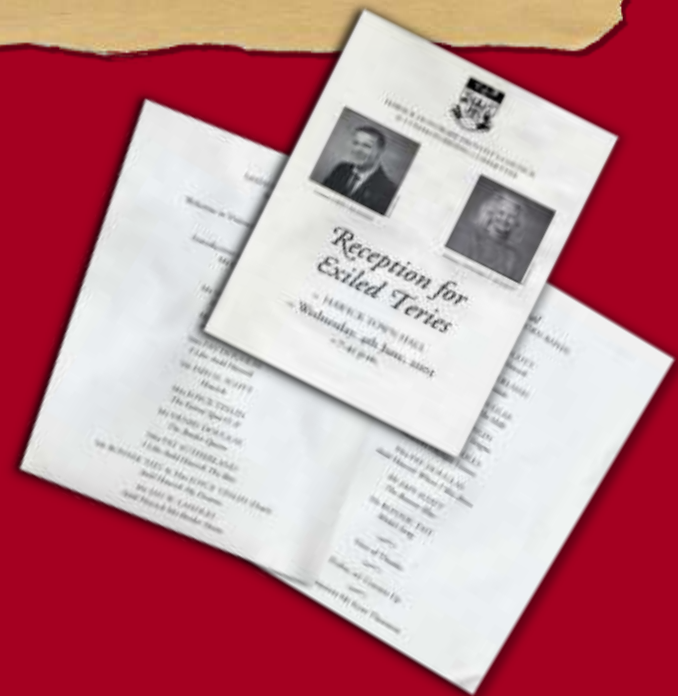
Those following also get to gallop round the course if the going is not too soft.

The Acting Father then carries the practice flag from the paddock to the crossroads at the top of the Nipknowes.



OVERSEAS NIGHT

Exiled Teries who have returned home for the Common-Riding are invited to meet the Cornet at a reception in the Town Hall on the Wednesday evening of Common-Riding week. It is an evening of song and catching up with "friends frae ower the main". The Maids of Honour are on hand to serve refreshments during the evening.



THURSDAY MORNING CHASE



6am on the Thursday Morning the Cornet receives the flag for the first time, then rides to the top of the Loan.

To prepare for the chases, at Rosebank Road the riders separate. Married male riders to front single riders to the rear.

YAWN!!!
It's too early I haven't woken up yet



Acting Father leads the married men's Chase up the Nipknowes. The married men chasing hard on his heels.



The crowd lining the Vertish see the blue and gold of the flag for the first time as the Cornet leads the single men's chase.





The
Right & Left
and single
men chasing
hard to try
and catch
him.



All
this
and
it's
still
only
7am!

At the top of the Nipknowes the Acting Fathers receives the flag from the Cornet and carries round to St Leonards.

The Lasses and crowd gathers outside the hut to listen to proceedings.





The songs and speeches finished,
"Teribus" is sung in front of the farm house
before the riders get back onto their horses



Then the Cornet leads the cavalcade to the Mair and round the race course. A large crowd have gathered on the Mair watch.

The children at Drumlanrig
are allowed out to watch
the Cornet pass as he
makes his way round the
town...



...and back to the Town
Hall where the flag is
displayed on the
balcony.

SCHOOL VISITS



After a quick breakfast the eight Principals and some of the followers visit all the schools in Hawick, they begin with the school the Cornet attended.

The School children dressed in their new Common-Riding outfits excitedly wait for his arrival.



