

## Chaloner Carpet



9.13

THIS IS A GREAT OBJECT TO LOOK AT WITH CHILDREN AS THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS TO SPOT.

Notes from ?

'The Chaloner Carpet' [Reg. no. 9-138] was one of the first carpets made in England using the 'knotting' technique. It measures 562cm by 224cm (18ft 6in by 7ft 4in).

The technique of knotting individual woollen threads into a woven fabric (in this case hemp), was developed in Asia (as in the imported carpet in the portrait of Elizabeth Vernon), but was also developed on the Continent from the 12th century.

Previously most carpets in England and Scotland had been embroidered, or tapestry-woven like Burrell's 'Luttrell Table Carpet' (not currently on display).

It is thought that professional foreign carpet makers, perhaps from Flanders (present-day Belgium), made this carpet around 1600 for Sir Thomas Chaloner (1561-1615) of Steeple Claydon, Buckinghamshire and Guisborough, Yorkshire. Chaloner was favoured at the Courts of both Queen Elizabeth and James VI and I. He was appointed tutor to Henry, Prince of Wales in 1603 and also became manager of the estate of King James's wife, Anne of Denmark (see the red silk embroidered skirt panel on display in the Embroidery Room, which appears similar to the curtains in the portrait of Elizabeth Vernon, and which is traditionally supposed to have belonged to Anne of Denmark).

The carpet was saved from export and purchased for the collection by the Burrell Trustees in 2000, with the aid of grants from The Art Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The pattern on the centre of the carpet repeats six times.

It consists of intertwined stems of a plant from the cucumber family, incorporating leaves, flowers and fruits (gourds?).

At this time, botanical drawings and prints were available, and may have been used as a graphic source for this design.

Within the stems can be found birds, butterflies, caterpillars, dragonflies, snails and snakes (it's fun to look for these).

The border, a classical round-arched arcade supporting grape-bearing vines, 'controls' the chaos of the central panel. We know that Sir Thomas Chaloner was interested in the Natural World, so this was a very appropriate design for him.

[You could possibly also mention 'The Lochleven Hangings' as a Scottish example of professional embroidery of the period, made late 16th or early 17th century and associated with the House of Lochleven, built around 1545 by the Earls of Morton.]

Contributor: Wilma Robinson

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Info from another Guide's Tour ??

Pillar Carpet     English

Thomas Chaloner     1559/61 – 1615     Elizabeth died 1603.

Thomas Chaloner travelled to Italy in the late 1500s. He saw alum being produced in the Papal States, which had a monopoly on production of this substance. Alum had many uses in medieval times. The most common were for curing leather and it was essential in the cloth industry for fixing dyes in material. Chaloner realised that the rock that was being used was identical to rock found near his home in North Yorkshire. He secretly brought some of the Popes workers back to England and began to develop the industry in Yorkshire. This is said to have greatly reduced the Papal income.

Pattern of intertwining vines bearing large leaves, large yellow flowers, and gourd like fruits.

Thomas Chaloner was a naturalist.

Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign he was sent to Scotland as an ambassador to the Court of James VI, at the insistence of Sir Robert Cecil (son of Wm.Cecil, Lord Burghley).

He became a great favourite and attended James on his journey to take possession of the English.

Became private estate manager and financial adviser of the king's wife Queen Anne of Denmark.

James appointed him governor of his eldest son, Henry, Prince of Wales in 1603.

As part of his services, he was in charge of the 420 servants in the Princes household and paid very well.  
The tradition of royal New Years gifts - The carpet was possibly a New Years gift from James. Possibly even given when James was still only king of Scotland?  
Prince Henry died of typhoid in 1612 at the age of 18.

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Notes from Tour by Morna Mathers 22/6/12.

Commission – My garden in summer. Butterflies, moths, grapes, snakes, caterpillars, dragonflies.

Birds chasing dragonflies/moth. Garden birds? Pheasants/grouse?

How many marrows? oranges? pineapples?

Pillars along border would have hung down the sides of the table.

The red carpet of the day. ONLY stood upon on VERY special occasions. Craftsmen imported from Holland? Flemish?

Tufted knotted wool pile on a hemp backing. 'Discovered' by family in original house in Yorkshire in 1999. Sold to overseas buyer-export licence denied.

Campaign to keep it- money raised – help.

Contributor: Wilma Robinson