

BORDER REIVERS

Anglo-Scottish Border Raids
1513-1603



Historical Booklet

Game Design: Ed Beach



James V 1513-1542




Mary Queen



Border History Timeline

Seven Border Battles

 (color-coded by March)

Lochmaben Fair

Jul 1484

Scottish Victory

Townfolk defeat rebels



Haddon Rigg

Aug 1542

Scottish Victory

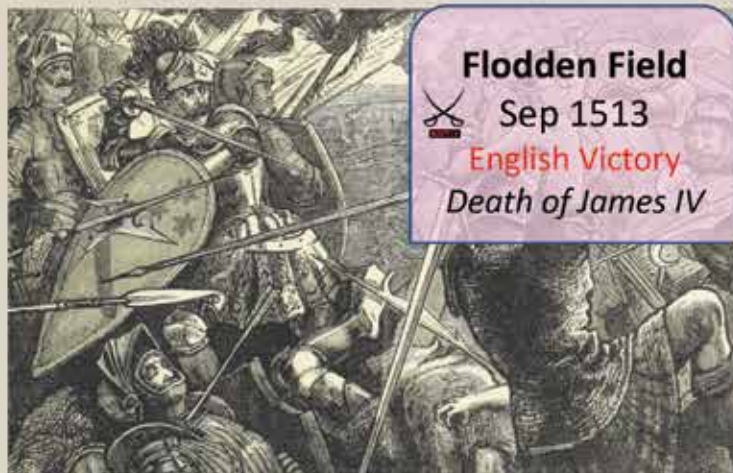
English warden repulsed

Ancrum Moor


Feb 1545

Scottish Victory

Maid Lilliard's stand



Flodden Field

 Sep 1513

English Victory

Death of James IV

Solway Moss

 Nov 1542

English Victory

Scottish army trapped

Five Key Events

Rough Wooing

Dec 1543 – Mar 1551

Forcing a marriage alliance (Edward VI to Mary)



Henry VIII 1509-1547

of Scots 1542-1567

James VI 1567-1603 (to Union of Crowns)



Mary Visits Borders

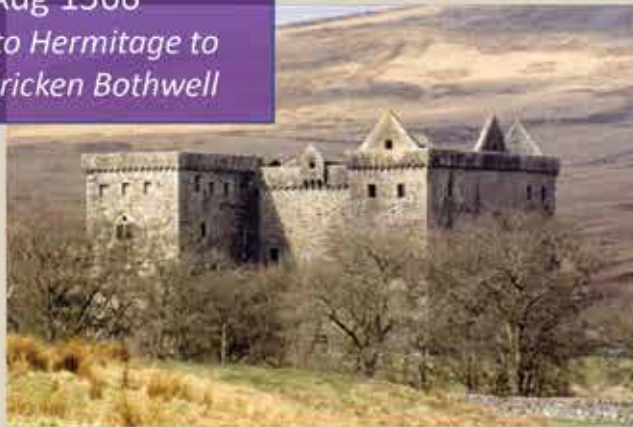
Aug 1566

Rides to Hermitage to visit stricken Bothwell

Ill Week

1603

Elizabeth's death triggers lawlessness



Rising of the North

Nov 1569

*Protestant Victory
Catholic lords rebel*

Redeswire

Jul 1575

*Scottish Victory
Day of Truce flare up*

Border Beacons

1570

*Law passed requiring
signal fires on all towers*

Kinmont Willie Escapes

Apr 1596

*Rescued by Buccleuth from
Gaul in Carlisle Castle*



Elizabeth I 1558-1603

Border Families

GREY

English East
March

Family Seat: **Chillingham**
Town: **Berwick** (walled)
Feud with: **Selby**
Fun Facts: This is the same family known for Earl Grey tea. Chillingham considered most haunted castle in England. Castle grounds house a herd of wild cattle said to be closely related to the ancient auroch.



Chillingham Wild Cattle

FENWICK

English Middle
March

Family Seat: **Fenwick**
Town: **Hexham**
Fun Facts: Fenwicks were the principal family of the Middle March, serving in numerous offices. William Fenwick was Deputy Warden to Sir John Forster and Robert Carey. Cache of medieval coins found at Fenwick Tower in 1775. Hexham Old Gaol, built in 1330, still stands to this day.



Hexham Old Gaol

DACRE

English West
March

Family Seat: **Naworth**
Town: **Carlisle** (walled)
Feud with: **Musgrave**
Fun Facts: Thomas Dacre commanded the Border Horse at Flodden Field, dramatically turning the tide for England. Carlisle held prisoners ranging from the notorious reiver Kinmont Willie to the deposed Mary Queen of Scots.



Carlisle Castle

MAXWELL

Scottish West
March

Family Seat: **Caerlaverock**
Town: **Dumfries**
Feud with: **Johnstone**
Fun Facts: John, 8th Lord Maxwell, traveled in exile to Madrid and helped the Spanish plan the 1588 Armada invasion. The long-standing feud between the Maxwells and Johnstones led to the bloody showdown at Dryfe Sands.



Caerlaverock, a triangular castle

KERR

Scottish Middle
March

Family Seat: **Cessford**
Town: **Jedburgh**
Feud with: **Scott**
Reiver: **Sir Thomas of Ferniehurst**
Fun Facts: Rival family branches at Cessford and Ferniehurst castles. Andrew Kerr introduced reverse spiral staircases to Kerr castles due to the high-number of left-handed Kerrs.



Andrew "Dand" Kerr

HUME

Scottish East
March

Family Seat: **Hume**
Town: **Duns**
Feud with: **Dixon**
Warden: **Alexander Hume**
Fun Facts: Another spelling is "Home" but always pronounced "hyoom." The Hume family enjoyed steady dominance over the East March, projecting their might from Hume and Fast castles.



Fast Castle's dramatic setting

Allied Graynes

TURN 1

Carleton



Primary March: **English West**
 Reiver: **Thomas Carleton**
 Provided intelligence (and bribes?) to aid the escape of Kinmont Willie.

Dixon



Primary March: **Scottish East**
 No fewer than eleven Dixon sites were ransacked during the Rough Wooing.