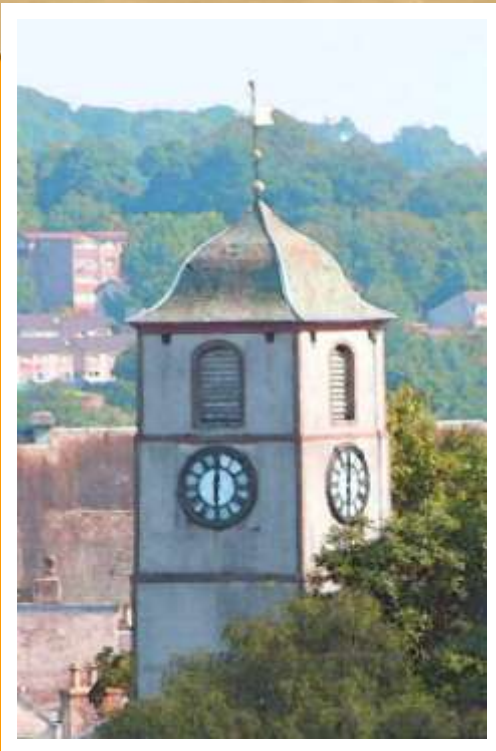
After some singing and prizes and presents being presented the Cornet asks the head teachers to give the pupils a day off, to go and support him at the Common Riding the next day. The answer is always

YES!!!!!!



COLOUR BUSSING NIGHT

6 o'clock on the
Thursday evening the
Common-Riding
begins...

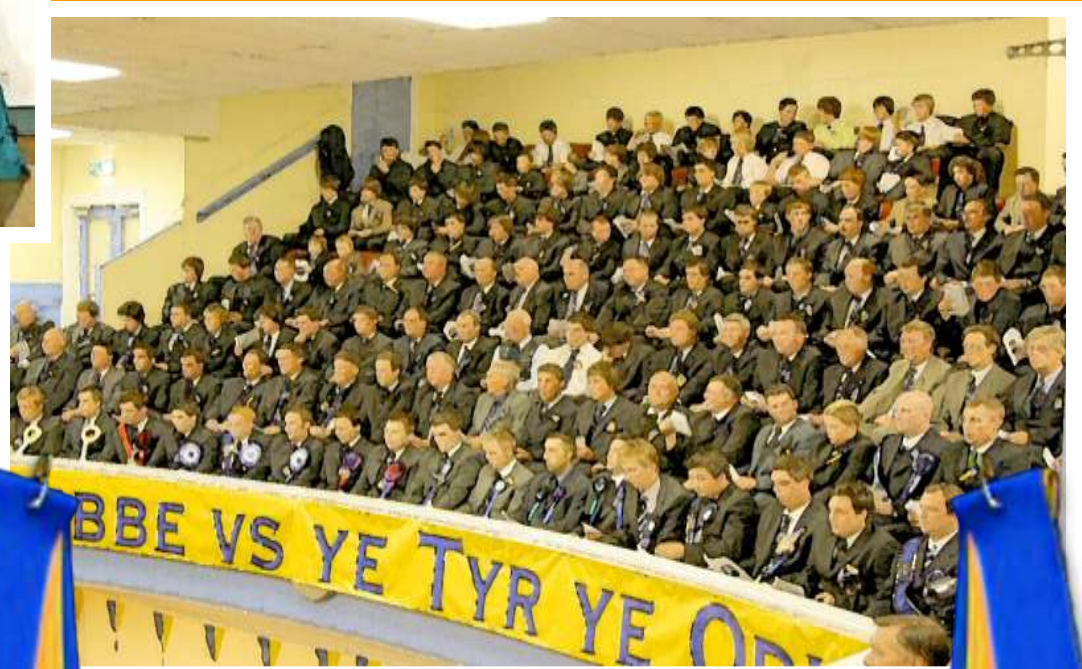


...The Drums and Fifes set off from Kirk
Wynd when St Marys clock strikes
6 o'clock. The Big Four witness the event.

The Colour Bussing



In The Town Hall the Lasses and the 22 Maids of Honour pin flashes on the lads before they take their seat in the Lads Gallery





The Lass carries the unbussed flag in, followed by her Right & Left and the Maids of Honour.



The Right & Left hold the flag while the Lass ties the blue and yellow ribbons to the top of the flag. The Lass then hands it to the Honorary Provost.





Cornet watches as the Lass gives the bussed flag to the Honorary Provost. His Right and Left then escort him to the stage...

