

Souters stitch up Colonials' cast for diaspora tapestry

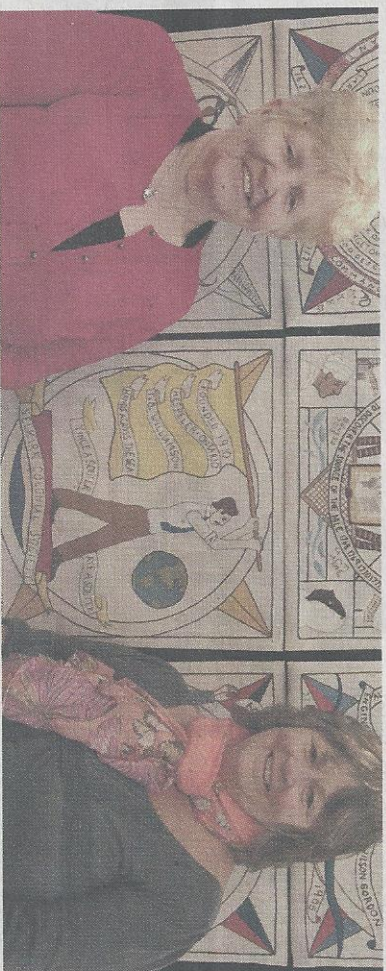
Panel honouring the founders of Selkirk Colonial Society goes on world tour

STUART McFARLANE

The influence of several exile Souters has been captured in an embroidered panel produced by a group of Selkirk stitchers.

The Selkirk Colonial Society, formed in 1910 in Hespeler, Ontario, Canada, is depicted in one of 305 panels which form the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry: an ongoing project recognising the contribution of Scots who left their native land to live overseas.

Selkirk's panel shows a man in a blue tie, white shirt, with rolled up sleeves casting the Golden Banner on a red stage. Tapestry artist Andrew Crummy designed the picture, with the help of several members of the Royal Burgh's Colonial Society, but the idea to include it in the tapestry came from a Canadian, Sheila Collins: an immigrant to Scotland from Ontario.



Sheila Lockie and Heather Beggs, two Selkirk stitchers who helped create the Selkirk Colonial Society panel for the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry

Ms Collins said: "When I discovered the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry at an exhibition in Prestonpans early in 2014, I decided to put forward my idea to have a panel made. The story behind the creation of The Golden Banner is special and the uptake by the people of Selkirk was enthusiastic."

Over the next two years the Society's panel will be included in a worldwide exhibition with 304 other panels, depicting the stories of Scottish emigrants settling as far away as Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Israel and Antarctica.

The skilled stitching using different colours of wool was

done by Sheila Lockie, Christine Brydon, Mary Hughes, Heather Beggs and Sheila Collins.

Most of the stitching was completed over this past winter to meet the deadline.

Heather Beggs said: "I thought the work was absolutely amazing. The work, variety of stitching and colours are beautiful in all the different hanging panels. It was a real passion and it got hold of me because you knew time was not with us and others had to do some stitching. I hope people from all around the world who see it get as much excitement and enjoyment out of the exhibition as I have."

Mary Hughes was also delighted to see the Selkirk panel on display at Prestonpans. "I spotted it immediately and it stood out quite nicely," she said.

"I think the finishers did a wonderful job because I had been a bit concerned about a 'pucker' in one corner.

"I feel happy now it can go on tour with Selkirk's head held high."

The global tour of the tapestry begins in the Netherlands at the end of this month before heading to Italy and France. It will reach the North American shores in 2016.