

The Voice of the Writer: Language, Land and People

16th – 18th June 2017

Overview of the weekend

The theme of the 2017 Andrew Raven Trust weekend was The Voice of the Writer: Language, Land and People. This year was the Trust's eleventh annual June weekend event at Ardtornish, in Morvern, Argyllshire. Each year to date, the weekend has focused on a different theme within the broader range which the Trust has established as its area of interest, embracing environmental, social and cultural dimensions, rooted in the Scottish Highlands. Each successive year over this period, the forthcoming weekend's theme has related to, and emerged from what has gone before. Trustees have also considered what focus would resonate with current concerns and be likely to be of interest looking further ahead.

In 2016, the Trustees decided to mark the Trust's ten years of activity by commissioning a book of essays based around the themes of the ten weekends held to date. The 2017 weekend was thus planned both to incorporate a launch for this book, and to explore the relationship of writing to landscape, places and people. The programme was developed, and presenters and participants invited, to flesh out these starting thoughts.

As has been the case in previous years, the programme ran from Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime and was held at Ardtornish House. The weekend this year was 16th – 18th June 2017. Participants invited from outside the area enjoyed accommodation in the house or estate cottages. Meals, refreshments and the scheduled presentations and group discussions were held in the house, and there were guided local walks based around the weekend's theme. As has also become a recent tradition of the weekends, the local Gaelic choir, Burach, sang and engaged participants on the Friday evening, and there was informal music-making after dinner on Saturday. Local residents and holiday visitors were welcomed to join the Saturday sessions and excursions.

The weekend's programme in summary included:

- *Place-making and an introduction to Morvern voices* (present and past perspectives on Morvern and Ardtornish) – Angus Robertson and Jennie Robertson
- *Norman Macleod's Morvern* – Nigel Leask
- *Notes from Morvern: 10 Years of the Andrew Raven Trust* – Adam Nicolson
- *Passing places: life, language and loss at the shoreline* – Hayden Lorimer
- *Land Matters: 25 years of writing on land governance* – Andy Wightman
- *Tir, Teanga Is Daoine: Reflections and readings from Gaelic poetry* – Meg Bateman
- *Canna Archives – a portrait of an island: Margaret Fay Shaw's Hebridean Idyll* – Fiona Mackenzie
- *Radio and nature writing, and BBC Tweet of the Day* – Tim Dee
- *Science communication – landscapes, science and policy: reflections on Scotland and New Zealand* – Maggie Gill
- *Panel of Reflection* – Will Boyd-Wallis, Annie McKee, Chris Hannan and Hayden Lorimer

Additionally, there were introductory and wrapping up sessions, panel reflection, question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions, musical performances, local excursions, and times of social interaction over meals and refreshments.

Guests arrived on Friday afternoon, to settle in, and departed after lunch on Sunday. On Friday evening, *Priscilla Gordon-Duff*, Chair of the Andrew Raven Trust, welcomed guests and explained housekeeping arrangements.

The following pages comprise a summary of the presentations and discussion sessions through the weekend. These notes are not intended as a formal, comprehensive or authoritative record, but to provide, in outline, an indication of the weekend and the presentation and discussion sessions in which the assembled group engaged.

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Place-making and an introduction to Morvern voices

Angus Robertson then introduced guests to Ardtornish Estate. The estate covers some 35,000 acres. The population of this land was cleared during the Highland Clearances, to make way for sheep and deer forests. The estate was bought by the Raven family in 1930 and is now run as a company and operated as a self-financing business.

Angus illustrated his introduction to the estate with photographs, maps and data that gave a sense of the land and its recent economy, highlighting a selection of documents involved in managing the land. Such documents include those in the 'thick and difficult to read' category and those in the more digestible category of two sides of A4 paper (as, it was noted, was favoured by Andrew Raven: succinct, clear and visionary was the message from Andrew).

The presentation touched on the series of hydro-electric schemes progressively developed at Ardtornish in recent years along one watercourse, including a dam at Loch Tearnait, the creation of a new loch with the building of the Rannoch Dam, and most recently, the installation of the Achranich Archimedes screw turbine just above the estate yard. Other commercial activities include tourism (hunting, fishing and hospitality, and visitors to the Ardtornish garden); broadleaf and conifer woodland management; and hill farming of sheep and cattle. Nearby, the Morvern Community Development Company has developed the Lochaline pontoon and harbour facilities, to provide services to and generate income from visiting yachts.

The management of the natural heritage at Ardtornish encompasses river management and habitat restoration; the Rahoy Hills Reserve, managed in partnership with the Scottish Wildlife Trust; 2,000 hectares designated as Special Areas of Conservation; clearance of over 1,000 hectares of *Ponticum Rhododendrons* in the 1990s; and planting or regeneration of over a million native trees since 1980. Studies and reports have included reference in Frank Fraser Darling's 1955 *West Highland Survey: An Essay in Human Ecology*; a 1992 conservation audit for Ardtornish Estate; a 2015 Morvern-wide habitat assessment and full deer management plan; and newly produced draft *Land & Resource Management Strategy, 25 years from 2018, incorporating Ecological Restoration*.