...where His Lass dresses him with the sash, his uniform is now complete.



The Honorary Provost
gives the flag to the
Cornet instructing him
to ride the Marches
with it and return it to
her in two days time
"Unsullied and
Unstained."

The Cornet accepts the
task promising to do
so.





After an hour of songs and speeches the Colour Bussing concludes with the singing of "Teribus"

PROCLAMATION AND BUSSING THE HORSE



Immediately following the Colour Bussing the Proclamation is made from the Town Hall Balcony, the site of the former Burgh Cross.

The Halberdier reads out the Proclamation. The Cornet waves the flag and leads the crowd in three cheers. The Flag is then left on display on the balcony.





The Saxhorn Band and Drums & Fifes lead 'The Cornets Walk'. The Big Four, lads from the gallery and townsfolk walk from the Town Hall and stop at the 1514 Monument.



The walk pauses at the 1514 Memorial, "The Horse", so that the Cornet can climb up and tie the ribbons to the flag, "Bussing The Horse."



The Cornet raises his hat and the crowd cheers three times.



Once the Cornet is back down on the ground The Cornet's Walk continues round the town.



The shows are in the Haugh and for many bairns Colour Bussing Night is the first night they get to go.



COMMON-RIDING FRIDAY



This is it,
Hawick's Big
Day.

The Friday is the
Big Day, it is the
day when the
Common is
actually ridden.
Drums & Fifes
rouse the town at
6am.



THE SNUFFIN'

As they pass the site of the Auld Brig "The Snuffin'" begins. The Official Song Singer grasps the snuff Mull and the crowd form a maul around him as they try to get a pinch of snuff from it.





The Song Singer breaks free and enters Drumlanrig tower where he then throws packets of snuff to the gathered crowd out one of the windows, a strive of a different kind.



THE AULD SONG

At 8.25am after the Cornet's breakfast the principals and Song Singer gather on the Tower steps to sing Auld Song. It describes the Common-Riding of old, the Official Song Singer leads, but each of the principals must sing verses.



The men are joined on the steps by the lasses for a quick photo. The Lasses are dressed in their best clothes and hats.

THE PROCESSION



It's now 8.45am and the Halberdiers lead the procession of Honorary Provost and Bailies from Tower Knowe. The Lassies car follows the Bailies, then the Drums & Fifes join the procession, playing Teribus as the Cornet...

At the rear of Drumlanrig Tower the Cornet mounts his horse and is passed the flag by the Master Of Ceremonies.





...leads the horses through the Tower archway. He, his Right and Left, Acting Father and mounted supporters are welcomed with enthusiastic cheers from the towns folk as they ride around the town.





I love the
Friday procession it's a
great sight almost 300 horses and riders all
looking their best for their Cornet. It makes
us feel proud to be part of the Hawick
Community.

"Words really cannot
express the pride and emotion that runs through
your veins when you receive the flag. I'd be too naive to even
think I could explain it. I remember looking at myself in
shop windows, not in vanity, just sheer disbelief that
I was carrying the hallowed banner." C 2006

FRIDAY CHASE AND HUT

The procession is completed when it reaches the Auld Mans Seat. It's time for the final Chase and the Acting Father begins it again.



Having led the married men to the top of the Nipknowes, he awaits the Cornet.



Then Cornet in his green coat, flag in hand, gallops up the Nipknowes. The unmarried men and boys not far behind him.