Forster



Primary March: **English Middle**
 Warden: **Sir John Forster**
 Known for marrying across the Border more often than most families.

Johnstone



Primary March: **Scottish West**
 Constant challengers to the Maxwells. Frequently served as Warden as well.

Scott



Primary March: **Scottish Middle**
 Reivers: **Bold Buccleuth**
Auld Wat of Harden
 Perhaps the most famous grayne, thanks to their poet Sir Walter Scott.

Selby



Primary March: **English East**
 The ruffians of the usually more law-abiding English East March.



TURN 2

Armstrong



Primary March: **Scottish Middle**
 Reivers: **Johnnie Armstrong**
Sym the Laird
Kinmont Willie

The largest, most feared family. Often crossed border and rode with English.

Elliott



Primary March: **Scottish Middle**
 Reiver: **Archie Fyre the Braes**
 Second to the Armstrongs in power and ability to put riders in the saddle.

Graham



Primary March: **English West**
 Reivers: **Richie Graham**
Jock of the Peartree

Big troublemakers who straddled the line between England and Scotland.

Musgrave



Primary March: **English West**
 Frequent West March deputies—unless the Warden was a hated Dacre.

Reivers

TURN 1

Johnnie Armstrong

Known as “Black Jock,” Armstrong dominated the borders in the 1520s, raiding and extorting blackmail payments far and wide. Entrapped, captured and hanged by James V in 1528. Johnnie subsequently became a border folk hero, memorialized in the ballads of Walter Scott.

Grayne: Armstrong

Sym the Laird

One of the earliest border power brokers, Sym could put 3000 Liddesdale Armstrongs in the saddle. With James V trying to crack down on the Scottish reiver lords, Sym crossed the border to offer aid to Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, an English warden.

Grayne: Armstrong

Richard Graham of Esk

During the reign of Henry VIII, the Grahams fought well for the English crown (both at Solway Moss and in the French campaign of 1544). Richard Graham of Esk gained renown for constructing eight Peels and escaping Warden William Dacre’s imprisonment at Carlisle.

Grayne: Graham

William de Lisle

A loyal Englishman serving as Constable of Alnwick Castle, William became an outlaw around 1525. He formed a confederacy of riding families, frightening authorities on both sides of the border. Caught by Henry Percy early in 1528 who saw to the hanging of William and his men.

Bonus Die for Allied Graynes



*Johnnie Armstrong
(leaving)*

TURN 2

Thomas Carleton

Deputy Warden of the English West March, Carleton was sent in 1547 by warden Thomas Wharton to raid and harass the Scottish West March. Carleton took that task to heart, stealthily seizing Lochwood Castle from the Johnstones and using it as a base for three years.

Grayne: Carleton

Archie Fyre the Braes

Archie was one of dozens of Elliotts that made Sir John Forster’s life miserable in the 1580s. Based on his name, Archie’s raids must have set fire to the hilly border country (“braes”) and no doubt he was expert at smoking defenders out of bastles, a tactic known as “scumfishing.”

Grayne: Elliott

Ralph Eure

A “fell, cruel man,” Ralph Eure led the English attacks during the Rough Wooing years—even enlisting Scottish graynes for additional riders. After sacking Jedburgh and Melrose Abbey, Eure met his match at Ancrum Moor where he was ambushed by the Earl of Angus.

Bonus Die for 3 Cattle

Sir Thomas of Ferniehurst

Thomas was a staunch Catholic and supporter of Mary Queen of Scots (the godmother of his eldest son). Feuded with the town of Jedburgh in 1570 and yet still managed to be elected town provost just 10 years later. Married Jean Scott to end the perennial Kerr-Scott feud.

Family: Kerr



*Kinmont Willie
(under arrest)*

TURN 3

Kinmont Willie

Kinmont Willie’s illustrious reiving career started at Solway Moss in 1545 and extended to his massive raids into Tyndale (that stole over 3000 livestock) almost 50 years later. His capture in violation of a Truce Day in 1596 led to the most famous gaolbreak in border history.

Grayne: Armstrong

Jock of the Peartree

After 1592, Jock led the Grahams, a grayne that never shied away from a good feud, having vendettas with the Bells, Carlisles, Irvines and Maxwells. A renowned horse thief and kidnapper, Jock was one of dozens of Grahams deported to Ireland by James I.

Grayne: Graham

Auld Wat of Harden

Auld Wat was the reiver whose wife reputedly indicated that the cupboard was bare by serving his spurs on a plate instead of dinner. No Scottish reiver of the late century caused so much trouble for the English. Sir Walter Scott the poet was one of his direct descendants.

Grayne: Scott

Bold Buccleuch

Warden and Keeper of Liddesdale when Kinmont Willie was captured in 1596. Led a hand-picked team into Carlisle Castle to free Kinmont, becoming the arch enemy of Young Scrope. Purported to have greatly impressed Elizabeth I when he later traveled to London.

Grayne: Scott



*Johnnie Armstrong
(returning)*

Wardens

TURN 1

Henry Percy

Henry Percy led a life of misfortune which started when he fell head over heels for Anne Boleyn, becoming her betrothed in 1523 without the permission of either his father or Henry VIII. Obviously the marriage was never allowed to proceed. Nonetheless he was active in the Borders in his role as Warden.

English East & West Marches

Earl of Angus

In 1514, Archibald Douglas, 6th Earl of Angus, married the widow of King James IV, Margaret Tudor, older sister of Henry VIII. Thus started Angus' busy life embroiled in the politics of England, France, Scotland, and the Borders. Distinguished himself with a victory at Ancrum Moor that halted the Rough Wooing.

Scottish East March

Alexander Hume

A stable presence for over 20 years as Warden of the Scottish East March, Hume was privy to diplomatic dealings in both England and Scotland. In 1562 he sent warnings to Mary Queen of Scots about English plans to aid the Huguenot cause in France. Supported the Catholics in the Rising of the North.

Scottish East & Middle Marches



Henry Percy

TURN 2

Sir John Forster

The longest tenured warden, Forster ruled the Middle March from 1560 until 1595, until the age of 75. Fought at Solway Moss and Redeswire, where he was captured. His reputation for under-handed dealings surpassed all others: he is said to have cherished "murderers, thieves, and March traitors."

