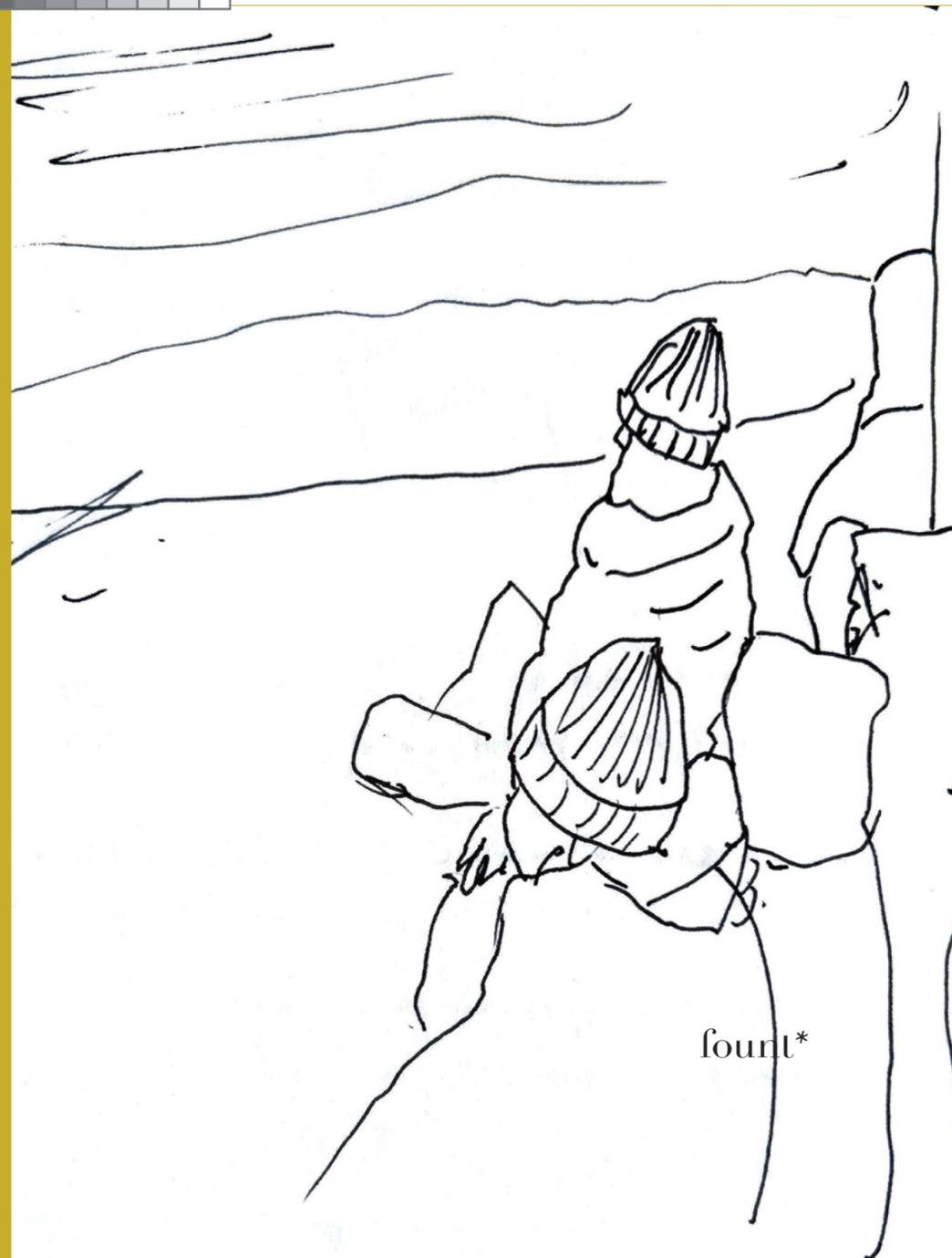


fount

From Source to Production Contemporary & Historical Creative Output and Cultures of Rural and Remote Scotland.

Summers in Scotland | Postcards of Perthshire & The Picture Letter
Community, The Land & Language | Sgriòbh & The Magic Mountain Festival
Climate Change | Climate Café & Hopeful Futures



fount*

*found in Scots, a spring, a source or a fountain, and a variant of font—a box or set of letters in one size and style creating a typeface.