Jennie Robertson, local resident and archaeologist, introduced Morvern voices from the past. Jennie situated her brief review of local writing against the backdrop of the geography of Morvern, the archaeological and distant historical context of its occupation since the Ages of Stone, Bronze and Iron, the mythology of Fingal in the poetry of Ossian, and the 12th Century Somerled, progenitor of the Clan Donald and the Lord of the Isles.

19th and 20th Century writers who visited Morvern included Sir Walter Scott in 1814, Alfred, Lord Tennyson in 1853, and John Buchan, who was a frequent visitor between 1907 and 1928.

More extensive 19th Century songs and poems about Morvern are by local residents, with deeper connections to the locality. Some of their songs and poems have been translated from the Gaelic by local historian Iain Thornber, in a paper to the Gaelic Press Society in Inverness. Illustrative excerpts were read out during Jennie's presentation by actor and weekend participant James Rottger. These included love songs and observations on aspects of the day-to-day lives of the local population,

centred around cattle and the farming life, and an especial and intense focus on the injustices and suffering of the Clearances.

The writers included Donald Mackinnon, Peter MacGregor, and the best known of the Gaelic Bards of Morvern, Dr John MacLachlan. Born in Rahoy in 1804, MacLachlan was educated in medicine at Glasgow University and returned to Morvern as a practising doctor for Morvern and Ardnamurchan. An edition of his *Gaelic Songs* was published posthumously in 1880. This included 'Climbing up Toward Ben Hiant', in which he riles about the human impact of the clearances.

Administrative records also cast a light on life in Morvern, including evidence given to the Napier Commission in 1883 on the conditions of crofters and cottars (farm labourers or tenants), a first-hand account of an evicted villager in 1824, written down subsequently by Norman MacLeod, and letters and other documents in the Ardtornish Estate archives. Among these is a detailed discussion by the head laundrymaid in 1911 about the amount of laundry to be processed.

Coming into the 21st Century, the Morvern Heritage Society, established in 2004, has published two volumes of *Exploring Morvern*, written by local people, with a third volume planned. The articles cover geology, natural history, mythology, archaeology and local history. They include the social history of residents in the 20th Century, the silica mine in Lochaline, the mediaeval grave slabs at Kiel church, a description of a cleared township, and an account of the Garden at Ardtornish by Faith Raven, who has substantially developed it over her lifetime. Pending completion of its third volume, the Society has published *A Nature Diary* by Stephen Hardy, describing his daily walks around Morvern.

Norman Macleod's Morvern

Nigel Leask, Regius Professor of literature at University of Glasgow and a lifelong visitor to Ardtornish, in *Norman Macleod's Morvern* presented a scholarly historical and literary account of a range of writers associated with Morvern, including a succession of three Norman Macleods.

The first Norman Macleod (1745-1824) was Minister of Morvern from for almost half a century, from 1775 to 1823. However, it was two subsequent Norman Macleods whose published writings have been more salient in capturing a literary and social public record of the times.

The second Norman Macleod (1783-1862), known as 'Caraid nan Gaidheal', was also a Minister, though not in Morvern. He launched two Gaelic periodicals, which are among the first secular prose writings in Gaelic: *An Teachdaire Gae'lach* (*The Gaelic Messenger*, 1829-31) and *Cuartair nan Gleann* (*The Traveller in the Glens*, 1840-43). He also referred to modern subject matter in Gaelic, describing in an 1829 issue of his periodical, the steamship *The Maid of Morvern*.

The third Norman Macleod (1812-1872), also a Minister, and son of Caraid nan Gaidheal, in 1867 published *Reminiscences of a Highland Parish*. This included an English translation of his father's 1828 article, 'The Emigrant Ship', and is reproduced in the recent edition entitled *Morvern: A Highland Parish* (ed. Iain Thornber, 2002). The *Reminiscences* also included 'The Story of Mary of Unnimore', an English translation of his father's account in Gaelic of an 1824 eviction during the clearances (referred to in Jennie's introduction to Morvern voices).

Other writers who mentioned or who were associated with Morvern include James Macpherson, who in 1761 published an English poem, *Fingal: An Epic*, allegedly based on poems by Oisian (Ossian), and Joseph Banks, who referred to the romantic Fingal stories of Ossian in 1772, while sailing by, on a trip where he claimed credit for discovering the rock formation subsequently known as Fingal's Cave on the nearby island of Staffa. In 1783 Thomas Hill, an English collector of songs and stories, recorded gathering a poem on Oscar (Ossian's son) in Morvern.

Earlier, Alexander Macdonald (c1698-1772), originally from nearby Moidart, son of a Morvern MacLachlan, one-time Ardnamurchan catechist and Gaelic tutor to Prince Charles, wrote poetry while in Morvern, as well as on the isle of Canna. Most notably, Macdonald is credited with publishing the first collection of secular poetry in Gaelic, in 1751, the highly political *The Resurgence of the ancient Scottish Language*, which expressed Jacobite views to the extent it was burned in Edinburgh.