English Middle March

Sir Thomas Wharton

Warden of the West March in 1545 when a large Scottish army approached Carlisle across Solway Moss. Wharton lit the beacon fires and mustered up what force he could. He successfully used those borderers to harass the Scottish advance out of the marshes, enabling an English victory despite the 1:5 odds.

English Middle & West Marches

Henry Scrope

Another warden with a tenure of over 30 years, Scrope was one of Elizabeth I's most trusted border guardians. He secured Mary Queen of Scots in his family's castle of Bolton after she fled Scotland. Also played a key role in the suppression of the Rising of the North and its aftermath, Dacre's Raid.

English West March



Earl of Angus

TURN 3

Sir Robert Carey

The romantic hero of the Borders, Carey trained as a courtier, diplomat, and soldier. Incredibly ingenious, Carey was known for a wide-ranging set of daring deeds that he documented in his memoirs. Famously rode from London to Edinburgh in two days to announce the death of Elizabeth I to James I.

English East & Middle Marches

Sir John Carmichael

Extremely efficient border official who started as Keeper of Liddesdale and moved up to warden. Greatly respected by the English: he was known for personally escorting Scottish offenders to Carlisle gaol. His downfall came at the hands of the Armstrongs, who met at a football match to plan his murder.

Scottish West March



Sir Robert Carey

The Failed Wardens

TURN 1

Duke of Albany

A French appointee as regent of Scotland after Flodden. Spoke neither Scots nor English and never understood the Borderers.

TURN 2

William Dacre

Allowed the first high-profile gaolbreak (Richard Graham of Esk) and took heavy losses when ambushed by the Armstrongs.

TURN 3

Young Scrope

A pale shadow of his father, Henry Scrope. Captured Kinmont Willie by violating a truce but then famously let him escape.



Duke of Albany



Young Scrope

Map Gazetteer

SCOTTISH WEST MARCH

Dumfries: The administrative seat for the historic county of Dumfriesshire—the same lands as those under the eye of the Scottish West March warden.

Caerlaverock: This unusual, triangular castle has been the stronghold of the Maxwells since the late 13th century. Put under siege by Edward I only thirty years after completion, the castle enabled 60 defenders to hold off a substantial English army for weeks.

Lochmaben Stone: This seven-foot-high, ten-ton glacial stone stands on the edge of the Solway Firth. Presumed to be part of a stone circle erected around 3000 BC, the stone was used as a landmark by reivers through the riding times, principally as a gathering spot for Western March wardens meeting for a Day of Truce.

Devil's Beeftub: A peculiarly shaped hollow in the hills above the Scottish West March. The Johnstones were fond of reiving cattle from their neighbors and then hiding their catch in this deep hollow where their pursuers would never look. A few days later when the chase was over, they would return to the Devil's Beeftub and retrieve their quarry.

Lochwood Castle: This L-plan tower house was the main stronghold for the Johnstones. Captured by ruse by Edward Seymour's English army during the Rough Wooing and held for three years. Burnt by the Maxwells and Armstrongs in 1585 but subsequently rebuilt.

Tarras Moss: A large, treacherous bog on the border of the Debateable Land. Crossable only by those familiar with the safe passages through. Used by reivers as a safe place to escape into to avoid pursuit.

DEBATEABLE LAND

This forty-square mile territory straddled the western end of the English/Scottish border and its ownership remained unsettled for hundreds of years. Instead, control reverted to the nearby riding families whose property bordered this area, especially the Armstrongs and Grahams. Homesteads established here were particularly short-lived since neither country enforced laws in such a no-man's land. Finally in 1552 the two nations constructed the four-mile-long Scots' Dyke to affirm which section was English and which under Scottish law.

ENGLISH WEST MARCH

Drumburgh: This peel tower was built in the 14th century on the site of a former tower of Hadrian's Wall. It was strengthened in 1518 by Thomas Dacre due to its strategic location near a ford over the Solway Firth.

Carlisle: With its fortified walls, Carlisle Castle should have represented one of the securest prisons to hold reivers. But not even this stronghold could keep Kinmont Willie Armstrong from being rescued by his supporters.

Naworth: Thomas, Lord Dacre, led the English Border Lancers on a victorious charge at the battle of Flodden Field. The Scottish King, James IV, died at that battle and Dacre commented that the Scots "love me worst of any Englishman living, by reason that I fande the body of the King of Scots." Dacre's newly accrued fame allowed him to strengthen his home at Naworth by building an arched entranceway adjacent to the existing Peel Tower.

Hadrian's Wall: By the time of the reivers, this 73-mile-long frontier fortification had not seen use for over one thousand years. Instead, this current World Heritage site was being used as building stone for bastle houses and peel towers being erected in nearby towns.

Bewcastle Cross: This Anglo-Saxon cross from approximately 800 AD is covered in intricate inscriptions in a runic alphabet. Measuring almost 15 feet in height (despite missing its top), the writings are mostly indecipherable due to weathering. Nonetheless, this cross remains a highly valuable artifact from this period.

Bew Castle: Constructed on the site of an earlier Roman fort, this Norman-age castle was regularly garrisoned during the reiver period because of its strategic position. Scottish reivers from Liddesdale and beyond would use the nearby Bewcastle Waste as their highway to targets in the English marches. Hence the office of Captain of Bewcastle became a pivotal role in the defenses of the area.

SCOTTISH MIDDLE MARCH

Ettrick Forest: A large, heavily-wooded royal hunting ground covered most of this region at the start of the sixteenth century. In 1528 James V organized a huge hunting party that slew hundreds of deer; he subsequently introduced sheep and most of this region has now been converted to pasture.

Liddesdale: As home to both the Armstrongs and Elliotts, Liddesdale surpassed all other locales as a lawless refuge for reiver families. Nearly 70 towers dotted the landscape. The office holder nominally in charge—the Keeper of Liddesdale—was without equal in his ability to project power far and wide across the border region.