Front Cover
Sketchbook Page, 2025. Image,
Louisa Preston



Back Cover
Sketch, 'An audience at one of the
Magic Mountain Festival events',
2025. Image, Louisa Preston.

fount magazine locates and highlights creative practices in a range of arts disciplines situated in remote and rural Scotland.

fount explores the relationships in and between the creative processes involved in contemporary cultural production and the localised and global community efforts to sustain economies, cultures and the environment.

fount is seeking contributions for future issues
To enquire about making a submission or for more information email
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► www.waspsstudios.org.uk

V&A Museum Collections
► www.vam.ac.uk

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To enquire about making a submission or for more information please email:
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This issue of *fount* is the second of three issues associated with the research project titled 'Contemporary Art-Publishing Ecosystems of Remote and Rural Scotland' funded by the Carnegie Trust Research Incentive Grant, 2024-2025. For more information on this project and to download a PDF file of this magazine to read or to print at home, visit www.researchtown.uk

This issue of *fount* can also be printed at the Making Publics Press in ATLAS Arts, Portree, Isle of Skye.

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came away with a long list of books on the subject that people involved in the Climate Café felt were important for their understanding of climate change and sustainability to them and to their interests. These include titles by well-known scientists, ecologists and geologists, and economists. The list is long and I include the bibliographic details in the Bibliofile section of this issue (p.19), with thanks to the people who suggested them at this Climate Café event. I was struck by how useful it was to discuss what can feel, to me at least, to be quite abstract ideas around climate change in a more focussed way by talking about these books and how for the selectors of them they helped with their thinking around how to go about tackling this issue for them and for their community and, well for all of us.

Moving from how published books inspire us, give us hope and help to inform us about what we could practically do about climate change in our community, a separate event happening that day, was in Inverness in the WASPS Creative Academy (www.waspsstudios.org.uk/space/inverness-creative-academy/). Hopeful Futures was a weekend gathering which aimed to highlight hopeful initiatives happening in the highlands and islands for the benefit of the community and the environment. Themes of local activism, cultivating community and the question “what’s in our power” were the order of the day with a zine workshop and a publication making event called the Hopeful Highlands Hack 2024. The Hopeful Highlands Hack was a publication that was generated from crowdsourced content forming a directory of the local groups and initiatives

working on community owned projects, social enterprises and nature restoration, all organised by Circus Artspace (www.circus.scot) and brought together on the day by the power of the people in attendance and the Making Publics Press. The Making Publics Press is organised by ATLAS Arts in the Isle of Skye. They have a mobile perfect binding machine, the perfect size to fit on the proverbial kitchen table, which had been driven over in the boot of a car to Inverness for the weekend. The cover was designed by [Maddie Lennon](#) (@maddielennoncantdraw) and printed on a risograph machine on the site of WASPS studios which is run by the Isle of Riso Studio. The cover and bundled pages were printed and ready to be bound and each of us in attendance had the opportunity to go and bind their own copy.

In case you want to know more about this Hopeful Highlands Hack or indeed contribute to the future edition of the publication, you can visit this website: [www.https://sites.google.com/view/hopeful-highlands-hack/](https://sites.google.com/view/hopeful-highlands-hack/).

Directory

Making Publics Press

ATLAS Arts
PO Box 6318
Portree,
Isle of Skye
IV51 0AF
► www.atlasarts.org.uk

The Atholl Gallery

6 Atholl Street, Dunkeld, Perthshire
PH8 0AR
Mon-Sun, 11.00 - 17.00
► www.athollgallery.co.uk

Birnam Arts

Station Road
Birnam
Dunkeld
PH8 0DS
Tel: 01350 727 674
► www.birnamarts.com

Birnam Studio / Gallery

Tower Buildings
Station Road
Birnam
Dunkeld
Perthshire
PH8 0DS
► www.mridulabasi.co.uk

The Birnam Reader Bookshop

Station Road
Birnam
PH8 0DS
► www.facebook.com/thebirnamreader/

The Blue Magpie

1a Brae Street
Dunkeld
► www.facebook.com/BraeStDunkeld

The Bridge

Community Newsletter
► www.dunkeldandbirnamnews.co.uk

Circus Artspace

► <https://www.circus.scot>

Climate Café, Dunkeld & Birnam

► <https://www.climate.cafe/climate-cafes/climate-cafe-dunkeld-birnam/>

Highland Zine Bothy

► <https://www.zinebothy.uk>

Isle of Riso

► <https://isleofriso.bigcartel.com>

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Photograph of sketchbook pages from the Magic Mountain Festival, 2025. Image, Louisa Preston.