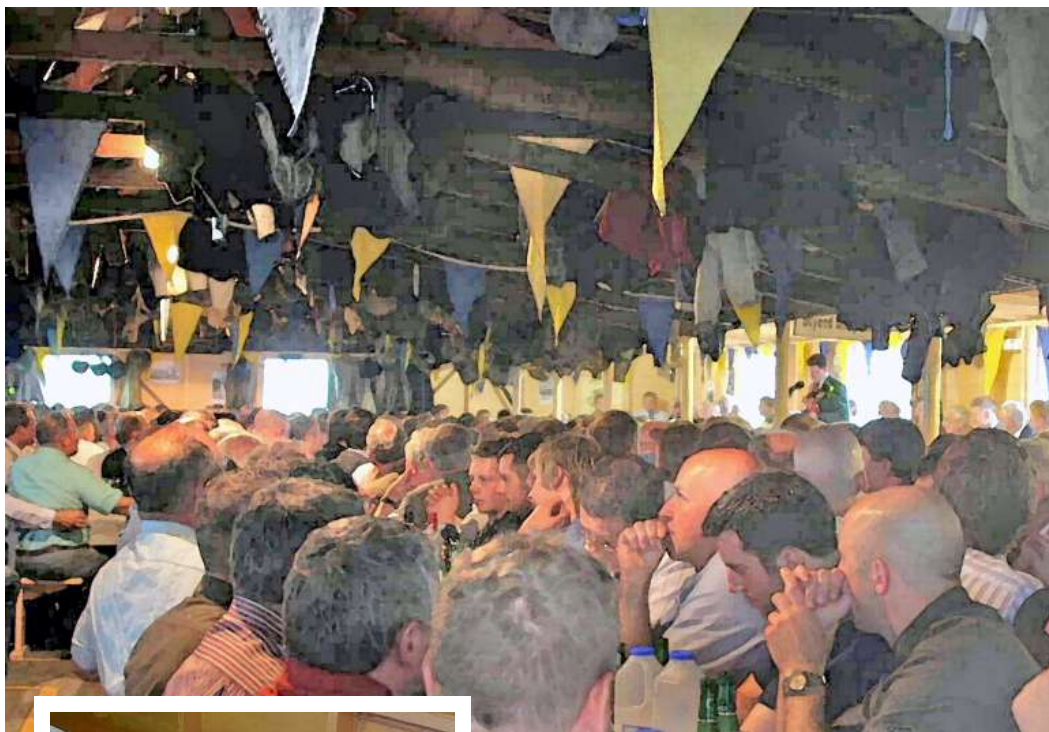
He is greeted at the top of the hill with cheers from the married men. Then it's the Acting Father's chance to carry the flag. His Cornet passes it to him, there are three cheers ...





...then he carries it round to St Leonards farm. The Cornet carries it to the front of the farm house where it is displayed, with three cheers, and remains while the Cornet is in the Hut.





The Cornet enters the Hut to thunderous applause. Once again there are speeches and songs and the riders get the Curds & Cream that was ordered the previous week.



The Lasses outside get their Curds & Cream too.





The Principals, Honorary Provost, Bailies and guests gather in front of the farmhouse where the Official Song Singer once again leads the singing of "Teribus".



THE RIDING OF THE MARCHES



The celebrations in the Hut have finished and the time has come for the Cornet to carry out the task he was chosen to do, Ride the Marches, or Common of Hawick. The Cornet leads the cavalcade of approximately 300 horses round the Marches. The flag is always at the front, riders are not allowed to pass it.



They canter round Acreknowe reservoir. Horses in single file either side of the loch, the flag always carried round the Hawick side.





At the southern most edge of the Common the Cornet dismounts and cuts the Sod with the Ceremonial spade marking the boundary of the Common.

Three cheers celebrate the marking of the boundary.



The Acting Father then carries the flag to the Mair. Returning it to the Cornet at the Mair gates.



THE MAIR

or Moor
or Muir
or
St Leonards Park

The Cornet carries the flag round the Mair greeted by cheering crowds who anxiously wait for a glimpse of their sons or husbands as they gallop round with the cavalcade.





The Cornet along with Ex-Cornets & Ex-Acting Fathers ride back round to the paddock where he displays the flag on the roof of the committee room building.



The Chief Guest then presents the Cornet & Acting Father with riding crops to commemorate their year as Principals



The principals and riders can join their families for a picnic, and catch up with friends old and new.





