



In 2021 most of us returned to some kind of reality. From online buying to going into real shops, from zoomed talks to live events, from looking at screens to viewing exhibitions. Like everyone, The Nomads Tent has come a long way since 2 years ago. We refreshed our website as a portal for events and supplying goods and services. We kept our supply lines open and our shop full. We also raised for Mercy Corps, over £3800, through the generosity of our customers, our speakers and in particular from our 2021 events.

Looking forward, we already have a busy diary for 2022 including two exhibitions, four talks and a concert. And that's before the year is half done! Watch this space for music, talks, our Fringe exhibition and later events.

We hope you will enjoy this newsletter and we look forward to welcoming you to The Nomads Tent soon!



Andrew

## Spring Talks & Events at The Nomads Tent:

Saturday 19th March 7.30pm to 9pm

**Gnawa Trance Fusion With Omar Afif**

Join Omar and friends for a special evening of Moroccan Gnawa music with West African, Sufi, jazz, and blues/funk influences.

**Tickets: £10 (students £8)**



Wednesday 23rd March, 6pm

**Traditional Palestinian Costumes: The cultural richness of memory**

*An illustrated talk by Dr Janet Starkey*

Before 1948, every village and small town in Palestine had its own style of embroidery and cut of dress. During this talk, stunning and colourful costumes that were collected in Jordan between 1964 and 1977 will be on show.

**Tickets: £7, proceeds to Edinburgh Direct Aid**

Thursday 21st April, 6pm

**Hidden Treasure of National Museums Scotland revealed:**

**A silk rug with Tree of Life by Kashani master weaver Mohtasham**

*An illustrated talk by Friederike Voigt*

Principal Curator, West, South & Southeast Asian collections, National Museums Scotland

Bought by National Museums Scotland in 1899, the rug's famous provenance has only recently been discovered. Principal Curator Friederike Voigt will share insights into Mohtasham's innovative carpet making in the 1850s. **Tickets: £7**



Wednesday 27th April, 6pm

**The Persian Carpet Man: Leonard Flinn and Ziegler's carpet business in Iran**

*An illustrated talk by Mark Flinn*

This talk is based on the diaries and letters of Mark's grandfather, Leonard Flinn, who worked for Ziegler & Co. and made six extended visits to Iran between 1903 and 1943

**Tickets: £7**

Tuesday 10th May, 6pm

**The Grand Tour in the Ottoman Empire: Power, Pleasure and Ruins.**

*An illustrated talk by Dr Philip Mansel*

Philip Mansel shows that large numbers of European travellers continued their Grand Tour in Italy, by sailing on to Constantinople, Syria and Egypt. Their motives were power, pleasure and desire to visit classical ruins. This talk will be illustrated by over 150 pictures, including unknown views of Athens, Constantinople, Ephesus, Baalbek, Palmyra and Alexandria.

**Tickets: £7, proceeds to Syria Relief. There will be the option to view Philip's talk via Zoom.**





# The Kincardine Castle Garden Carpet

BY ANDREW HAUGHTON



In 2016 we set up a Road Show in the magnificent and beautiful Kincardine Castle, home of Andrew and Nicky Bradford. The Bradfords invited over 50 people to a splendid dinner and to hear me attempt to explain something about the Origins and Imagery of 17th century Safavid Garden Carpets.

Little did I know that the images I showed of the great Chahar Bagh carpets of Safavid Persia and Mughal India would set in motion a remarkable adventure. I suppose it really began the next morning, when Andrew said he had an idea. He took me to the huge walled gardens of Kincardine Castle which had once supplied food for the family and staff. I saw straight away that it was the exact layout of a classical Persian garden but with additional and rather magical elements such as the 50 metre long laburnum walk planted by Andrew for Nicky.