John Gregorson Campbell (1834-1891), born in Morvern and later Minister of Coll and Tiree, wrote on the superstitions of the Highlands and Islands, drawing on material from Morvern among other places. Campbell's life and work have been narrated in *The Gaelic Otherworld* (edited by Ronald Black, 2008).

Following Nigel Leask's presentation and discussion, the guests proceeded to informal interactions over drinks and dinner, followed by a performance by Burach, Morvern's Gaelic choir to close the evening.

Sessions recommenced after breakfast on the Saturday morning. Priscilla Gordon-Duff initiated the day by welcoming non-resident guests and briefly summarising that the Trust has operated since 2008 and thanking Faith and Mandy Raven for their pivotal role in initiating and sustaining the Trust and its annual weekends. The Trustees were introduced. The weekend's theme was recapped briefly, as was the harmonious fit of the Gaelic choir to the focus this year on the voice of the writer, land, and people.

Notes from Morvern: 10 Years of the Andrew Raven Trust

This was followed by an introduction by Mandy Raven to the book *Notes from Morvern: Ten Years of the Andrew Raven Trust 2007 – 2017* and to its author, Adam Nicolson. This was the 11th annual ART weekend, and it marked the launch of the book.

There have been fifteen Trustees so far – all except one of these were present today. The weekends were reflections on topics of interest to Andrew, and to all who 'stand on land'. Thanks were due to Faith, the Raven family, to the 250 or so people who have been at a weekend, to the team at Ardtornish who look after guests at the weekend, and to the people of Morvern.

In the 12 years since Andrew died, much has been achieved in Morvern. The ART has learned from Morvern. Simon Pepper, catalyst for the Trust and its founding chair, in the concluding essay in the book, encourages readers and the Trust to think what futures we would want to inhabit.

Adam is an award-winning and much published writer. This book was 'written by committee', with periodic dialogue between the author and Mandy, Mandy in turn gathering and sifting suggestions and feedback from a small group and discussing with Adam those which stuck, rather than Adam working entirely in isolation; while the writing, and creativity and coherent voice, resided in the hands of Adam as author: a model for how to communicate in the modern world.

Adam Nicolson then introduced the book *Notes from Morvern*, the process of writing it and some related thoughts, leading into a discussion.

Adam enjoyed the writing task. But he had Andrew sitting on his shoulder, as an 'in-head editor' – 'Adam, do you know what succinct means?'

Writing this book was unlike the way most books get written. Christopher Isherwood said, 'I am a camera, with its shutter open...'. Everything in this book is not the writer as a passive camera. In Shakespeare's *Othello*, Iago says: ' 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus.' This book is not 'I am a camera', but I am a *colander*.

This is a jointly made book – it's a joint effort; it has cyclical meaning. Adam wrote about the King James Bible: that had 54 writers, and many committees. Also Homer's *The Iliad* was not written by one person but by a culture, honing a meaning over generations of shared events. (So: Homer, God and Andrew Raven operating in the same culture space!)

The Andrew Raven Trust makes no differentiation between the local and the global. On the small island of Barra, the response to its supposed remoteness is: 'Remote from where?' Everywhere is the centre of its own universe. It's a false distinction to make.

A passage from the book's chapter Carbon and the Land, based around the first Andrew Raven Trust weekend, relates a walk with Pete Smith through the oak woodland by Loch Arienas. In that tranquil setting, there is an illusion of peace, well-being and stability, removed from crisis and urgency. However, this is an illusion. The woods have been in reality intimately connected with the wider contemporary world throughout their history, including the Napoleonic wars and the introduction of income tax, and are now 'connected to the urgent realities of a warming earth'. The fate of these woodlands is inextricably linked with the fate of the poor in Africa and Asia.

That is the first lesson: everything connects; appearances deceive; layers of meaning are concealed to the casual walker; and ignorance is not good enough. Nor are single points of view. Only the multiple view – which takes into account both the realities of competitive nature and the sheer pleasure of seeing a green hairstreak or a pearl-bordered fritillary afloat in the wood; which can unite sensuous experience with intellectual understanding; can recognise the way different phenomena act to different timescales; can place human and natural history in a single frame; can accommodate private experience and public policy as two dimensions of a single continuum; and which can dissolve the gap between world crisis and a beautiful afternoon alone in a remote part of Scotland – only that kind of breadth of understanding can be good enough. Neither local nor global, aesthetic or scientific, public or private are sufficient in themselves. (Notes from *Morvern*, p28)

This interconnectedness and layering of realities has been an underlying thread of all the weekends the ART has organised: jointness and multiple perspectives. The 'language in which the landscape is written' is one of our great non-verbal communications; and close involvement in your place is a new human right.

The theme of the fifth ART weekend was Paths. Again, paths exhibit the interconnectedness of human social history and nature. Citing a French historian, paths are 'the mistress lines of the country, the first human marks made at the end of the Ice Age, from which everything later has taken its cue'. The Americans made the first railroads following the paths which bison had kept open through the forest. Walking a path links the walker with those who made it in the past. Highlanders shunned Wade's roads, and stuck to their own preferred paths.

How we map out, move through and interact with the land is an expression of our relationship with the land.

