

# Coldstream

While Coldstream is a peaceful Borders town these days, its location at the very edge of the border between Scotland and England has ensured it has suffered a violent history. Forging the River Tweed at this location is relatively easy, as armies discovered during the 13th and 16th centuries. The famous battle at Flodden Field, where James IV and thousands of other Scots were killed, took place not far from the town. This event is commemorated during Coldstream's Civic Week each August.

A bridge across the Tweed was completed in 1766 and it was over this that Robert Burns took his first steps into England. The bridge was the focus of attention again in 1996 when the Stone of Destiny was returned to Scotland over this route. The building at the end of the bridge was commonly used as a marriage house at a time when Coldstream rivaled Gretna for conducting weddings, although it has not been used for this purpose since 1856.

Coldstream's most notable claim to fame came in late 1659, when General Monck, who had been Cromwell's military governor of Scotland, used Coldstream as the Headquarters of troops including *Monck's Regiment of Foot*. On 1 January 1660 Monck led the his forces across the Tweed en route to London, forcing the restoration of Charles II to the crown.

*Monck's Regiment of Foot* later became known as the Coldstream Guards, and it remains one of the senior regiments of the British Army. A stone in Henderson Park marks the event: and there is more information in the Coldstream Museum, housed in the building once used as the headquarters of the Coldstream Guards on Market Place. A monument commemorating the raising of the Guards sits by the banks of the Tweed (above).





Officially the Coldstream Guards are known as **Her Majesty's Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards**. They are part of the Guards Division or Household Division. The regiment is ranked second in the order of precedence, behind the Grenadier Guards. This is because the Grenadier Guards have served the Crown for a longer period of time. However, the Coldstream Guards is an older regiment, and because of this, has the motto *Nulli Secundus* (Second to None). The regiment has never been termed the "Second Regiment of Foot Guards" and, when parading with the other four regiments, is always on the extreme left of the line, with the Grenadier Guards on the extreme right. This ensures that the regiment is indeed "Second to None".

Their nickname is 'Lilywhites'. An ordinary soldier of the regiment is called a Guardsman, a designation granted by King George V after the First World War. The regiment is always referred to as the Coldstream, never as the Coldstreams, likewise a member of the regiment is referred to as a Coldstreamer.

From the earliest days the Regiment had drummers and a "Band of Music" from 1742. This was in fact eight civilian musicians who were hired by the month by Officers of the Regiment to provide music for the Changing of the Guard at St.James' Palace. When, in 1785, the musicians were asked to perform at an aquatic excursion to Greenwich, they declined on the grounds that the performance was "incompatible with their several respectable and private engagements." This was too much for the officers who asked the Duke of York, Colonel of the Regiment, for a regular attested band. He agreed and from Hanover in Germany sent twelve musicians under the direction of Music Major C.F. Eley. The instrumentation consisted of two oboes, four clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, one trumpet and a Serpent. The date of the band's formation was May 16th, 1785.

In 1984 the band moved into the newly completed Wellington Barracks and for the first time since the band was formed has official accommodation. The accommodation comprises of full changing and official facilities and a fine practice room. Before this the band had no permanent residence and at one stage rehearsed in a room above a public house in Chelsea!

The Band of The Coldstream Guards has now been in existence for over 200 years of continuous service which makes it one of the oldest Military Bands in the world.