Sketches of the covers of recommended books discussed at the Climate Café, Dunkeld & Birnam Unplugged event, 2025. Image, Louisa Preston.

Climate Café & Hopeful Futures...

Climate Café organised a week of events in September 2024 to coincide with #ScotClimateWeek. Dunkeld & Birnam Unplugged was about “celebrating community climate action, with #ClimateCafe pop up spaces, walks, events and workshops during #ScotClimateWeek” and organised by Jess Pepper who is the founder and director of Climate Café. I saw the advert for the week of events on the Birnam Arts noticeboard and decided to go along to find out more.

Climate Café is a community led and focused initiative which aims to create and foster group discussions in the local communities they take place in on the topic of climate change. Everyone is welcome to join in the meetings which are very informal. The meetings are not attached to any political party and are also not for profit. Each meeting can last from ninety minutes to two hours depending on the session and the session organiser (www.climate.cafe)

Climate Café in Dunkeld and Birnam is situated in the old surgery building in Birnam.

Several events were scheduled each day during #ScotClimateWeek, 2024, including an update on Scotland’s Climate Change Plan, community nature walks, talks on water efficiency and local business initiatives towards tackling the effects of climate change (www.climate.cafe/event/

[unplugged/](#)). The first event I went to was about a Riverwoods project in Perthshire. I heard (and have since read) about this project which aimed to test a concept of Nature-Finance, meaning “funding for nature-recovery” (Almond Headwaters - Riverwoods Investment Readiness Pioneer Final Project Report June 2024). In Scotland our Nature Capital, which is “the extent and quality of nature in the landscape” is very low. There is broad agreement amongst, Scottish, UK and International data collected that there is a “need to fund nature recovery, urgently and at scale”. This is because nature recovery is essential for helping to reverse climate change and the resources such as “soil and water health” (Almond Headwaters - Riverwoods Investment Readiness Pioneer Final Project Report June 2024: 3).

Riverwoods is the name for the areas of land alongside the

riverbank with woodland on them, also known as riparian woodland. This project was focussed on the area of the Almond River headwaters which are situated on three privately owned Perthshire estates: Glenalmond, Auchnafree and Ardtalnaig which collectively cover approximately 9,000 hectares of land. The project was developed by the Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust and funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. It had three aims: to plan for new nature areas that the estates would like to host; to create plans by local enterprises to fund new nature areas; and to gather the thoughts of people living locally on possible changes brought in by nature finance.

The second climate café event I went to was focused on books about sustainability with the aims for the discussion to be around hopeful perspectives towards climate solutions. I

editorial

What is community? How does publishing as a process and the publication artefact connect community and communities? These are a few of the questions that lie at the heart of this third issue of *fount*—the second *fount* issue connected with research conducted for the project, ‘Art-Publishing Ecosystems of Remote and Rural Scotland’, supported by a Carnegie Trust Research Incentive Grant.

Linked to community is of course the land that people are living on and with. Concerns about the environment and our effects of living in it, on it and from it are apparent in this issue of *fount* related to concerns over land use. Tourism has long been a feature of Scotland’s history as illustrated by postcards, a publication for tourists of Scotland to buy for sending messages to friends and family members at home (pp. 6–9). The railway connected people seeking to holiday in the countryside in Birnam and communities along the track as far north as Thurso and Wick. Scotland’s connection with England surfaces not just through the tourism present in the historical postcards but also today. Issues around second home ownership have been reaching fever pitch in recent years for communities in the Isle of Skye as well as Birnam and Dunkeld extending to areas across Scotland.

Land use and community relating to the Gaelic language and associated historical and cultural understandings of Scotland which are being re-discovered are explored in this issue through a feature on two festivals in the Isle of Skye: the Magic Mountain Festival, an outdoor cultural festival based in Portree and the bilingual Literary Festival, Sgrìobh in Kilmuir, Trotternish (pp.10–15). Sgrìobh promotes Scottish Gaelic and community through gathering people together to celebrate writing and the written word in English and in Gaelic in contemporary times.