Ardtornish, like all long-occupied places, is laced with paths, a skein of habit and need, and if, for example, you walk up the Black Glen, from the trout-filled pool in the river at Acharn, it is difficult not to feel, more than on a modern road or in a car, that you are somehow tapping into some of the deeper meanings it holds.

Think of Obama: 'We should choose our better history.' Be selective and discriminating in what you conserve from your history.

A critical element of the ART meetings is that they always happen in Ardtornish House: reflecting the anomaly of 'squirearchy' – the distribution of wealth and ownership of land in Scotland. The Scottish Land Commission is charged to recast the binary predicament of the land owned by so few, highlighted in land ownership statistics from *Who Owns Scotland*.

As a writer, Adam is highly aware that words have histories and associations. These deeply affect perceptions and attitudes. So, to reflect and enable social change and new relationships, the words have to change: there is no word in Scotland more toxic than 'estate'. Why call the place Ardtornish Estate? Why not call it simply Ardtornish? 'Community' is also a toxic word: Latinate, disconnected, dehumanised. Why not simply say 'Morvern.' Shelley said 'poets are the unacknowledged legislators of mankind.' W. H. Auden said 'A culture is no better than its woods.' Adam adapts this: 'Every culture is only as good as its words.'

Former Chair of ART Trustees Simon Pepper then chaired a question and answer and discussion session in response to Adam's presentation on the book.

- Adam described himself as a 'sieve'. We are not being lectured at, we are being helped to see things. While not being an accurate record of what was discussed at the weekends, the book tells a story, picks a path, and weaves senses and preoccupations emerging through the ten weekends.
- How can we 'choose our better histories'? Friendship. Being with. Theresa May's response to the fire catastrophe is 'let's have a report'. This is horrifying. Nature, the past and being with: these are three legs of a stool.

- Adam is a still, rather than a sieve. Adam has brought out things from past weekends which hadn't picked up. Adam's reading has distilled the past. Adam is now writing about Wordsworth. Using the cow principle of digesting and re-digesting, chewing the cud to extract the goodness.
- How did Adam distil, and work with the collected views? Someone said 'all books are made out of mountains of other books'. These weekends are all about the same things: deer, community, land. The book goes around without progression. Too much of the language in modern life is dense, dehumanised. Adam just written a book on sea birds. Having waded through many academic papers in the digital library JSTOR, he has found gems, but he needed a machete to wade through the forests of documents and words.
- The word 'community' has lost its scale. It has been scaled up to sizes where it no longer has meaning. The word has become devalued (like 'local').
- Governments used to have film makers. How could the voices be captured? The angry voices in Kensington after the Grenfell Tower fire.
- How does one stop the filming, photography or writing, becoming just a parallel track and make it a track that has to lead to action? How does one make the transition into the real world without being a bureaucracy? Adam returns to friendship: sitting down and talking with someone about something you don't necessarily agree about, is hugely powerful. You have to enable the individual and the emotional.
- Don't be afraid to lead. The beacons of a few examples of innovative land use shine out.

The session closed with the observation that the book is a beautiful object in its own right. It is intended as a memento of the joy and fun of all that has been done in the foregoing ten Andrew Raven Trust weekends.

Morning coffee break

Passing places: life, language and loss at the shoreline

Nigel Leask then introduced Hayden Lorimer, Professor of Cultural Geography at the University of Glasgow. Hayden is the author of *Pedestrian Geographies: Walking, Knowing and Placing Scotland's Mountains*, has collaborated with the NVA public art project to reclaim the ruins of St. Peter's Seminary which was presented at an earlier ART weekend, and has an interest in the interactions between human animals and non-human animals and the environment, including the introduction of reindeer to Scotland since the 1950s.

Hayden Lorimer then presented on *Passing places: life, language and loss at the shoreline*.

This project looked at cultural and aesthetic aspects of a shoreline pet cemetery which is in danger of being washed away by the encroaching sea.

Pet owners have created a pet cemetery, where they take their dead cats, dogs and other small animals, to bury them and erect monuments. Each grave has its own unique memorial. Many have models, statues and inscriptions. Keepsakes and items which are associated with the pets in their

lifetime, such as favourite toys, in many cases are placed by the graves. The graves may be interpreted as shrines.

The inscriptions are typically highly personal, using family pet names and terms of endearment, written in local language and frequently referring to nicknames, children and adults who miss the dead pet. Often, the words reflect a pet-centric world or walks and owner-pet interactions.

There are comparisons, sometimes uncomfortable, with graves of children and the memorialising of them in childhood terms.

Hayden presented selected monuments photographically and with transcriptions of the inscriptions. Many of the photographs were taken close-up, and from ground level, rather than from the perspective of a human standing nearby. This heightens the impact of the photographs, lending extra poignancy to their representations of lost friends, and to the monuments becoming progressively weathered and sunken into the sand and shingle.

The expressions of a sense of loss and affection for the dead pets is evident. There is great sentimentality. Whilst this is sincere and profound to the bereaved pet owner, from an academic perspective, to the cultural geographer it is an interesting cultural phenomenon worthy of record and study.