Hermitage Castle: This sturdy, ominous fortification dominates Liddesdale and was typically the seat of power for the Keeper. Often referred to as the "Strength of Liddesdale," the castle was granted to Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuth ("Bold Buccleuth") and remained in the family until the 1930s. Watch out for the ghost of Mary Queen of Scots if you visit, as explained below.

Mary Queen of Scot's House: In 1566, while reigning as Queen of Scotland, Mary came to Jedburgh to hold court in the small border town. This stone house (now a museum)—or one very like it—was where she stayed. Mary departed hastily for Hermitage Castle during that visit to check on the injured Earl of Bothwell, who later became her third husband.

Cessford: This sturdy castle served as home for one branch of the Kerr family. With thirteen-foot walls and defensive earthworks, it was considered one of the most defensible sites in Scotland when the English attempted to assault it in 1523.

Smailholm Tower: This peel tower with a dramatic view is depicted on the cover for the game. The Scotts of Harden gained ownership of this property in the 17th century, leading to the now-famous poet Sir Walter Scott visiting Smailholm in his youth. Tales of the castle, which was attacked three times by the English during the Rough Wooing, inspired Scott to document the border times in his ballads. Scott explicitly included the tower in his epic poem *Marmion: a Tale of Flodden*.

ENGLISH MIDDLE MARCH

Thirlwall Castle: Originally constructed by the Thirlwall family in the 14th century, this oversized tower house was strengthened by stone from nearby Hadrian's Wall. Located in a strategic position twenty miles west of Hexham, it was an important signal tower to alert of impending raids from Scotland.

Hexham: This market town in the center of the English Middle March retains several structures from the reiver period. Hexham Priory, founded in 1114, was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1536 and transformed into a parish church. The Hexham Old Gaol was built in the 1330s as one of the first dedicated gaol facilities in England. The stone building still stands and now houses the Border History Library and a museum with samples of 16th century arms and armor.

Fenwick: A tower house that served as seat of power for the Fenwick family until 1475. Recent archaeological digs at the site have uncovered a cache of medieval coins and burials dating from the 13th century.

Elsdon Tower: This tower house started as a simple peel tower but was strengthened into a tower house during the reiver period. Fully restored in the 1990s. Do not confuse this tower with the nearby motte-and-bailey construction (named Elsdon Castle) which dates from the 11th century.

Linhope Spout: This 60-foot-high waterfall is located in the historic Breamish Valley, site of numerous Neolithic and Bronze Age hill forts. The waterfall, one of the top attractions in Northumberland National Park, is nestled up into the Cheviot foothills above several of these forts.

Alnwick Castle: One of the most famous castles in England, Alnwick has been used as a filming site for dozens of movies and TV series. Ancestral home for the Percy family, who used the castle as their seat of power while serving as Earls and Dukes of Northumberland. Thomas Percy, 7th Duke of Northumberland, was one of the Catholic ringleaders during the Rising of the North. Executed for treason, he was nonetheless beatified by the Catholic Church in 1895.

SCOTTISH EAST MARCH

Sir Walter Scott: Famous Scottish poet who immortalized the borderers in his series of border ballads. Always accompanied by one or more of his hounds. Said to love the view west across the Tweed toward the Eildon Hills; benches have been placed at this spot so modern visitors can enjoy the vista.

Hume Castle: Stronghold of the Hume family which was deemed impregnable until the advent of artillery. Switched hands between the English and Scots several times in the 16th century, often by negotiation or treachery. Part of the network of border beacons that was reactivated for the Napoleonic Wars: on January 31, 1804, a lookout here mistook charcoal fires for a beacon and set off the full network of signal fires in an incident known as "The Great Alarm."

Thirlestane: Originally an English fort during the Rough Wooing with Hugh Willoughby (later an English polar explorer) as captain. In the 1580s a peel (now known as "Old Thirlestane Castle") was erected here by John Maitland, Lord Chancellor of Scotland. When the Maitlands became Dukes and Earls of Lauderdale, they erected a large castle/stately home here—now open to the public as the new Thirlestane Castle.

Duns: Administrative seat for the Scottish East March, the town was burned to the ground three times during the Rough Wooing. By 1580 the town had relocated off the ancient hillfort and down to flatter land at its base. The medieval scholar, John Duns Scotus, is thought to have been born at Duns Castle around the year 1265. Duns is one of several Scottish towns to still hold an annual football match.

The Merse: Bounded by the Lammermuir Hills to the north and the Tweed River to the south, this lowland region has some of the most fertile land in the Borders. The name Merse is literally "salt marsh" or "floodplain" in Scottish.

Fast Castle: Built on a dramatic promontory overlooking the North Sea, Fast Castle was frequently visited by royals on their journeys between London and Edinburgh. Margaret Tudor stayed here on her trip to become wife of James IV, as did Mary Queen of Scots some sixty years later. Paintings of the site in the early 19th century show a well-preserved castle; sadly only a ruin survives at this time.

ENGLISH EAST MARCH

Ba Green: A three-acre field on the south side of the Tweed River; this is the only Scottish territory south of that river. As legend has it, the field was contested each year between the residents of Wark (England) and Coldstream (Scotland) through a game of mob football (a "Ba Game"). As Coldstream grew larger and won most years, the field became a permanent piece of Scotland.

Chillingham Cattle: A herd of ancient white cattle has inhabited the 1500-acre park at Chillingham since the 14th century. Perhaps descended from the ancient aurochs, these unique beasts were reduced to only 13 in the herd after a hard winter in 1947. Their numbers have since rebounded to over one hundred animals.

Norham Castle: Sited on a bluff overlooking the Tweed, Norham Castle was the first line of English defense against Scottish invasions. Captured by James's army just before the Battle of Flodden. Reinforced several times up until the 1590s, when Elizabeth abandoned further efforts to keep it in good repair.

Bamburgh Castle: One of the most photographed castles in England due to its imposing presence looming over the North Sea coastline. Currently owned by the Armstrong family who purchased the site in the late 19th century. Originally known by the Saxon name "Bebbanburg," the castle has gain further renown recently as home of Uhtred, the hero of the TV Series *The Last Kingdom* (based on Bernard Cornwell's book series *The Saxon Stories*).