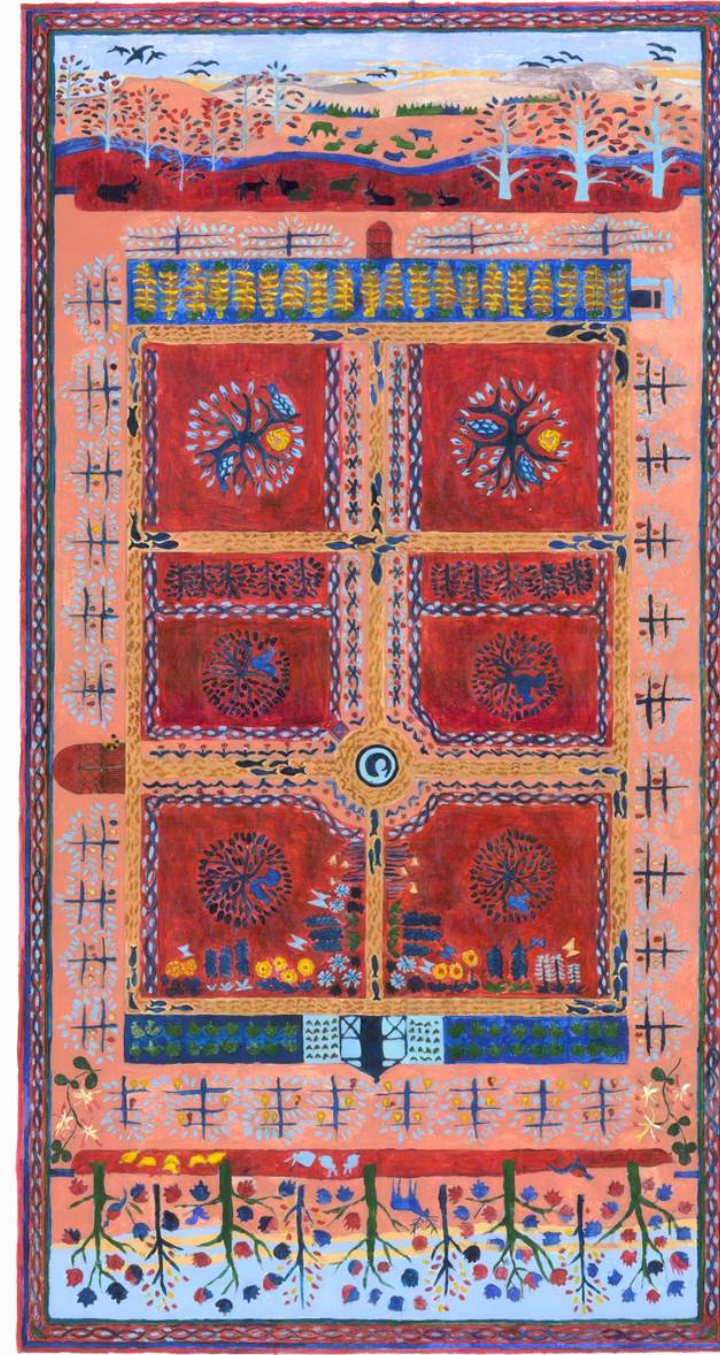
I had for many years been captivated by the subject of these so called Paradise gardens, with their roots in Achaemenid history, and the carpets that emulated them. It's a rich subject with some interesting examples, such as the vast 'Spring of Chosroes' carpet woven with silk, jewels and precious metals, surely a myth, were it not for records that suggest it did exist and was chopped up and distributed as booty by the Romans in 600AD. And what about the Taj Mahal? The supreme memorial to love and loss, which sits at the head of a great chahar bagh (four gardens). And right on our doorstep is the Wagner Garden Carpet, one of the greatest examples in the world, in The Burrell Collection, Glasgow which re-opens March 2022. But lets go back to Kincardine Castle, where Andrew Bradford had been doing some serious thinking. After my tour of the garden he quietly asked if we could make a carpet for the vaulted dining room in Kincardine Castle! It should reflect the layout and surroundings of the walled garden and be a gift to future generations.

So no modest proposal, but a visionary, ambitious and immensely exciting challenge. We had previously made a more modest and similarly themed carpet designed by the accomplished landscape gardener and artist Laura Mackenzie, measuring 4 x 3 metres. But the Kincardine dining room required a carpet over 8 x 4 metres. This was going to be a huge undertaking. We set to work immediately.

We began by meeting altogether, touring the garden again

and exploring how we could do this. Andrew Bradford supplied images of the mountains visible beyond the garden which along with a cider press, cows, deer and other wildlife, including the tail of a tiger shot by Andrew's forebears, and of course the laburnum walk, were to be incorporated into the carpet. Laura began making rough drawings and our weaver in India, Vijay Thakur, sent us colour samples. We had a couple more meetings with Andrew and Nicky, and refined the design several times before pressing the start button on the work in India. In early 2020 our world decided it had another plan for everyone and all work stopped on the carpet.

The next steps are best told by Vijay who tells a little of his background and how he managed to complete the carpet.



Preliminary layout sketch by Laura Mackenzie



**Andrew:** When did the weaving of the Kincardine Castle Garden Carpet start and how did you manage the disruptions of the last 2 years?

**Vijay:** I think we started our vegetable dyeing process [of all the wools needed]in September 2019. The samples had already been dispatched and received by you in August 2019.

Weaving started at the end 2019. But somewhere in March 2020 weavers were nervous about Covid and decided to leave work and rush back to their native places which is around 800 kms away.

They started coming in groups in July 2020. Work went on and with some modifications in design such as the addition of a COVID 19 symbol on the graph and our workshop signature in Urdu scriptbeing incorporated on the graph weaving at your request.

We engaged more weavers on this loom, announced rewards for fast work and the carpet was [taken off the loom] in the middle of 2021.

Then followed many stages including washing twice [and various trimming and adjustment processes] to give it a straightlook. This takes a lot of time andexpert skilled craftsmen.