The longevity of this pet cemetery is under threat. It is situated on a rapidly eroding piece of coastline. It is possible that it may be washed away within the foreseeable future.

And whilst those whose pets are buried, and the caretaker of the pet cemetery, invest great value in the individual pet's grave, in the same way that we do in the case of departed loved humans, badgers will dig with no compunction if they can smell a meal; and paving stones place over a grave to prevent the badgers' attentions are at times stolen by other people, without care, for their own use.

John Berger, Virginia Woolf, Oscar Wilde and Walter Benjamin have variously written on death and sorrow. The overall conclusion is that we cannot in reality write of death, only of our experience of being aware of death, ie about life, and that a life's meaning comes into focus, and a writer's work gains power, through this awareness.

Susan Stewart has written that miniaturisation offers a spatial transcendence which leads to the nostalgic; while Leslie Jamieson has written that if emotion is insulted by people calling it sentimentality, then sentimentality is insulted by being labelled saccharine.

Nigel Leask chaired a *question and answer* session following the presentation.

- What does this tell us about people's relationships with animals? Does our care for pets stunt our relationship with other animals, with which we have less emotional connection?
- Katrina Brown has done work on walking dogs in the Cairngorms – people can take part in the wildness when the dog is off the leash.
- University study teaches us to eschew sentimentality, but think about what you can do with sentimentality. This gives pet-ownership a new twist.

- Why is this flirting with calling pet ownership ridiculous? There is an aesthetic at work; avoiding the term 'kitsch'. It is working class north east Scotland culture. Pet cemetery memorials are significant and should be accorded due respect, if we claim to respect the people whose pets are in the cemetery.

Land Matters: 25 years of writing on land governance

Priscilla Gordon-Duff introduced Andy Wightman, speaking on *25 years of writing on land governance*.

Priscilla first met Andy 20 years ago on a study tour to Norway. Currently a Scottish Green Party MSP, Andy has been a leading campaigner and writer in Scotland on land rights, democracy and the economy throughout the time they have known each other.

Andy Wightman - *25 years of writing on land governance*

Hayden called Andy 'a hyper-empirical rural geographer'. To understand land, you have to dig deeply. It's three dimensions, from earth's core to the sky. In the sea, out to a 200-mile limit, all powers have been devolved to the Scottish Government.

Andy has notable forebears and contemporaries in writing on the social and economic aspects and injustices of land use and ownership in Scotland. A key recent work is Jim Hunter's *The Making of the Crofting Community*. A review in the Herald remarked that the book is 'written with controlled passion and savage exactness'.

In the late 20th Century, there was a combination of concern on nature conservationist grounds and social outrage, when tax and ownership regulations and markets found banks and wealthy London-based people buying land and planting Sitka spruce in large blocks in the Highlands.

An earlier book, Thomas Johnston's *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland*, relates how common lands disappeared in Scotland.

John McEwen's original edition of the book *Who Owns Scotland*, later updated by Andy Wightman and Jim Hunter, documents the extent and detail of the land distribution issue in Scotland. Andy has also published a related book, *The Poor Had No Lawyers: Who owns Scotland and how they got it*.

Adam Watson, internationally acclaimed ecologist and mountaineer especially associated with the Cairngorms, also collected Gaelic place names and published *The Place Names of Upper Deeside*. In doing this, he met Jean Bain, crofting at Ardoch, above Crathie in Aberdeenshire, the last native speaker of Deeside Gaelic. The language was infused with Nordic words.

Deeside Gaelic died because the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act 1886 was not applied to the North East of Scotland, due to the objections of lowland landowners. The impact of land ownership led to depopulation and as a result caused the demise of the language and the way of life it reflected.

With the advent of modern technology, as well as writing books, Andy has been an active blogger. This medium has served to communicate and disseminate views and information. Writing the blog

has been a tool to increase historical awareness and to engage in contemporary issues around land ownership and democracy in Scotland. Andy briefly touched on some examples of investigations and comments which over the years he has published on the blog.

- Tulchan estate, bought and sold by sale of the shares in the estate company, whereas the owner of the land remains the estate. The transactions were opaque and the effect was that tenant farmers did not benefit from the right to buy at the point of transfer of land ownership.
- Land ownership and development projects at Linwood, near Johnstone in Renfrewshire, have been decided, and the land bought and sold, without adequate local community engagement or information, to the detriment of the local community. This has been the case for many years, with a failed car plant (Linwood was expanded specifically for this factory, which made the Hillman Imp), a shopping centre created on land purchased by the County Council under a Compulsory Order, and most recently with the supermarket chain Tesco purchasing land to build a superstore and associated local facilities (library, clinic, community centre) in place of the existing shops, through an intermediary company apparently set up specifically for this purpose. In the face of this disempowerment, Linwood Community Development Trust has been established, to strengthen the voice of the local residents in the fate of their town.
- People of Carluke in Lanarkshire did not know they owned a piece of common land (Black Law Community) when a big wind farm was made, so they did not get a turbine constructed on common owned land and could not earn income, although the windfarm was constructed on land all around it.
- There have been continuing efforts to secure Edinburgh New Town as common ownership: Edinburgh City Council did not know it owned the common land of St Giles Cathedral, so the Council lost it.
- Land grabbing has long existed historically and continues to be enabled in Scotland even in new legislation into the current decade. The legal device of *prescription* essentially passes ownership of land to a person if they occupy it for ten years. The provision to allow, within this, *non domino* titles means that a person who does not own the land can lodge a claim to it, and if the claim is not challenged within ten years, they can then claim prescriptive rights and take ownership of the land.
- While colonizing powers claimed ownership of land around the globe for their national monarchs, and that ownership has in some cases persisted up to the present, a celebrated and key historical precedent in land ownership law was the case of *Mabo vs Queensland No. 2* (1992). The court case ruled in favour of aboriginal rights over the land. This led to a national debate about the past 200 years of the history of Australia.
- Tony Benn suggested five questions to ask anyone in power: *What power have you got? Where did you get it from? In whose interests do you exercise it? To whom are you accountable? How can we get rid of you?* If the respondent can't answer all five of these questions, then they are not holding power democratically.