Lastly, the themes alluded to above of land use and community also relate to issues around climate change affecting the local environment. A feature on the Climate Café in Birnam, a week-long series of events (organised by Jess Pepper) and a separate event ‘Hopeful Futures’ in Inverness (organised by [Highland Zine Bothy](#) and [Circus Artspace](#)) demonstrate considered local community action towards some bigger issues affecting us nationally and globally (pp.16–17). Through the discussion of published books as recommended reading by members of Climate Café, Dunkeld & Birnam, and hands-on community publication making at the Hopeful Futures event, local groups are highlighted which are helping to create more sustainable communities in Perthshire and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Through these features, the ways in which publishing and publications (such as the zine, the postcard, the self-published title, the literary festival and the poetry workshop) help to uncover and explore some connections between land use, community, language and culture. This issue of *fount* also invites you to reflect on the opportunities for economic, environmental and cultural sustainability that publishing and publications have for people living in the communities and the wider networks that these publications circulate in and are created by.

Welcome to *fount** you may find more than you first expect!

* *fount* in Scots, a spring, a source or a fountain, and a variant of *font* – a box or set of letters in one size and style creating a typeface.

Summers in Scotland: Postcards and the Picture Letter



Photograph taken from the top of Ben Lomond, 2025.
Image, Louisa Preston.

Connecting with some of the issues around tourism today for people living in remote and rural parts of Scotland, this feature highlights the arrival of tourism in the Victorian age—with the train station at Birnam and Dunkeld and other stations along the track.

The railway connects the focus of this feature on postcard publications and their use—as a means of sending greetings to friends or relatives of people touring around Scotland on their holidays, as well as advertising for hotels and businesses and collectors items—with today's Birnam Arts.

Birnam Arts, as I mentioned in the previous issue of *Fount* (2025: 12), was founded by the train station master John Kinnaird who gathered the funds required to build the original part of the building that is Birnam Arts.

sheet of A3 paper, and folded them down. These were then given to another table who personalised the zine by adding some stamps to the screen printed side and colouring in bits. The finished zines were then passed to the table with people making the belly bands and completed with a number on the back e.g. 1/100 etc.

An artist living on Skye was setting up the screen printing and facilitating that part of it. She was part of the reason that Max from Isola Press was there at Magic Mountain giving a talk the next day on their books. By the time we finished the zine making, it was time to go for dinner. We made our way to the Skye Gathering Hall and ordered some food which was good to do as those that ordered food after Jenny Graham's talk were still waiting on it until 9pm. Jenny Graham spoke of her amazing round-the-world cycle journey, for which she held the Guinness Record for 6 years. It was great to hear her talk about this experience.

On Sunday morning, I felt refreshed after going to bed earlier than I did on Friday. I headed up to Third Ridge for 10am. There were more amazing pastries made by the Bog Myrtle Café, I mentioned earlier. I got straight into a tote making bag session led by the owner of ShelterStone bags. Because I am so bad at sewing and I needed to finish my bag, I didn't get to see the Isola Press talk.

With my newly made tote bag in hand and the feeling of achievement with it, I went to see Col Gordon talking about how we might revisit the lost meanings of the Gaelic language, which is intertwined with the land, to move forward in a more

sustainable and peaceful way with each other and with the land. This really struck me as important for the environmental aspects of community, located in Skye, but which has relevance to concerns internationally. Col is a farmer of Skye, and has made a podcast called 'Landed'. For a future issue of *fount* I hope to find out more about his work.

After these events at the Third Ridge, it was time to head over to Las, a cinema and arts space named after the Scottish Gaelic word for kindle, light, ignite, for the film screenings. I had some lunch in the café. A film screening was shown of *Twa Double Doubles* by Douglas Tyrell. In part a documentary the film focuses on the musicians Norman and Corrie of the band Peatbog Faeries who went to Shetland, the home place of one of the musicians in the search for some lost fiddle music which was never written down. The film was an amazing glimpse at the Norse connections and history for Shetland and the culture there around music and dancing. It was also part fiction with the myths connected to a fiddle player who is asked to go and play music in a cave and when he returns its one hundred years later and his family are all gone. This was connected to how one of the musicians felt about playing their music in the city of Glasgow or elsewhere—where it's all fun and dancing—but when he returns to Shetland all his family are older and there are new members all grown, and he's missed that part of life as a cost of doing his music.

