

The Great Tapestry of Scotland will be officially opened next week

At the Great Tapestry of Scotland visitor centre in Galashiels there is a new national exhibit revealing the magic of one of the most ancient and popular forms of theatre. Next week the five-star visitor attraction will be officially opened by Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Rothesay on 9 September.

The Magic of Masks and Puppets exhibit, which is on loan from the Scottish Mask and Puppet Centre (Scotland's primary venue and resource centre for the art forms of puppetry, mask and physical theatre) will be displayed at The Great Tapestry of Scotland until the end of the year.





The touring exhibit has been specially tailored for the Tapestry's visitor centre, featuring puppets from every era and culture. In keeping with the Tapestry's telling of

Scottish history, heritage and culture, Scottish puppets will be on display, including Morag the Highland Cow (formerly co-presenter of the BBC's Fully Booked) and the crawling baby animatronic puppet from the cult film Trainspotting. It also features shadow puppets from Greece, Turkey and Indonesia, Javanese Wayang Golek rod puppets, Rajasthani marionettes, giant Russian doll figures from the Rostov State Puppet Theatre and of course Punch & Judy.

Centre director Sandy Maxwell-Forbes said: "This is an exciting month here at the Great Tapestry of Scotland. Ahead of our royal opening and free Great Tapestry Gala community event on Friday 9 September, we're delighted to bring the fascinating and vibrant Magic of Masks and Puppets to our new permanent home in Galashiels.

"The Great Tapestry of Scotland is where Scotland's story begins, so it incredibly apt that our version of this national touring exhibit features some iconic Scottish puppets. By getting up close to the puppets on display here, our visitors will discover exactly why these often living, breathing and subversive marionettes are so often the stars of stage and screen."

Tickets for entry to the Magic of Masks and Puppet exhibit cost £5 adults, £4 concession, £2.50 child.



Great Tapestry of Scotland Photo Phil Wilkinson

Great Tapestry Gala Day

A free family gala day will also be held on Friday afternoon (from 1pm to 5pm) to celebrate the opening. Taking place in the visitor centre and the square directly outside it, the Great Tapestry Gala Day will feature entertainment for all ages including: puppet shows and workshops, live music, carnival style street entertainment, bubbleology, craft workshops, textile demonstrations, and a solar powered cinema in a converted caravan (through Moving Images).

Entry to the Tapestry's visitor centre will be free for everyone from 12pm to 5pm and, exclusive to the event, some of the biggest stars from Scotland's history, as featured on the Tapestry itself, will be brought back to life to tell their stories on the day.

Revellers will also be given the opportunity to add a stitch to a new welcome panel for the Galashiels Transport

Interchange, which has been commissioned by the Borders Railway Community Partnership and designed by the Tapestry artist Andrew Crummy, to tell some of the great Borders' stories.

Though it was unable to open with great public fanfare due to Covid restrictions, the Great Tapestry of Scotland visitor centre first opened its doors in 2021 to great acclaim from media and visitors alike.

The centre, located close to Galashiels Transport Interchange, was purpose built to house The Great Tapestry of Scotland, one of the world's largest community arts projects. Hand-stitched by a team of 1,000 stitchers from across Scotland, The Tapestry charts 420 million years of Scotland's history, heritage, innovations and culture through 160 compelling panels.

It was the idea of author Alexander McCall Smith and was designed by artist Andrew Crummy based on a narrative written by Scottish Borders-based award-winning writer and historian Alistair Moffat.

As well as permanently displaying The Tapestry itself, the new visitor attraction is home to a workshop space – where visitors can meet the makers, a café showcasing local food and drink, a shop and Gallery 1420, which hosts a series of visiting exhibitions. The acclaimed Magic of Masks and Puppets exhibit will be displayed in Gallery 1420 until 31 December 2022.

The centre is open to the public 7 days a week from 9.30am to 5pm and The Stitchers Cafe is open 9.30am to 4pm. Prices to view the Great Tapestry of Scotland and visiting exhibits vary.

For more information visit www.greatapestryofscotland.com



25th August 2021
Great Tapestry of Scotland.
Event.
Photo Phil Wilkinson