



PRESS RELEASE

To: Editorial

From: Laura Brown, Audience Development Officer

Date: Thursday, 19 August 2010

A STITCH IN TIME AT KILMARNOCK

East Ayrshire Council's Arts and Museums team are getting set for the launch of unique exhibition, entitled 'A Royal Engagement' at the Dick Museum, Kilmarnock.

This exhibition is the first of its kind and will showcase the outstanding skills and expertise of Dean Castle's Textile Team - a group of local volunteer textile workers set up in 2005 to preserve some of the interior fabrics at Dean Castle.

Museums Officer, Linda Fairlie, has been supported by Janice Trewinnard, Project Leader, on aspects of textile production.

Linda explained: "The Textile Team has 15 members whose ages range from 23 to over 80 years and between them they have a wealth of knowledge and experience in working with fabric. Thanks to their skills, some of the most treasured fabrics in our possession can be brought back to life and enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. This exhibition will feature examples of current work-in-progress, alongside completed pieces and museum collections."

Hanging in the Great Hall of Dean Castle is a tapestry that dates from around 1500. This tapestry is on the cusp of the medieval and Renaissance periods and relates back to the time of James IV and his wife Margaret Tudor, sister to Henry VIII, who received Dean Castle as part of her marriage settlement in 1503.

The tapestry portrays a betrothal scene and the Textile Team is preparing replica costumes as worn by the main figures in the tapestry, for display purposes. All items are hand stitched, as true to the originals as possible, and additional pieces are being produced for school groups to try on. Following the exhibition, these items will be moved to Dean Castle and school children will be invited to take a 'royal' tour of the castle dressed in their finery. Historical information will be provided in relation to royal and noble connections to the area and a variety of other subject areas.

As part of this project the 18th century curtains are being restored by the Textiles Team. There are seven curtains, of Italian origin, consisting of silk velvet, silk, gold braid, silver and gold threads, paper and linen.

Linda explained: "The Textile Team has been fortunate to enlist the assistance of Maggie Dobbie, Textile Conservator with this entire project. She has guided their efforts with both the curtain and costume projects."

The Team has also been busy creating Coats of Arms cushions based on the existing heraldic banners which hang in the Banqueting Hall. These have been hand stitched and tell the story of the local and regional area through the imagery. These were originally meant for use by members of the public but have been produced to such a high standard that it has been decided that they should become part of the museum collections.

A series of other smaller projects are ongoing and these will form part of the exhibition, including the re-storage of the collection of Ayrshire Needlework baby robes.

Councillor Jim Roberts, Spokesperson for Lifelong Learning, said: "The Textile Team has been working tirelessly for the last five years to bring pieces of history back to life and this exhibition is an excellent opportunity for them to showcase their extensive skills and talents."

The exhibition runs from 11 September – 18 December 2010 at the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock and will be supported by educational workshops, textile events and Curator's Tours.

The Textile team is supported by East Ayrshire Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

ENDS

For further information contact Laura Brown on 01563 578153.

NOTES TO EDITOR:

Events can be arranged in the evening if required. Any special requests for visits would be considered and appreciated.

Associated Events Include:

Galloway Consort Group - educational visits will include illustrated workshops with music played on instruments from the period of James IV, James V & Mary Queen of Scots and children will participate in simple dance and music workshops

Sir Hugo – A local knight from this period will work with children in a workshop with local coats of arms and costume from the period. Children will be able to dress in costume and learn all about what was happening in this region in this extraordinary time period

Curators Tours - Please contact:

Linda Fairlie Tel: 01563 554342 or email: linda.fairlie@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Bruce Morgan Tel: 01563 554346 or email: bruce.morgan@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

School Visits – Various dates available - Please contact: Tel: 01563 554902

Opening – Friday 10th September, tickets free, to book call 01563 554900 - Music, Poetry & More

Ends