The final talk was by the Adventure Syndicate who discussed their new endurance adventure event called the Tour de Farce. This was especially inspiring to see these women

dedicated to encouraging endurance events in a way which is more equitable and accessible as well as environmentally considerate. One of the rules of the event for example, is that there is a time penalty for each snack wrapper from snacks consumed during each leg, which encouraged the cyclists to look for more sustainable unpackaged snacks! When I asked how to get into this type of endurance sport before committing to a four day long event like this, they recommended The Racing Collective and Sisters in the Wild as groups which support getting into endurance events.

To find out more about Sgrìobh visit:
<https://sgriobh.scot>

To find out more about Magic Mountain Festival visit their Instagram account for the latest updates: [@magic_mtn](https://www.instagram.com/magic_mtn)

» » attached to small holds or only had small holding places to lift them by. It was a bit like a sword in the stone moment, where people were trying to do what seemed unachievable to my untrained experience!

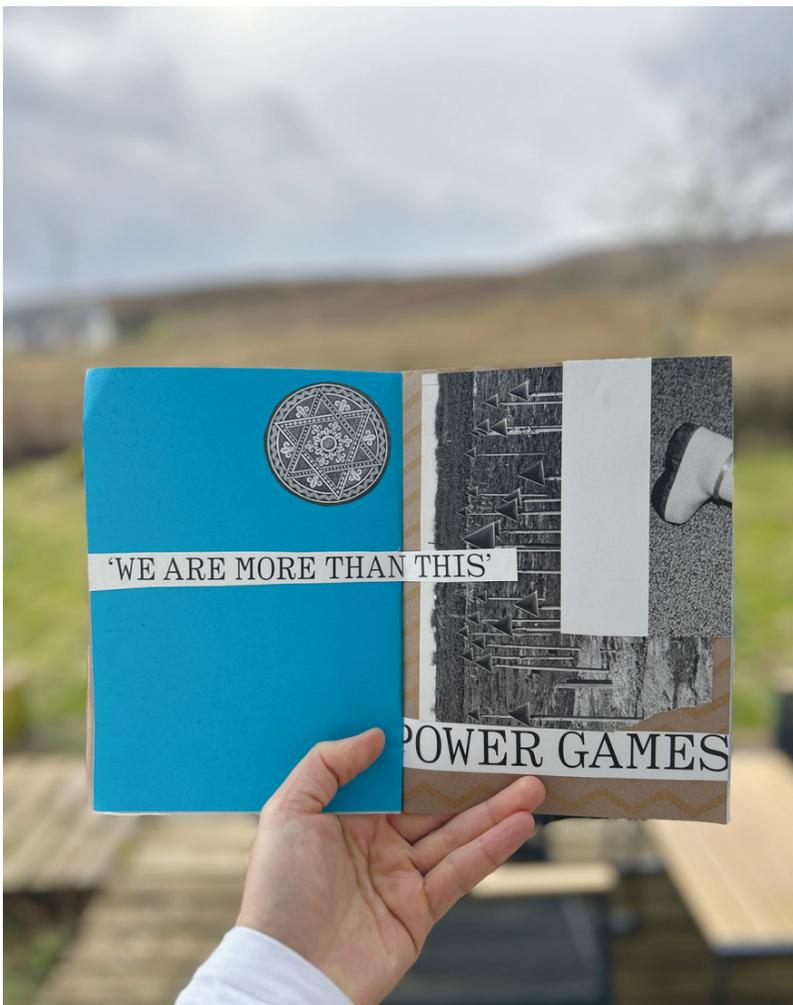
The long awaited Print Power Workshop began and there was a lot of us in the room. Sixty people were collectively going to print, trim, glue, fold, personalise, band together with a belly band and stamp an edition of 200 zines. I think any sense of trying to limit the attendance to this workshop felt exclusionary and, an everyone who wants to join attitude took over which felt fun.

The zine we collectively produced is called Vara, meaning 'be'. The premise is that Strava (meaning Strive), the well-known biking, running and hiking tracking app made the author of the zine just feel very bad as he got older. The idea with the zine is to get away from the numerical and quantitative data representing exercising outside and instead focus on the experience of being outdoors, the physical and emotional sides of the run, bike or hike in the wild. The zine contains riffs on Rapha the well known cycling brand, and encourages you to 'plot the feels' in a bootleg print version of Strava. The zine folds out in a concertina format which mimics the scrolling effect as you open out the long thin strip with the content set left to right along the short width of the panel.

