

PRESS RELEASE

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HIGHLANDS GET FIRST LOOK AT WORLDS LONGEST TAPESTRY

Volunteers from the Highlands are among hundreds around Scotland who have helped create the world's longest tapestry - and now they will have the first chance to see the finished article.

Telling the story of Bonnie Prince Charlie's early campaign in 1745, the tapestry, which is actually embroidery, measures 104 meter, has taken the 200 volunteers over 25,000 hours to produce and consists of more than 10 million stitches.

The tapestry will be unveiled to the volunteers and the media on 26 July, and will then set off on a tour of the Highlands, starting on Eriskay on 31 August where it will go on public view for the first time. It then moves to Arisaig, Invergordon, Fort William and Genuig - following roughly the route and dates of the Prince's journey. (Full schedule attached.)

It is made up of separate 1m x 46cm panels, each of which shows a scene from the journey of the Prince and his followers, from the time he landed in Scotland in August 1745, to their resounding victory at Prestonpans in September.

Each of the panels was embroidered by individuals or groups from around Scotland and beyond. Most are based in communities along the Prince's route, but many come from further afield, including Australia, the USA, France and Ireland.

Highlands and Islands volunteers involved in the project include:

Helen MacLean	-	Howmore, South Uist
Christine Haynes	-	Mallaig
June Cairns	-	Arisaig
Pauline Elwell	-	Arisaig
Helen Brodie	-	Arisaig
Anne Cameron	-	Arisaig
Daphne Stewart	-	Caol
Sandra Provan	-	Corpach
Sandra Casey	-	Fort William

Helen Nairn	-	Kinlochmoidart
Norma Callison	-	Fort William
Karen Lees	-	Fort William
Johan Morton	-	Fort William
Joan Kerr	-	Banavie

Commissioned by the Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust, the tapestry will be unveiled at a preview event for the volunteers in Prestonpans on 26 July. It will then go on a tour of the Highlands over the summer, before returning to East Lothian and Edinburgh in the autumn.

The project was inspired by the famous 11th century Bayeux Tapestry, but actually outmeasures it by some 34m.

Andrew Crummy, the artist who researched and designed the 104 panels, said: "When we started work on the tapestry over a year ago, we had no idea of how much enthusiasm there would be among people to get involved, or what the quality of work would be. In both respects we've been absolutely astounded.

"People from all over Scotland and from all walks of life came forward to take on a panel - so much so that our tapestry grew from 80 panels to 104, to accommodate everyone who wanted to take part and elements of the story we had initially overlooked.

"The quality of work has also proved a revelation. Although we knew some of the stitchers were very experienced and would produce high quality work, we've been blown away by the work of everyone - even those that had never attempted embroidery before.

"Many of the stitchers worked in groups, or met regularly to compare notes, and that also really pushed up the standard as an element of healthy competition developed.

"The result has been a truly amazing tapestry which I'm sure will impress audiences for decades to come. Perhaps one day it will become as famous as the Bayeux."

One of the early volunteers for the project was Dorie Wilkie who went on to become one of the key co-ordinators. She has provided encouragement and advice to the many stitchers and has been astonished at the commitment everyone has shown to the project.

"People's reasons for getting involved have been incredibly varied," she says. "Some volunteered just because they love embroidery, while some had a family connection to the Jacobite rising or the region of Scotland depicted. For others, it has provided some welcome social contact or distraction from difficulties in their lives.

"What we all have in common, however, is a sense of achievement and pride in having helped create this incredible tapestry."

Eventually the Trustees intend the tapestry will be a key exhibit in the living history centre they are campaigning to build close to the site of the battle in Prestonpans.

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Note to Editors:

1. Tapestry Tour Dates and Venues

31 July - 1 August	Eriskay , Village Hall
3-4 August	Arisaig , Astley Hall
8-10 August	Invergordon , Naval Museum
19-20 August	Fort William , Nevis Centre
21-22 August	Glenfinnan , Glenuig Hall
28-29 August	Stirling , Smith Museum & Gallery
31 Aug - 3 Sept	Blair Castle , Ballroom
5-8 September	Perth , Salutation Inn
11-13 September	Dunblane , Dunblane Cathedral
16 September	Gullane , Village Hall
24-26 September	Prestonpans , Community Centre

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www.battleofprestonpans1745.org