Berwick: The largest town on the Tweed changed hands between England and Scotland at least 13 times before becoming permanently part of England in 1482. Worried the strategic town might fall again, Elizabeth made it the first town in England with the new "trace italienne" style of artillery-proof fortifications.

Lindisfarne Priory: Home of northern England's greatest saint—Cuthbert—and the Lindisfarne gospels, this Holy Island was the religious center for the Kingdom of Northumbria. Pillaged in a raid in 793 that signaled the start of the Viking Age.

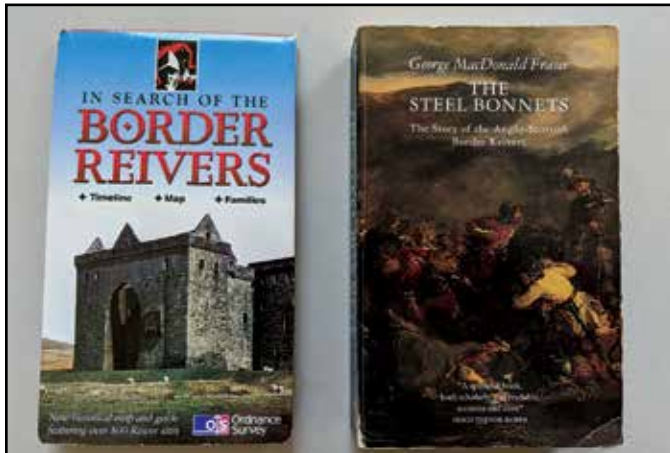
All Permanent Defense sites on the map are locations of extant or ruined castles or towers that can be visited to this day.

Designer Notes

Much of the material in these notes originated in the seventeen Border Reivers Design Diaries that were published in 2020 on the InsideGMT web site. What follows is a consolidated version of those articles that provides a detailed look at how this game came to fruition.

Getting Hooked

In some historic gift shop during our April 2006 family tour of the historic sites of Northumberland (I don't think it was Alnwick or Bamburgh Castles, perhaps the museum at the Roman fort of Vindolanda?), I stumbled upon an amazing map. The "In Search of the Border Reivers" Ordnance Survey map amazed me because it showed that the entire Border region was dotted with hundreds of ruined stone towers and castle sites. Why had they been built? What wars were these? Why did this map look like an amazing game that needed to be designed? How did this all happen during the *Here I Stand* period and I never realized it? To answer all these questions, I bought the map and accompanying book, George MacDonald Fraser's *The Steel Bonnets*.



Found in gift shop in 2006: 16 years later both are very well used!

I had finished the book before we returned home and already knew I wanted to capture this underappreciated time in a game. My Border Reiver journey had begun.

The Players

One of the unique things about the Border Reiver period was that despite decades of lawless raiding and reprisals, out of that chaos was created a custom body of international law that occasionally proved quite effective. This series of March Laws (officially known by the Latin name "Leges Marchiarum") was first drafted back in 1249, some 250 years before the most active raiding period represented in the game. At that time the knights representing Henry III of England and Alexander II of Scotland decided to divide each side of the border into three "Marches:" one along the east coast, one along the west coast, and one in the middle. A Warden would be appointed to oversee justice in each of these regions and as necessary they would coordinate with their counterpart across the border to hear grievances at a Day of Truce, usually held in a convenient meeting place right at the boundary line between the two nations.

The Marches are very unequal in size. The western Marches are by far the largest and the eastern ones quite small. But the eastern ones lay directly on the main north-south path between Edinburgh and York and thus a number of the major battles in the border wars between England and Scotland occurred directly in these eastern lands. The relative workload of each of these six wardens was pretty even.

I knew immediately that I wanted each player to be a villain and a law man—both at the same time. The best way to achieve that was to make each player a family who had stepped into the role of Warden of a March. Keeping their March from being overrun by the other players thus becomes an important part of playing well. And if you can achieve that while still stealing blatantly from your opponents—well then that makes you a real contender for most famous Reiver of all time.

So in the six-player game all six Marches are in play and each player represents a family that dominated one of these Marches for most of the 16th century. (In a four-player game the two eastern March players are dropped out but the game changes very little otherwise). Deciding which family was dominant in each March was a bit easier on the Scottish side, since it had to be either Johnstone or their archenemy Maxwell in the west and either Scott or their own nemesis the Kerrs in the middle. In both cases I picked the family that had spent more time in the Warden role (Maxwell and Kerr). And then the Scottish East March was always dominated by the Hume family. In England the choices were harder, especially since several of the key wardens were royal appointees by Henry VIII or Elizabeth I and not even members of a border family. But the Greys in the east (the family later responsible for Earl Grey tea) and the Dacres in the west held wardenships several times during the 16th century. And I decided to represent the Forsters by adding the famed warden Sir John Forster as a card in the game, leaving the English Middle March to be run by the Fenwicks.

Anatomy of a March

As warden, you must defend your lands from all forms of attack. Several elements are common to every March in the game, as we will see by looking at the English West March as our example (see the in-game view of this March on the next page). First and foremost, your family needs to have a fortified seat that they can call their home base. For the Dacres, that royal home would be Naworth Castle which sits just on the south side of the River Irthing (while Hadrian's Wall runs along the northern edge of that same stream).



Naworth Castle

Thomas, Lord Dacre owns Naworth as the game begins in 1513 and that same year he would go on to lead the English Border Lancers on a victorious charge at the battle of Flodden Field. The Scottish King, James IV, died at that battle and Dacre commented that the Scots “love me worst of any Englishman living, by reason that I fande the body of the King of Scots.” Dacre’s newly found fame allowed him to strengthen Naworth, building the arched entranceway (“the Warden’s Tower”) just to the right of the oldest portion of the castle, the traditional square, four-sided tower to the left, known throughout the borders as a Peel Tower. In the game your family seat is where the rival players attack if they have a feud against you (as represented by wooden cubes from the other players that are stored in the “Feuds with Dacre” box that surrounds the manor house graphic).



English West March

One other convenience that no proper march is without is a gaol to hold any reivers you might capture. Your gaol is always located in the largest town inside your domain. For the English West March that would be the largest town in all the borders: Carlisle. With its fortified walls, Carlisle represents one of the securest prisons to hold reivers. Carlisle thus rolls a bonus die against Gaolbreak attacks, unlike an unfortified town like Hexham, principal town of the English Middle March.