The experience was highly sociable and enjoyable. I started at the table with the guillotine where we were to slice up the A3 page which was risograph printed on one side and had been screen printed during the print power workshop on the other side. We then glued together two strips x 2 to make the two zines out of one



Above and below: Photographs of sketchbook pages from zine made by Louisa Preston at the Magic Mountain Festival 2025. Images, Louisa Preston.



I found two publications while perusing the shop at Birnam Arts one day in August 2024. Both pamphlet style publications are by David and Ian Robertson and both were published by The Friends of Perth & Kinross Council Archive. The first publication, *A Postcard from Perthshire*, was published in 2013 and the second, *The Story of Perthshire Postcard* was published ten years later in 2023 (see the Bibliofile, p.19 for details). The authors came to realise the richness of historical postcards for their project on 'Lost Gardens of Perthshire' for providing them with the information of how these gardens once looked. At that realisation they decided that these postcards could be interesting for a wider audience of people interested in knowing what life was like for people living in Perthshire in the 1900s (Robertson and Robertson, 2013: 1).

Plain postcards had been used in Britain since around 1870 for people to write and send messages and communications at a time before the telephone became more widely available. The picture postcard as we know it was invented in Paris to mark the occasion of the opening of the Eiffel Tower in 1889 at the Paris Exhibition (Robertson and Robertson 2013: 2). It took ten years

for Britain to allow the production of continental sized picture postcards. The Post Office was reluctant to allow the production of picture postcards by private companies but they eventually bowed to commercial demands, which led to the 'golden age of the picture postcard', between 1900 and 1918. In 1903 the number of postcards being sent through the Royal Mail was estimated at over 600 million in one year (Robertson and Robertson, 2013:3). This was the culmination of a string of early developments which illustrated this reluctance by the Post Office to accept the picture postcard. For example one type of postcard had small vignette images printed on the same side as the message with the other side of the card used for the address. Of course, the postcard that we know today has the image printed on the front of the card with the address, message and postage stamp on the back.

'View' cards were a particular set of postcards developed in Scotland to showcase the views of the Highlands. This coincided well with the rapid increase in visitors to Perthshire and » »

» » the Highlands, enabled by the growing rail network which was expanded in the Victorian era, and compounded by the popularity and use of cars and coaches in the early 1900s (Robertson and Robertson 2013: 5). 'Comic' and 'novelty cards' were soon developed as another type of postcard. 'Art cards' where publishers would contract artists to paint particular views of Scotland were also produced. 'Panoramic cards' were produced in much smaller numbers but enabled a landscape panorama photograph to be printed which could be folded down into the single postcard size (Robertson and Robertson 2023: 20-21). 'Hotel cards', and 'Transport cards' were another two types of card produced to highlight certain hotels for advertising purposes and the changes coming in to travelling with the advances of electricity and the car respectively. These cards were attractive to collectors, as collecting had become a fashionable hobby of the time.

The history of the postcard for Perthshire and the Highlands provides a window into the earliest signs of tourism to Scotland.

The railway and the development of the car as well as car ownership accelerated tourism during the early 1900s, as cards for example depict, of a train covered in tourists leaving Pitlochry, or of someone arriving in Aberfeldy to fan fare (Robertson and Robertson 2023: 22-23). This heyday of postcard sending and collecting across Britain fuelled a flurry of postcard innovations by publishers in Scotland and demonstrates a point in time whereby publishers, local businesses and tourism connect most vividly. Little did they know at the time: how fast the number of cars would come to populate our cities, towns, and roads; how tourism would begin to cause tensions for certain communities experiencing larger volumes of tourists than they can manage; or that places would suffer a deterioration of their very community due to second home ownership.

Tourism is more obviously connected with the postcard which endures today in this era of the email and the mobile phone as a way to send greetings of 'wish you were here' choosing your card from the racks of postcards of views of the town, city or region you are in outside the gift shop or hotel lobby.