- Martin Luther was a social revolutionary as well as a religious one: he refused to pay tithes to the church: instead, these taxes were put in a chest owned by the people. This was the start of local councils. The chest is in the Wittenberg Luther Museum.
- In Kinross, where Andy grew up, the local town council and culture were very strong and active. Now, the council is disbanded and the town hall is closed, riddled with dry rot.
- Andy has received many legal threats by lawyers. Andy is now in the thick of a legal battle. The legal argument is on whether buying a block of land allows you to sell it.
- Wildcat Haven Enterprises sells souvenir plots of land in Morvern and Ardnamurchan. Andy's blog post: 'Wildcat Haven, Bumble Bee Haven or Tax Haven?' has been contentious.
- The Law of Defamation in Scotland is vague: Scotland did not adopt the same law as England. Writers, and especially bloggers and Facebook posters, are being silenced by lawyers' letters threatening them with prosecution. In England, only a single instance of publication can be sued. In Scotland, every re-poster, and every re-tweeter, of a story can be sued. This has an intimidating, silencing and stifling effect.
- People with money can bully and harass those who don't have money. It is the job of the public and politicians to stand up for the public.

Priscilla Gordon-Duff chaired a brief *question and answer* session following Andy's presentation.

- One participant was in church. The reading from Corinthians was showing Jehovah authorised a land grab. Andy's response: Go on and read Leviticus and the Jubilee: all lands and debts should be written off every 7 years.
- Was there anything Andy would update in the book from 1999? It's all about how power structures came to be as they are. If this was Norway, Ardnamurchan and Morvern would each be a commune. 50% of local residents' income tax would be spent by the local council. Norway's constitution protects local rights. In Scotland, there is not enough democracy: democracy is not active if it is just a matter of once every four years having an election, and then no more engagement until the next election.

Before the group broke for lunch, Isla Robertson introduced a '*Tweet*' activity

Participants were invited to do a 'Tweeting on paper': to write a short note of whatever of interest might come to mind during the walks, and post the notes on one of the flipcharts. Over the remainder of the weekend, these short notes accumulated on the boards, open for all to read, and to add their own notes at will. Later in the weekend, a selection of these notes was read out, prompting comment on themes and points which had emerged.

The morning sessions were followed by lunch and then in the afternoon by a choice of two optional guided walks in the rain (or remaining in the house):

- Meg Bateman: A Gaelic walk, from Claggan to Loch Arienas.
- Adam Nicolson: Every Step and Arrival - up the Black Glen to a waterfall, accompanied by Tim Dee, birder.

Walks and tea

Tir, Teanga Is Daoine: Reflections and readings from Gaelic poetry

When the group reassembled after the walks and tea, Meg Bateman was introduced. Meg is a Professor at Sabhal Mor Ostaig, the Gaelic College in Skye, part of the University of the Highlands and Islands. Meg studied and later taught Celtic studies and Gaelic at the University of Aberdeen before moving to Skye. Meg has written and published poetry in Gaelic (translating into English also from her Gaelic original work) and, more recently, has written poetry directly in English.

Meg then presented *Tir, Teanga Is Daoine*, her own reflections, with readings from Gaelic poetry, both her own (including 'Elgol: Two Views' and 'Loch Computer: A Love Song') and others' (including an excerpt from Sorley MacLean's 'Hallaig').

Meg Bateman spoke of her own experience and engagement with Gaelic poetry, reflecting on and offering insights to non-Gaelic speakers on the very different relationship the individual, and the human race, have with the rest of nature in Gaelic culture. The way the spoken and written word express our place in the landscape reflect different world-views embodied in Gaelic and English languages.

In Gaelic consciousness, there is a symbiosis of land and people. The person is not isolated from others, the human is not distinct from nature, and the supernatural is not alien to the natural world: all are interconnected. This interconnectedness is embodied in the language and its expression of thoughts and feelings.

Language traces our perception of reality and the sense we impose on the world. Different languages have different ways of dividing colours – not just in identifying different colours and boundaries between colours, but also in describing scales of colour saturation and of varying brightness.