So that covers the first two attacks in the game: Feuds and Gaolbreaks. The third is a Battle where you take your mounted forces off to fight alongside your nation’s army (as Dacre did at Flodden). Battles only occur when the appropriate event is drawn. Now there isn’t a lot you can do to prepare your March against an entire invading army, but you’ll still find it important to see that you fight well in any battle that occurs in your March to keep your Notoriety high in your home lands.

Finally, we have the fourth type of attack (and the most common one): the Raid. These attempts to steal Cattle and Sheep occur against the four Farm Regions in your march. Each Farm Region in the game is typically a separate river valley (or “dale” in usual border parlance). Here in the English West March those farm regions are valleys of the Eden, Irthing, Lyne and Caldew Rivers.

Defending Your March

So how do you defend against these attacks? First there are Permanent Defenses. These are the castles and towers that were found all over the Borders (and still can be to this day—I exclusively used sites that can still be visited for the permanent defense locations included in the game). You bring these defenses online by either garrisoning an existing castle (which provides two full defense dice against Raids into either of the adjacent Farm Regions) or by constructing a Peel Tower (which provides just one die). Forces posted in such a location were used to intercept passing raiders, especially if they were detected far enough in advance that the “border beacon” network could be activated to warn of the incursion.



Corbet Tower in Teviotdale, Photo by Neil Stevens

The second option is to provide shelter for the livestock that were the target of the raid. The best way to accomplish this was to upgrade your ramshackle farmhouse into a Bastle. These multi-story stone houses had a ground floor to protect your cattle and sheep and then a steep, easily-defended stair up to the living quarters on the second floor. Reiver families would often build clusters of bastles to protect a whole region from raids.

Finally, players can develop mobile defenses that are secretly posted at their discretion just before the raiding season is about to begin. Every player starts with two tokens to represent these defenses: their Deputy Warden and a Rumor that there might be defenses (which is just used to bluff your opponents). More of these Defense Tokens are acquired during the summer buildup, the most powerful of which are the Wardens.

Border Livestock

Cattle changed hands frequently during the Reiver period. Faster and more compliant than sheep, they were easier to seize successfully. Over a thousand cattle were stolen in some raids, especially during the Ill Week period right after Queen Elizabeth’s death. We therefore consider them to be the most “liquid” of the border livestock currencies and your Cattle tally in the game is your treasury you may spend to purchase items. You’ll spend Cattle when putting cards in play in the Summer Phase, when hiring extra raiders from your Allied Families, and maybe even to pay off a bully if you get blackmailed.

Sheep were also stolen by the hundreds in the raids of the 16th century. Knowing that they are slightly less mobile than cattle, our Sheep serve as proxies for the farmsteads dotting the countryside of each march. Unprotected Sheep are left standing on the game board; whereas Sheep protected by the stone walls of a Bastle are placed down on their side. The number of Sheep in your march is a direct reflection of your economic strength, much as the square key control markers down on the board play that role in a game like *Here I Stand*. Each Fall you'll check that you have a sufficient number of Sheep in play to support the Horses and held cards you will be carrying into Winter. Your yearly income in Cattle is also a direct product of the number of Sheep you have in play.



Sheep in Blue Mist, Photo by Liz Hanson

Finally, we get to the most powerful of the livestock: Horses. The reivers rode a now-extinct breed of horse, the Galloway Pony. Born and raised in the unforgiving climate of the borders, these reliable steeds were acclimated to the long treks over rugged terrain expected of a Border mount. In the game each Horse you maintain represents more riders you can put in the saddle. Therefore, each Horse you send in support of one of your attacks provides one extra combat die. You can lose Horses when reivers are captured in a Raid and just as easily regain a Horse by breaking reivers out of Gaol.



Horse Above Hawick, Photo by Liz Hanson

Summer Card Design and Drafting Strategies

So now let's step away from the history for the moment and take a look behind the scenes at some of the game design considerations that went into the assembling the cards in the Summer Deck. Gaining some insight into how the deck is constructed is a great first step to appreciate some of the strategies you'll want to consider while drafting cards each Summer. Let's start by looking at how the different types of cards are allocated to the three Turns of the game.

CARD TYPES	Turn 1	Turn 2	Turn 3
Recruit: Reiver	4	4	4
Recruit: Warden	3	3	2
Recruit: Office	6	4	2
Recruit: Allied Grayne	6	5	2
Play: Defense Tokens	3	3	3
Play: Livestock	6	7	5
Play: Permanent Defenses	4	3	3
Play: Bastles	3	3	2
Hold: Notoriety	1	4	4
Hold: Attack	6	5	7
Hold: Defense		1	1
Hold: Target			2
Hold: Border Ballads			5
TOTAL	42	42	42

When considering Recruit cards, players should cross-index the number of cards of each type against the number of slots you have for such cards on your Family Sheet. Notice that there are 12 Reivers included in the game when you have 6 players. So that is one type of card where you can probably get an initial Reiver into play early, and then replace him with someone even stronger later. Not so with the Wardens; there are only 8 of them total in the deck. Therefore, once you've recruited one you are probably set. Unless of course you jump into the lead and expect to be under heavy attack on the final turn. Then upgrading to a Turn 3 Warden might be an excellent move.

Offices and Allied Graynes are your most flexible sort of Recruit cards with three slots to distribute them into by Turn 2. Try to set up matches between your Reivers and their corresponding Grayne; the one extra die you get per attack from such a match is hugely beneficial. And remember that those matches are listed on each Reiver card for easy reference. Unfortunately, the deck does include those two Double Cross cards, so you never can feel too complacent about your lineup of Allied Graynes.

What other cards are hotly contested? The answer to that question depends largely on which of the three turns you are talking about. On Turn 1, you need to get some kind of defenses in place before you start investing in more Livestock. Luckily there are three different approaches to playing defense: either permanent defenses, mobile defenses or protecting your sheep in bastles. For Turn 1 you can get away with a solid defense from just one of

these sources. Later in the game when the raids get fierce, you'll need significant defenses from several of these defense types.