Speaking of intergenerational knowledge and this connection to a way of life and the land in Skye, I participated in a community of people who gathered for The Magic Mountain Festival, a festival with shared interests in climbing and the outdoors, traditional Scottish and contemporary music, zine making, printmaking and books. Some lived on Skye others did not, like me, who had travelled there to attend. The festival was located in Portree, the largest town in Skye. Magic Mountain festival was organised by Third Ridge, an indoor climbing centre in Skye. Third Ridge is run by climbing instructors who run the outdoor guiding business Skye Adventure. Third Ridge work in partnership with Skye Gym who they share facilities with in Portree Industrial Estate. To get to Third Ridge, you walk in the front door to Skye Gym, go up two flights of a metal staircase, through the upstairs part of Skye Gym (where there are cardio machines and weights) and go through a grey door at the back of the room. Inside, you find yourself behind the climbing wall. For the Magic Mountain festival, there was a table in the middle with stools around it and a long table at the window with a coffee machine and glorious pastries set out on it, made available from Bog Myrtle Café.

Registration was on Friday at 4pm. I was there early to get my name down promptly for the Print Power workshop, which I anticipated would be over subscribed. I was asked if I wanted to buy a programme for £2 which included a temporary tattoo - to which I said yes!

I then wandered over to another building across from Third Ridge to see the folk at the

Highland Zine Bothy who were based there over the weekend. The zine bothy was being constructed at the time I was there, in one of the Studios of Skye Gym. I got chatting with a couple who run a pottery studio in Waternish, called Skio and with someone who lives in Glasgow and who works in the NHS. This was a great way to start the festival for me, and settled me down into what was to come over the weekend. There were music performances on Friday night at the Skye Gathering Hall in Portree, ending an exciting first day at the

festival.

The following day, at lunch I got chatting with Max from Isola Press, a brilliant independent publisher of books made from archival material of people biking outdoors and of outdoor equipment fashions of the 70s and 80s. I was keen to get to the Print Power Workshop in time, so I then headed back over to the Third Ridge where I watched some of the people competing in the climbing competition. There was a brilliant challenge set up in the middle of the space with people attempting to lift increasing weights which were »



Photograph of a zine made by Louisa Preston at Magic Mountain Festival 2025. Image, Louisa Preston.

“crofting women
Lewis seaweed,
sheilings cattle
from villages,
journeys for
the cattle, a life,
intergenerational
knowledge and
power.”

The Kilmuir Community Hall is where the Sgrìobh festival took place in March 2025. Kilmuir hall is community owned, under the care of the Kilmuir Community Trust. The community of Kilmuir is around twenty to thirty minutes from Portree in the northern region of the Isle of Skye called Trotternish. At points on the drive up from Uig the single track road feels like it is wishing itself off the side of the cliff which adds to the remote feeling of this community from the main towns of the Isle of Skye.

The Kilmuir Community Hall is about the same size as the Breakish community hall which hosted an ATLAS arts film screening evening earlier in the month. Bunting made out of scraps of material and carefully cut into triangles, stitched onto fabric tape, stretches across the ceiling on the roof beams. In a little room off to the left of the main hall, a small group of us squeezed around a central table for the Open Book Workshop. Katharine McFarlane and Shona Chambeul spoke in Gaelic and English. To begin, we heard readings of poems selected to get us thinking, which were linked to

the theme of bridges. These poems made me think about community and culture and the connections that we make, either physical or emotional.

I wrote the poem published here (on the previous page) which is a version of one I shared on my blog post on www.researchtown.uk, dated 21 March 2025.

My writing during the workshop on that March afternoon in Kilmuir unearthed emotions I had not realised I had. Anxiety and anger over aspects of our technological advancements and the political and social impacts of them, the speed of which seems out of control with the developments of artificial intelligence bubbled to the surface as I wrote. This took me by surprise as much as the visceral emotion of the sense of the loss of a way of life that surfaced for me while reading it out loud to the group. The poem has hints of science fiction of the idea of travelling through space in an undefined future, or land, of a family fleeing, on a risky

journey over a bridge. That bridge connecting us to a hopeful future.

Apart from the writing workshop, the day primarily featured writers who visited, some from the mainland in Scotland, and some who lived in other parts of the Isle of Skye. Hearing the Gaelic being spoken reminded me of the oral tradition of storytelling which was coming alive before my ears. I sketched people talking and listened with curiosity and fascination to the sounds of the Gaelic words that I do not understand fully. The English version when heard tended to break that spell but it was good to know what was being said! I picked up on the sounds to write them down, not knowing how to spell these Gaelic words in the moment. In my sketchbook-zine I wrote the words being spoken by a guest speaker: “haroo hein, ha necalstag sniheron mehehe torag agus, agus hoola crow, crofting women Lewis seaweed, sheilings cattle from villages, journeys for the cattle, a life, intergenerational knowledge and power.”