In most languages, when speaking of an emotion, it is the person who feels the emotion that is the subject of the sentence: 'I love you'. In Gaelic, by contrast, it is the emotion which takes the foreground, rather than the person who is affected by the emotion: 'There is jealousy against you in me'. Gaelic word order suggests the human individual is not the centre of things. Similarly, in paintings by William McTaggart, the human is not in the foreground. There is not a sense of the living dominant over the dead; or of humans as dominant over animals.

In the Eighteenth Century, Donnachadh Ban, a game keeper, wrote of admiring the deer, what the deer ate, the gamekeeper who shot the deer and the gun he shot it with. There is no conflict in loving the deer and eating the deer. There is a striking contrast of perception of the human's place in the world between a David Kasper Friedrich painting of a person looking out onto nature with no people in it, on the one hand, and Donnachadh Ban seeing humans as integral to the natural world around them. He lamented the glens without people as having become 'unnatural'.

Somhairle Macgilleain (Sorley MacLean)'s poem 'Hallaig', about a village in Raasay badly cleared, resonates with this perception of the past and present, the mystical and tangible, underpinning and informing harsh reality. Sorley MacLean was rational, lived in the 20th Century, and engaged in contemporary life and politics with an international perspective as well as in his native land, but he

wrote poems with a full understanding of the natural world of the traditional Gaelic culture in which he was rooted. 'Hallaig' exemplifies the sense of the living dead, the cumulative former population of Raasay returning as trees. The power and beauty of the poem rests in its drawing on the landscape, both generic features and the tolling of place names laden with local association.

[The full text of 'Hallaig', in its original Gaelic and in English translation, is available on the Sorley MacLean Trust website, <http://www.sorleymaclean.org/english/index.htm>]

Remoteness is now more to do with political distance than physical distance. Now, remoteness is the forgotten people in tower blocks between motorways. As part of 'Loch Computer', a research project led by Robert Crawford at St Andrews University, Meg was asked to write a short poem including the words 'Loch' and 'Computer'. The poem written in response to this challenge, in Gaelic and in English, explores fusing the Otherworld of ancient Celtic myth – an enduring world, though seldom glimpsed, where, for example, the mythical 3rd Century Fionn still lives and hunts – with the passing realities of our contemporary life in the real world.

In the poem 'Loch Computer: A Love Poem', the narrator likens the blue start screen of the computer and entering the online world, with the plunge into the blue of the remembered Loch am Iomair, and youthful longing. In a very Gaelic way, the computer and internet enable us to explore and connect with worlds, places and people, and with pasts, which are outside our visible and immediate day-to-day environment, and thus to enrich our understanding.

In looking to Celtic culture and history, we now are attracted to the land where people emigrated from to escape the hardships which faced them.

There is, underlying all this, a Gaelic linking of language, land and people. Myles Dillon, the Irish Celticist, spoke of man temporarily dwelling on a place inhabited by his ancestors.

Tir, Teanga Is Daoine – question and answer session was chaired by Nigel Leask

- Meg does her own translations. In Ireland, usually others do the translation.
- Meg formulated her own interest in poetry in Gaelic-first poems. In her latest book, she wrote first in English, then translated into Gaelic
- Things are seen and perceived differently in Gaelic: 'The woman at me' is how Gaelic expresses the English 'my wife'. Gaelic uses the format 'my mother' because one's mother is inalienable.
- The Gaelic for dandelion is 'the gapped one of Bridget'. Hill names are feminine – thigh, breast, belly. The question of whether this is a metaphor or direct is maybe irrelevant in a pre-Christian world.
- To say 'hello' or 'goodbye' in Gaelic, there has been no straight translation: a response might be to say, 'well, Donald...', or 'You've got up.' With the current Gaelic schooling, translations from English to 'good morning' are taught, but these are unnatural (not idiomatic) and do not reflect traditional Gaelic culture. Modern Gaelic is more prosaic than traditional Gaelic.
- In Gaelic, we belong to the land, rather than the land belonging to us: other examples of egalitarian nature of Gaelic? Meg: All believed they were all related to the chief.

- Meg read her poem 'Dobhran Marbh', 'Dead Otter', which relates seeing a dead otter, and the shock of it having lost its footing on a river bank and fallen to its death on boulders. The shock reflected the feeling that an animal is a machine, fit for its niche, and surprise that an animal had gone wrong and its instinct had failed it, whereas humans often go wrong because of our over-use of rationality.

Canna Archives – a portrait of an island: Margaret Fay Shaw's Hebridean Idyll

Fiona Mackenzie was introduced and then spoke on *Canna Archives – Canna: A Portrait of an Island. Margaret Fay Shaw Campbell's Hebridean Idyll*. Fiona's presentation was punctuated by her own singing of Gaelic folk songs.

Fiona is a Gaelic singer and Gold Medal winner at the Royal National Mod. She has studied Scottish Music and History at Aberdeen University and Librarianship and Information Science at Robert Gordons University. Her Master's degree in Song and Performance from the University of the West of Scotland included carrying out a research project into the life and work of American-born folklorist Margaret Fay Shaw. This involved spending extended periods on the island of Canna at the former home Margaret Fay Shaw and her husband John Lorne Campbell, exploring their collections. Subsequently, Fiona has taken up the post of Archivist of the collections at Canna House, for the National Trust for Scotland.