In Turns 2 and 3 the Livestock cards are much desired since there are losses to replace from the previous raiding seasons. At times you might be locked out of the Livestock you need; in that case you can always discard a card instead of playing to cash it in for a Default Action. You'll see the number of Default Actions taken increase toward the end of the Summer when players are drafting from just 2 or 3 cards and those last few choices may not fill in their final need perfectly.

On Turn 3 the Border Ballad cards enter play. However, with strong Reivers, strong Wardens, dastardly Attack cards, and a Double Cross also in play, some Border Ballad cards may get passed several times before someone pulls the trigger and drafts each one. Look for a Ballad that pairs well with your strength in the game, whether that is a specific type of livestock, defense tokens, or a strong showing in Notoriety in several Marches.

Event Cards

The twelve events included in the game serve as once-per-game opportunities to boost your chance of success in the upcoming winter attacks. Since the event deck is randomly ordered each game, and 25% of the events will not appear at all, you'll see a unique combination in pretty much every game.

Seven of the events in the deck are Battles, one per March plus the unique battle, RISING OF THE NORTH, which occurs off map to the south. The largest such battle was that at FLODDEN FIELD in 1513 with over 50,000 troops engaged. Dacre was warden of the English West March when he led his riders into the battle; Lord Hume, the warden of the Scottish East March, also brought border cavalry to the fight. And that's exactly how battles are resolved in a *Border Reivers* game: one family from each side (English and Scottish) may send troops to the battle to serve as one of their two attacks that they are allowed to make each Winter. As one of the primary ways to gain large VP totals and insert yourself into the Notoriety contest in a March, they are almost always hotly contested.

The second type of event represents an extended royal presence in the Borders, such as Henry VIII's Rough Wooing campaign (1540s) or MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS' visits to the borders (1560s). In those rare times where the Borders actually became a national priority, the reiver lords would align themselves with national interests and one side of the border usually suffered very badly. These protracted campaigns are represented by providing dice to reroll combat misses, ensuring that in these times one nation has the upper hand. Since players are allowed to raid targets on their own side of the border, these events represent the perfect time to "pile on" and focus your attacks on the nation in distress at this point in time.

Finally there are three events that provide additional incentives to consider specific types of attack for this winter season. A good example is the ILL WEEK card which encourages the players to Feud (historically this was the week after Elizabeth's death when the Borders saw one last round of devastating feuding before James could finally restore order). Other cards provide incen-

tives for Gaolbreaks (BALLAD OF KINMONT WILLIE) and a slight reduction in Raid effectiveness (BORDER BEACONS).

Target and Warden Cards

Besides Events, the other consideration I want players to have when planning their attacks is the need to demonstrate proficiency across the entire spectrum of activities expected from the head of a successful reiver clan (also known as a heidsman). The heidsman had a number of roles to play: they were a Reiver first, committed to family second, and loyal to their nation a distant third. And if they were serving as the Warden of a March, they had to enforce the Border Laws somewhere in the middle. Thus *Border Reivers* asks players to consider all four of these roles and provides players a set of Target cards that are the tools needed to excel in all four areas.

So let's look at this table where I have mapped these four roles to possible combats in the game:

Role	Raid	Feud	Gaolbreak	Battle
Reiver	Attacker			
Family		Attacker	Attacker	
English/Scottish				Attacker
Warden	Defender	Defender	Defender	

Notice that if you are acting for your family, you have two different options: either initiating a Feud on another family or making an attempt to break one of your relatives out of Gaol. Similarly, if you are serving in the capacity of Warden, you can ride out to defend against any of the attacks that target your March (basically anything except a national battle). And your role as an English (or a Scot) heidsman means serving in your nation's army at a major battle.



To encourage players to adopt each of these roles, each participant starts the game holding three Target cards that specifically mention one of these roles: Reiver, Family, and English/Scottish. The other three Target cards primarily support Raids and Battles but require that you distribute these attacks against different target marches.

And then finally each player starts the game with a seventh "one time use per game" card, the Warden card. Instead of playing this to set up an attack, players save it for a moment when their defense tokens are caught out of place. The Warden card then lets you move a powerful defense token into just the right spot to blunt that attack on your March.

Notoriety

A significant share of the Victory Points used to measure your success are accrued in attacks. But roughly 20% of your VP come from the “word on the street,” in other words your reputation in and among the towns of the border as measured by the competition you undergo for Notoriety.

This reputation-based game is an area control mechanic where each player’s reputation grows (and shrinks) in the six marches of the borderlands and in a seventh zone: the Debateable Land nestled between England and Scotland. There are four ways to add Notoriety: two passively from Recruit cards and two from more direct actions. A player that controls the hearts and minds of three Marches at the end of the game can score 27 VP just from Notoriety, often enough to be the deciding factor.

So what are those sources of Notoriety? First the Allied Graynes allow you to place Notoriety in a geographic region (typically either East, Middle or West Marches). And then if you want Notoriety in either England or Scotland, you gain it from Offices. These recruited cards net you Notoriety at the start of each Winter—a nice steady bump even if it is accrued passively.

However there are more active ways to take the Notoriety lead in a March. Six of the Notoriety Hold cards allow you to directly bump up or down Notoriety totals in a favorable way. Secondly, your successful Feud and Gaolbreak attacks increase your Notoriety in a target March by 2 and reduce the Notoriety of the owner of that March by 1. Battles likewise net you Notoriety in the target March, this time a variable amount based on the size of that national struggle. So often a Notoriety leaderboard at the end of Winter when attacks are completed looks very different than it did during the Fall.

The Development Process

So that’s a lengthy description of key factors in the finished game, but how exactly did *Border Reivers* arrive at this point? Let’s look at where I started and how I had to ruthlessly throw away some initial designs that were not even close to the target.