Photograph of a zine-sketchbook page made during Sgrìobh, 2025. Image, Louisa Preston.

Another enduring feature of the Victorian era is the rental of homes to visitors in Scotland. Beatrix Potter, who is famous for her pocket sized hard back illustrated books of Peter Rabbit and other animal characters, is also connected with Birnam and Perthshire. She spent holidays in Perthshire with her family in a rental home for the summer in nearby Dalguise and other houses in the surrounding area, such as Eastwood in Dunkeld, in the late 1800s. Beatrix Potter was also a keen naturalist and land conversationist. Her drawing work and picture letters relate here to the picture postcard and thereby join together the themes in this feature of tourism through her activities in the summer in Scotland as well as her concerns with the landscape and the environment. The format of her picture letter is reflected in the size and format of the squares framing the text in this feature.

Beatrix Potter’s picture letters were illustrated stories that she sent to a five year old boy Noel Moore, the son of her former governess, about a rabbit, Peter and his siblings, Flopsy, Mopsy,

and Cotton Tail as well as other stories about animals like Squirrel Nutkin. The V&A museum in London houses a collection of surviving letters that Potter wrote to the boy in 1893 who had been suffering from ill health in the hope of cheering him up. The letters were formed of one sheet of paper folded in half to form four frames for each part of the text and the story which had sketches of the bunnies (Peter Rabbit picture letter, 1893, V&A).

The illustrated correspondence and picture letters written by Potter led to the publication of the well known children’s books published between 1902 and 1913. The folding of a single sheet to form the frames for the story are reminiscent of comic frames also made in the process of creating comics. The connections that these picture letters make between Birnam and the surrounding locale, and the environment chime with the focus of this issue of *fount*. Potter’s interest in fungi and the natural sciences as well as her ability to draw her observations so accurately emphasise the connections between art and drawing to our natural environment. The inspiration of which is keenly felt not just when reading Potter’s stories but when seeing the artists who exhibit and work with Birnam Arts, as well as ATLAS arts in Portree and around Skye and Lochalsh.

The role of correspondence and the postcard publication in connecting people visiting Scotland’s environment to their friends or relatives at home, or elsewhere, is also seen keenly here. The ephemeral aspects of the postcard and the picture letter are also seen to endure, as well as its role in connecting people with the environment and with the visual arts.

Community, the Land & Language



Sketch of a mountain view in Satran, Isle of Skye, 2025. Image, Louisa Preston.

Concepts of community connected with the land, land use and culture for people living in their local environment in the Isle of Skye are the focus of this feature.

Communities gather in the Isle of Skye, formed through shared interests in literature, the outdoors, land use, and Scottish heritage for the bilingual Gaelic and English literary festival called Sgrìobh in

Kilmuir, Trotternish, Isle of Skye, and the Magic Mountain Festival, based in Portree, Isle of Skye.

The dictionary defines a community as a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. Community is also understood as a group of people who are living together and practicing common ownership, or as the people of a district or country considered collectively in terms of their shared social

values and responsibilities. To be part of a community then is to have a shared sense of values and responsibilities, as well as the sharing of common characteristics. Community Land Scotland helps communities to gain shared ownership of certain buildings or land which gives an added dimension to shared ownership for some communities in that they are collectively responsible for that shared piece of land and building or buildings on it. >>

cross drochaid allt briste

through the stars and light we travelled
the sky dark and wide but so bright the spots of light strewn across the black

cross drochaid allt briste
the bridge felt angry to be stood there so long,
so unappreciated, its feet always wet, for ever

the crossing was long and treacherous
a deep ravine with water crashing and echoing below
the spray misting the air all around

we moved slowly then, knowing of the place we hoped it would take us
to a time before mobile phones, the internet, microwaves
wizardry some of which set the world ablaze
faulty words skewed and laundered by the trolls in power
uncaring, untruthful, plain wrong
algorithms amplifying incorrect truths, falsehoods and twisted realities for political gain

we hoped for the place we once knew
of green forests, snow in winter, sun in summer
carefree days playing in the barley fields
simpler times when to ring someone at the phonebox as your teeth chattered meant
something to you and the receiver
that world is gone
destroyed, left unprotected from computing gone wild and growth at all costs

the sun peeked out of the clouds
we could glimpse our new home
if only the bridge stayed fast