**Andrew:** I know some of your weavers have been with you for about 30 years and you said they are a bit like a family. I also know you have dedicated your weaving practice to natural dyes. Can you say a bit about your own background?

**Vijay:** I was Chairman of The Carpet Export Promotion Council, Ministry of Textiles in the Government of India. I also tried my best to bring the entire community of carpet manufacturers, exporters, importers, retailers and wholesalers of the world together. The World Carpet Conference was held in New Delhi from 3rd to 5th November 2003 and was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of India Mr Atal Bihari Vajpaee. It was attended by delegates from over 25 Countries including Iran, Turkey, Nepal, Bangladesh, India, US, UK, Germany, Denmark, France and many other European countries and also some from South America, Australia, New Zealand etc. One of the sessions was chaired by Rufus Reade [of The Nomads Tent]. At the concluding session I was unanimously elected/nominated as the Chairman of The World Carpet Forum.



Laura Mackenzie meeting Vijay in India



Laura going over plans with Andrew and Nicky

**Andrew:** And what aspects of carpet production particularly interest you?

**Vijay:** The carpet weaving, especially the vegetable dyeing, and designing of a carpet. Also looking at the carpet as it progresses with its irregularities, some designed in the graph, sometimes weavers mistakes in designing, and sometimes changes/modifications of the motifs or lines one introduces as the carpet weaving proceeds. These are the most interesting elements in carpet making.

**Andrew:** You have woven carpets for many years for people all over the world and you said in 2020 that the carpet for Kincardine Castle might be your last big project. Is that still your plan?

**Vijay:** I wonder if I can ever give this up!

We have been thrilled to work with Laura Mackenzie on this huge undertaking. Her fabulous creative eye and sense of scale concerning actual gardens, allowed the idea of a carpet for Kincardine to become a reality. Laura has worked both in the public and private sector, in urban and rural situations as a landscape architect. Garden designs include historic gardens and analysis of the designed landscape. Projects are far and wide including gardens at Greywalls Hotel in East Lothian. In 2014 she began designing carpets.

The Kincardine Castle Garden Carpet will be exhibited at The Nomads tent in Edinburgh from the 8th to the end of April 2022. From there it will go to its home at Kincardine Castle in Aberdeenshire.

*The Nomads Tent welcomes commissions for rugs, carpets and kilims. Please contact Andrew for more information.*





# BOUJAAD RUGS

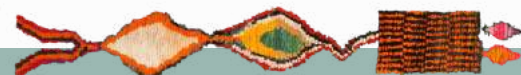
BY SUSIE BEVERIDGE



Can a carpet change your life? Maybe not but it can certainly bring you joy every time you look at it. Take these attractively striking Boujaad rugs with their bold vibrant abstract designs for example. The composition and colours of these rugs have a painterly quality to them with the weavers taking inspiration from the Bauhaus art movements in the 1960's as well as from their Berber tribal neighbours.



It is thought that the Boujaad tribal rugs date back to the 15th Century. Their popularity soared in the late 20th Century and they are still as popular today. Contemporary and vintage Boujaads are handwoven in a small region of Haouz, Morocco between the Middle Atlas and the Atlantic Ocean using natural wool often recycled from old blankets, and both natural and synthetic dyes. Traditionally these rugs were considered as a status symbol for the Moroccan people and were highly sought after for their design and craftsmanship. Contemporary woven Boujaad rugs have strong, eye-catching vibrant colours which, with age, can soften into lovely washed pastel tones, reflecting how ageing mellows energy into wisdom through experience. Owning a Boujaad rug, be it vintage or new, is like owning a work of art; the big question is do you put it on your wall or the floor?



## Moths! Detection & Prevention

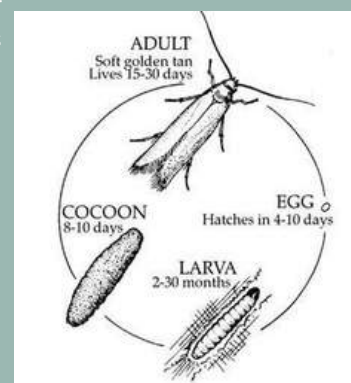
Tineola Bisselliella has a lot to answer for. Thousands of rugs and carpets, not to mention other woollen items, are destroyed every year by the tiniest little pest in our homes, the common clothes moth.

The clothes moth is a very small moth with a wingspan of around 14mm and body length of about 8mm. They are active mostly between April and October (depending on your location). They feed on animal fibres and hair, bird nests, fur, clothing, carpets and upholstery made of natural fibre or animal skin.

### Keeping your home carpet moth free:

Vacuum regularly and clean up spills or traces of food as soon as they happen - make sure you move the furniture too, the carpet moth larvae will happily live for a very long time somewhere that is dark and undisturbed. Get into the habit of checking for moths on a regular basis - prevention pays off.

The Nomads Tent offer moth treatment services. Please check our website or call us for advice.



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