My first important realization in trying to design a game to cover the Border Reivers period was that there really was no existing game that I could closely follow as a model. I’m very used to

designing games that are zero-sum competitions to control a shared map, but during the Reiver times no territory actually changed hands. A situation where the nasty attacks led to feuds and reprisals needed to be fiercely competitive with plenty of backstabbing, but I was not going to be able to frame that as land grabs and struggles for territorial control. Instead, I decided that is should be about establishing and nurturing your relationship as a reiver—and about controlling not land, but livestock. Coming up with one combined measurement that represented both your reputation and livestock wealth was easiest if everything was converted to victory points—a concept that has been in the game since the beginning.

But other problems remained. What should the timescale of a turn look like? How would raids work? How much detail did the map need? These were the areas where I iterated most heavily, in some cases throwing out early designs that were wildly unsuitable. Those first attempts included:

- A highly detailed map with 50 regions including 13 in the Scottish Middle March alone.
- Detailed plotting of your exact Raid path across the map so intercept rolls could be attempted by reivers stationed at Peels and Towers along the path.
- A 65-cell Feud tracking display which allowed any two families in the game to be at feud, even two minor ones.

MARCH		Hume	Elliott	Armstrong	Kerr	Scott	Maxwell	Johnstone	Grey	Forster	Fenwick	Carleton	Graham
Scottish East	Hume									ALLY			
Scottish Middle	Elliott			FEUD	FEUD						FEUD		
	Armstrong							FEUD					
	Kerr					FEUD							
Scottish West	Scott												
	Maxwell							FEUD					FEUD
English East	Johnstone												
	Grey												
English Middle	Forster												
	Fenwick												
English West	Carleton												
	Graham												

The Original Feud Chart



The Devil’s Beeftub, Photo by Liz Hanson

- Stratego-like secret placement of a team of reivers out to specific locations within your March (echoes of this remain in the Defense Token placement).
- A chit draw activation system to maximize the unpredictable nature of who would get to make the next attack (a concept reused by the stack of Target cards used in the Solo Game).
- Turn-by-turn selection of a specific role (Reiver, Warden, Family, Nation) where the role choice acted as a multiplier to VP scored in appropriate categories.
- Livestock used like commodities in Settlers of Catan to purchase items—even with the ability to exchange one type for another at a 4:1 rate in a market town!

Plenty of notable ideas, but sadly one problem dominated all these early tests—the game was taking too long. Full games with these mechanics were going to take 6 hours or more. That was way longer than my target for a treatment of this topic. These 2007 and 2008 attempts at a design were pushed aside—I moved my attention to developing *Virgin Queen* (released in 2012) instead.

Improving the Pacing

By the time I returned to the Borders, one key item had changed. *7 Wonders* had been released. And I had played it a lot, gaining a strong appreciation of how elegant it is to have all of the players in your game making a decision at the same time. Surely this style of card drafting and simultaneous play could be adopted to speed up play here for the reivers? So I gave it a try—and problems starting clearing up quickly. The new version (probably the game's fourth major iteration) was now playing in 30-45 minutes per player. So much better! Some fine tuning remained (for instance I needed to add in secret placement of Defense Tokens to bring elements of bluffing and setting of traps), but once the current Summer Phase was in place, I knew I was closing in on a final form for the design.

Solo Game

So were there any other late-breaking design developments? In fact there was one more—the addition of the Solo Game. Soon after I placed the game on P500 with GMT, Gene Billingsley called me up and encouraged me to consider such a mode. I was initially resistant: how could a game about backstabbing, blackmail and thievery ever work with only a single player? But he had presented me with an intriguing design challenge and I was soon able to come up with a new solitaire method of drafting that showed you the same percentage of the deck in a single Summer that you see in a multi-player setting. Big thanks go out to Mark Greenwood for his contributions to the Solo game, including running tests of it over and over. And additional thanks go to Jason Carr and Tony Curtis at GMT for supporting the Solo effort with suggestions and resources for the extra components needed.

Family Discovery

Finally, I had one additional discovery very late in the game's development. After playtesting was complete, the preorder target reached, and an artist was about to be assigned, I stumbled on a notable fact when I was poking around at some family

genealogy. It was at that point that I realized that my 7th great-grandmother was a Catharine Maxwell, born in approximately 1638, probably in the town of Minnigaff where her father was a reverend. I soon realized that Minnigaff is a village to the west of Dumfries—here was a Maxwell ancestor born in the vicinity of the Scottish West March just after the riding times had ended. Some actual reiver heritage!

Acknowledgements

The final notes I want to add before wrapping up these notes are words of thanks for all the help I received on this project. The game is in much, much better shape thanks to the effort on my top playtest group: Rick Byrens, Mark Greenwood, Steve Greenwood, Aaron Lipka, John Nestor and Justin Rice. This crew played the game repeatedly and were instrumental in final balancing of the entire deck of 126 Summer Cards. I loved how as soon as we finished one session they always wanted to dive in for another round.

I also need to thank:

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- Mark and Kerryanne Field (Border Aerial Photography) and Liz Hanson for their amazing photography of the region,
- And finally my family—Sarah, Matthew, Natalie and Brian for putting up with my sudden obsession with Scotland, Northumberland and the people that lived there 500 years ago.



Kale Valley and Grubbit Law in Teviotdale, Photo by Neil Stevens

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- Copper Beach Photography (card 99).
- Neil Stevens (several pictures in Designer's Notes)
- Various Summer Cards licensed under CC BY 2.0 (see attributions to left of each photo).

Pronunciation Guide

Family and place names from Cumbria, Northumberland and the Scottish Borders can be notoriously tricky to pronounce. With that in mind here is a quick guide to some of the trickiest names you will encounter while playing *Border Reivers*.

Alnwick: ANN-ihk

Bamburgh: BAM-buh-ruh

Berwick: BEHR-ihk

Caerlaverock: kar-LAV-e-rohk

Dacre: DAY-ker

Duns: DUHNZ

Dumfries: dum-FREESS

Fenwick: FEHN-ihk

Hume: HYOOM

Jedburgh: JED-buh-ruh

Kinmont: KEHN-mon

Redesdale: REEDZ-dayl

Redeswire: REEDZ-wire

Thirlestane: THURL-stain

And one more, very important for any traveler visiting the Border region:

Edinburgh: ED-in-bruh or ED-in-buh-ruh



Berwick Castle Above the River Tweed, Photo by Neil Stevens



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