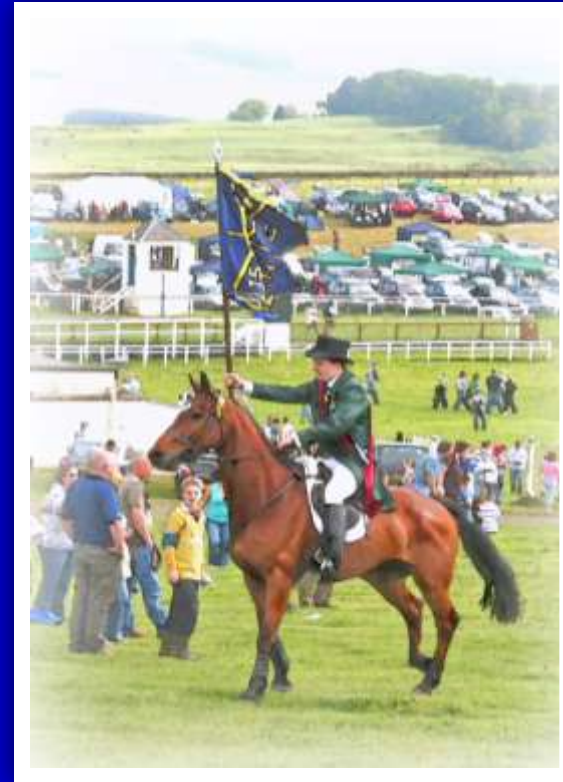
Then the racing begins,
The Tradesmen's
Handicap being the big
flapping race. Large
crowds gather on the
mound in the paddock
to watch the race.



Don't forget the
schools relay race at
12 noon!



Before you all go off
and play with the
goodies you buy at
the stalls.



At 4pm the Cornet
and mounted
supporters leave the
Mair and ride back to
the town to complete
the riding of the
boundaries

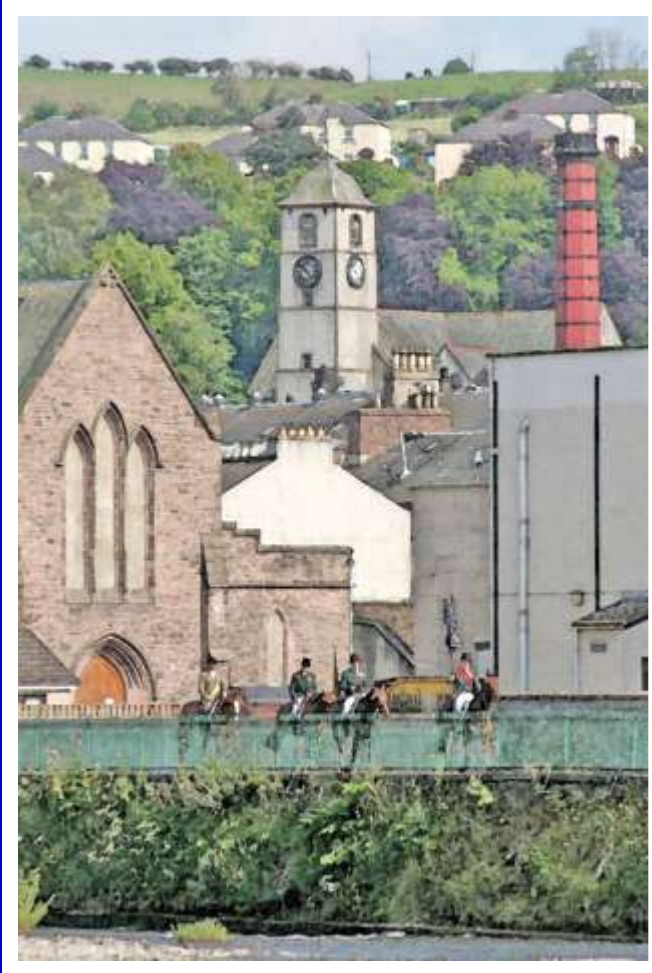


THE DIPPING

I never get
to see this
bit



Back in the town the Big Four leave the cavalcade at Myreslaw Green and ride to the Cobble Pool, where the Cornet, Right & Left ride into the middle of the river as the Acting Father watches on



The Cornet then dips the staff end of the flag into the river three times, thus marking the boundary between Hawick & Wilton



Well I didn't know that. I always thought "dipping the flag" meant they dipped the cloth end!

