P R E S S R E L E A S E

EMBARGOED till 12 noon June 3rd 2013

**FIRST PANELS OF SCOTTISH DIASPORA TAPESTRY UNVEILED**

Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop has today unveiled the first completed panels in a major work of community art – a tapestry which is engaging Scots emigrant communities from all around the world.

Known as The Scottish Diaspora Tapestry and consisting ofsome 150 beautifully embroidered panels, the tapestry will go on full display across the nation, in locations including Stirling, Inverness, Edinburgh and East Lothian as part of Homecoming Scotland 2014 next year.

Each of the panels tell the stories of Scots who emigrated to find a new life in 25 other countries including China, India, Canada, USA, Sweden, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and France.

Volunteers from Prestoungrange Arts Festival have been working with hundreds of embroiderers across the world in what organisers have hailed - the biggest community arts project ever undertaken in Prestonpans. From today visitors to the 3Harbours Festival were able to view the first 10 completed panels which have come from Sweden and Italy and are on display in Prestonpans Community Centre. The panels depict how Scottish soldiers fought for the Swedish King and in return were invited to share in the foundation of Goteborg and why and how so many Italians from Barga came to settle in Scotland.

Andrew Crummy is the design artist responsible for turning the stories unearthed into 500mm x 500mm panels for stitching back in the countries involved.

He said:

“While it’s an enormous challenge to gather together diaspora stories and the volunteer stitchers across the world to create this new embroidery, the responses been magnificent. Not only in support for the idea but in finding the images they will stitch onto their panels. It’s a delight to see the different styles of embroidery that emerge”.

Unveiling the panels, Scotland’s Culture Secretary said:

“This project reflects Scotland’s place in the world and the stories that the tapestry will tell will be ones that Scots everywhere, in this country and abroad can relate to.

“It’s a fantastic and ambitious follow-up to the 105 metre Battle of Prestonpans Tapestry in 2010 which has had some 250,000 visitors since its creation and which I’ve also seen in its full glory today.

“Clearly a project like this a wonderful way to celebrate Scotland’s culture, to educate people about our diaspora community and to give tourists yet another wonderful way to experience Scotland’s rich and varied history – during Homecoming 2014 and beyond.

The completed panels along with some of Andrew Crummy’s design drawings for future panels will be on display at Prestonpans Community Centre until Sunday, June 8. The completed tapestry will eventually be complemented by guides in relevant diaspora languages and Gaelic.

More details are available at[**www.scottishdiasporatapestry.org**](http://www.scottishdiasporatapestry.org)

**Notes to editor**

* Scotland will welcome the world in the Year of Homecoming 2014 - providing a year-long programme of events alongside the  Ryder Cup and Commonwealth Games
* The Year of Homecoming Scotland will run from 31 December 2013 to 31 December 2014 throughout the length and breadth of the country.
* Visitors from around the world are invited to join in a celebration of the nation’s food and drink, active pursuits, cultural heritage, nature and ancestral heritage.
* Homecoming Scotland 2014 is a Scottish Government initiative being led by EventScotland and VisitScotland, supported by numerous partners.
* To find out more visit [www.homecomingscotland.com](http://www.homecomingscotland.com)

Further details including are available from Gordon Prestoungrange or Arran Johnston

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