**THE ROLE OF DEACONS DURING THE PERIOD OF**

**THE RIDING OF THE LINLITHGOW MARCHES**

**Congratulations on being chosen as Deacon of your organisation.** In Scotland the title ‘Deacon’ came to be used for the head of a trade [guild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guild): one who would best represent that group and uphold their standards and reputation. You now hold that high office in your organisation and carry on a long tradition in the history of our ancient and royal burgh.

**As Linlithgow developed into an important 16th century trading town, one of the principal functions of the Marches Day was to make sure that everyone knew who the Deacons were. On the two Saturdays before the Marches Day, these important officials were paraded along the town so that everyone knew who they were. Linlithgow`s continuation of this centuries old tradition is now unique in Britain.**

**What do Deacons do on Deacons’ Night?**

1. They represent their organisation and speak for them.
2. They are paraded along the High Street - and three times round the Cross Well – so that the townsfolk, the Provost and Bailies and the members of the Deacons Court can recognise their status.
3. Following the Deacons’ Night Parade, they hold court in their chosen venue – making sure that their organisation is ready to receive the Provost’s Visitation.
4. They welcome the Provost, Bailies and Deacons Court party into their venue - **giving due precedence to this organisation** **over all others** – as history and tradition dictates.
5. They welcome the Provost and his Party and offer greetings (a few words will do) finishing with the words “Long Live the Deacons’ Court, Long Live the Marches”. (The Provost will then reply.)
6. They welcome other visitations from fellow organisations and welcome them in suitable fashion.
7. They may, if desired, lead their visitation around the venues of the other participating organisations.

**What do Deacons do on Marches Day?**

1. They accept, if so desired, along with their My Lord (their right hand man or woman), the invitation to attend the Provost’s Breakfast.

1. They lead their organisation in the celebration of the time honoured customs.
2. They ensure the appropriate behaviour from the members of their organisation.
3. They follow the instructions of the Procession Convener, the Deacons’ Court Stewards and the police who will direct their actions on the day.

On behalf of the Court of the Deacons of the Ancient and Royal Burgh of Linlithgow, I thank you and your organisation for taking part in our ancient traditions associated with the Riding of the Linlithgow Marches. “Long Live the Marches.”

For more information, please contact the Clerk to the Court Ross McIntosh at linlithgowmarches@gmail.com