After the Principals gallop back up Beaconsfield Terrace to rejoin the cavalcade, they ride via the High Street and Cross Wynd to the top of the Millpath, where the riders are dismissed for the day



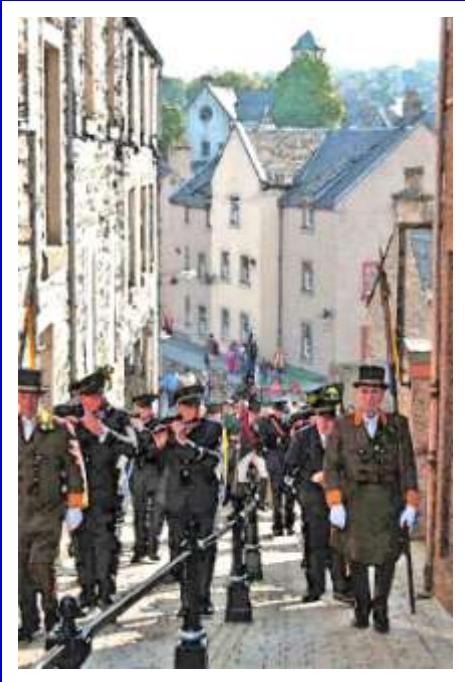
THE SONG SINGING



The Big Four, Provost, guests & Bailies then form up behind the band and walk to the foot of the Millpath, where the second Proclamation is read out and "Teribus" is sung



Then its back to the Town Hall via the Staney Brae, Drums & Fifes leading the way



The Cornet then once again displays the flag from the balcony of the Town Hall





Principals are then carried
shoulder high from the Town
Hall to the Tower Knowe



COMMON-RIDING DINNER AND BALL

Having returned the Flag, the Cornet has a short time to get ready for the Common-Riding Dinner. The Dinner is a mixed dinner with speeches and song, during which the Cornet is presented with his Cornet's Medal, a gift from the people of Hawick.



The Common-Riding Ball takes place after the dinner. The Cornet, Dignitaries, Ex-Cornets & Ex-Acting Fathers and Visiting Principals take part in the Grand March to start the Ball

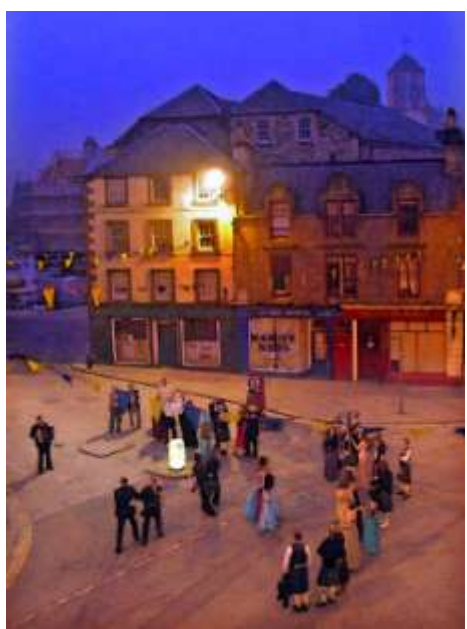




Shortly before Midnight the
Cornet's Lass receives the
Cornet's sash which she wears
for the duration of the Cornet's
Reel. The Reel is danced by
the Principals and Ex-Cornets
and their partners.



At sunrise and the
Big Four sing
"Teribus" at the top
of the Moat before
returning to the
Tower Knowe where
they dance the Reel
again



Shh! It's 3am.
Rupert fell asleep
hours ago.



COMMON-RIDING SATURDAY



The Drums & Fifes rouse the town.

At 9.30am the cavalcade ride to the
Wilton Lodge Museum, via the
Avenue.



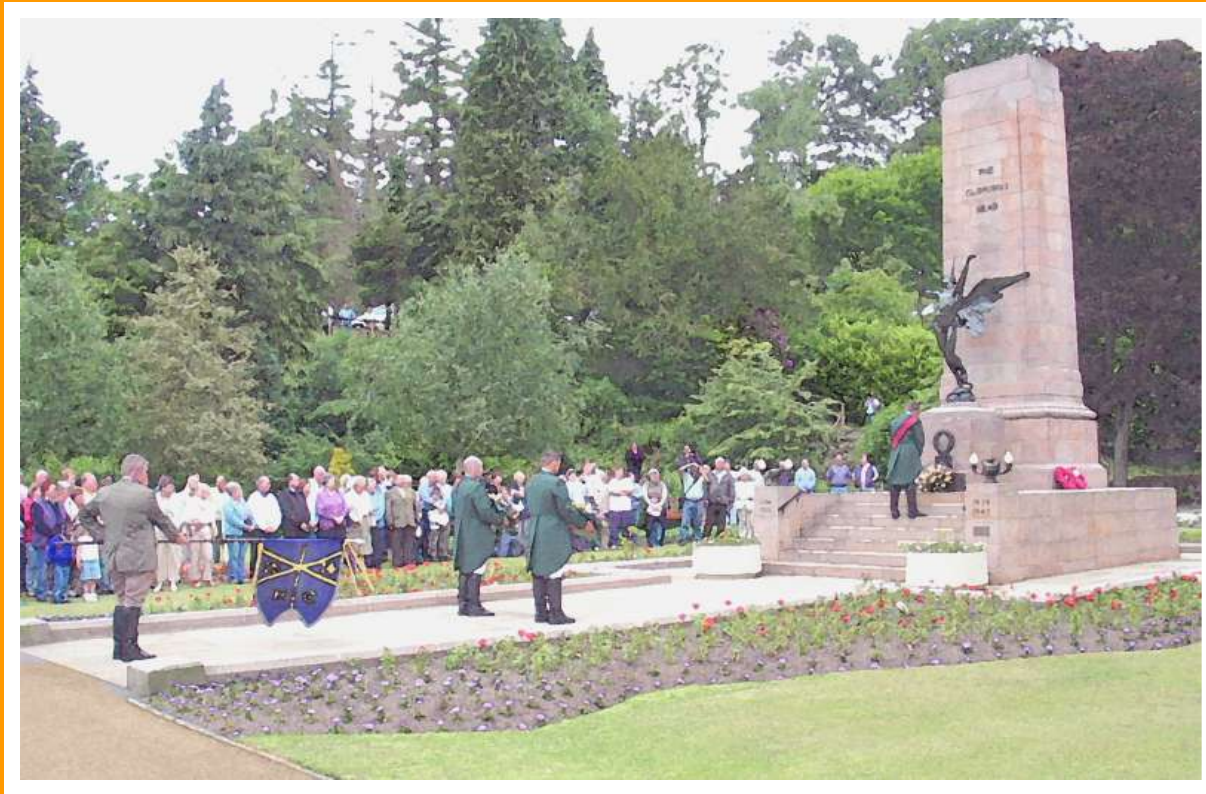
Stopping to quietly sing
"Teribus" at the Laurie Brig'.



They continue on to
the museum where
the Lasses are
waiting

The Cornet and His Right and Left collect the wreaths from the museum and carry them to the War Memorial, the Acting Father carries the flag





The Acting Father lowers the flag while the wreaths are laid, and respects paid. The Cornet, Right and Left then about turn and return to the museum





The cavalcade leave the museum and ride to the Mair via the Dukes Wood, Flex Farm and Pilmuir. The Cornet carrying the flag all the way





As on the Friday
the cavalcade
gallop round the
Mair, on the
Saturday they all
follow the Cornet
back to the
paddock





The flag is displayed on the roof again. Then another day of family picnics and horse racing can be enjoyed

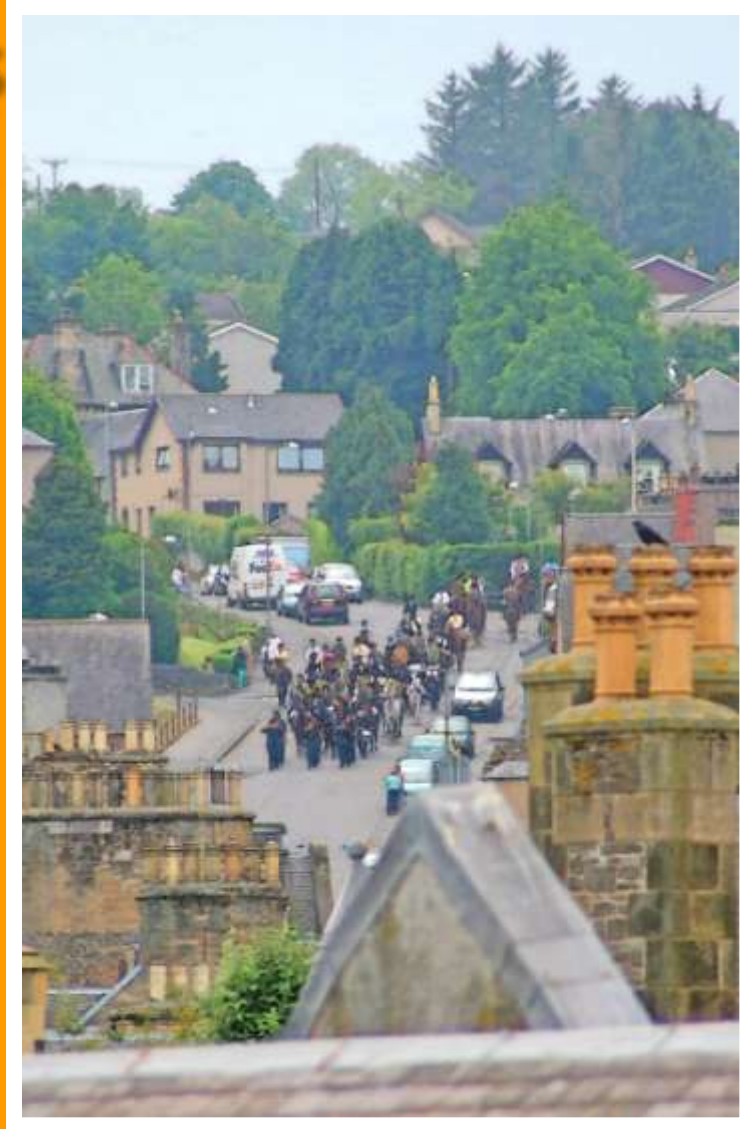




At 3pm the flag is taken down from the roof of the committee room and the Cornet and mounted followers leave the Mair for the final time. Riding back to the town via Crumhaughhill

THE HANDING BACK

The Lasses and townsfolk wait at the Town Hall while the Drums & Fifes meet the horses at The Auld Mans Seat





The flag is carried along the High Street for the last time. The Cornet dismounts and the Principals enter the Town Hall





The Drums & Fifes play
"Teribus" as the flag is
carried out onto the balcony





The flag is lowered as The Saxhorn Band play the "Invocation" an emotional tune at an moving ceremony



Only the music can be heard, even the horses stand in silence.



The music ends and the flag is raised and left on display as the four Principals reluctantly leave the balcony for the final time





Having returned the flag "unsullied & unstained", it's time for the principals to let their hair down. The Reel is danced one more time on the Tower Know, accompanied by the Drums and Fifes.



The Cornet has fulfilled
his duties, the Common
has been ridden and
Hawick Common-Riding
was once again
"the best of a'!"

The End