Margaret Fay Shaw was an American folklorist who lived on Canna for many years. The orphaned daughter of a Pittsburgh steel baron, she was sent to school in Helensburgh. She first heard versions of Gaelic folksongs there, and resolved later to pursue Gaelic songs in their pure form, and moved to the western isles. As a child, Margaret had taught herself to play piano, by ear, and later had tuition.

Prior to settling on Canna, she lived for six years on South Uist, and after marrying John Lorne Campbell, for four years on Barra. Lorne Campbell then bought the island of Canna, and the couple moved there for the rest of their lives. However, Margaret felt South Uist was where her heart lay, having lived there with the sisters Mairi and Peigi Macrae, who worked at Lochboisdale house, learning Gaelic and absorbing the culture and folksongs from them. Gave up dream of classical music career due to arthritis. Went to North Glendale to learn Gaelic. Live with Peigi and Mari Macrae.

Margaret went on to be a major collector and archivist of Gaelic song in Scotland and Nova Scotia. She was also a pioneering female photographer. Despite her long-time relocation to life in Canna, she always insisted she was an American, not a Scot. She met and married John Lorne Campbell when he was making a book with Compton Mackenzie. He died in 1997, and Margaret died in 2004, aged 101. They donated the island of Canna to the NTS in 1981.

The collection at Canna House is the most important collection of Gaelic songs. There have been moves proposed to move part or all of the archive to a city location, on the dual grounds that it could be better conserved and made more accessible to readers and listeners there than is the case on Canna. However, Fiona sees clearly that to do so would dislocate the contents of the collection

from their native environment: the archive can best enrich our understanding by seeing it all in location, and in one place: do not remove part or all to a 'more accessible' location.

In 1956, Margaret made a broadcast on BBC Women's Hour, 'Portrait of an Island'. The island adapts over time, but the identity does not. The archive remains in Canna House, and is nowhere else.

Asked if she was lonely on Canna, Margaret had replied, no, people who work with animals are never lonely, and that she was at the centre of her world.

Indigo Carnie then chaired a *question and answer* session on Fiona's presentation.

- Fiona's involvement began when she moved to the Highlands and began singing and researching Gaelic songs. Canna became the holy grail of Gaelic songs, from John Lorne Campbell's Hebridean song book. Fiona was working with the National Theatre of Scotland. and worked on a show on Margaret Fay Shaw, which toured Scotland in 2013-14. Fiona took over as archivist at Canna House two years ago.
- At present, the archive remains in the house on Canna. It is planned to build a new archive wing of Canna House to store all the material together, along with accommodation for visitors. This is the best way to understand and explore the material deeply, in its environment.
- For wider access, a virtual archive is being prepared. The NTS is digitising all the archive. All the photographs have by now been scanned in low resolution, and work is in progress making high resolution scans of them all. Paper documents are being digitised, as are the audio recordings.
- What has changed in the time since Margaret Fay Shaw went to Canna? The phone box still does not work; the boat comes three times a week still. The people on the island still make their own music. However, the farm is now just animals – sheep and cattle – with no crops. The school has re-opened, and has three children now. The café changes every few years. Canna's population is now about 25, while it was 29 in 1956.

Indigo Carnie was working on the furniture and paintings archive in Canna House. Stories cluster around objects in the collection. A glass tumbler had broken very cleanly into two parts. There are various stories about this. One story is that the voice of Caruso broke the glass. A bottle label said it was broken by a high F on a trombone. A visitor asked about a broken glass because they'd been told it had broken in an earthquake.

John Raven had arrived on Canna, and John Lorne Campbell had said 'now we can have a flute quartet', but two of the four associates didn't have flutes. They went on to Rhum and found the scandalous planting of rare plants to fraudulently support a scientific theory (documented in the book *A Rum Affair*, by Karl Sabbagh).

Following the presentation and question and answer session on the Canna Archive, Isla Robertson drew the group's attention to the '*Tweet*' notes posted to the pin board, and some of the observations and comments were read out by actor James Rottger.

Sunday 18 June 2017

A group photo was taken on the drive, after breakfast, by Maddy Raven, before the day's sessions.

Radio and nature writing, and BBC Tweet of the Day

The first session on Sunday morning was on *Radio and Nature Writing*, by Tim Dee. Tim was introduced by Sara Davies, a 'pioneer' resident in a new area of habitation at Lochaline. Sara has been a radio writer and producer, a presenter for BBC and Channel 4, and a features journalist for the Guardian, Observer and magazines.

Tim Dee is a radio producer of nature programmes and a nature writer. His first book, *The Running Sky*, is an account of Tim's childhood and subsequent career as a bird watcher. His second book, *Four Fields*, reflects on looking and listening to the landscape, in four contrasting locations. As well as six 'O'-levels, Tim was awarded the Boy Scouts Badge for Home Economics, and the National Prize for Identifying Ducks' Feet. In addition to nature programmes, Tim has produced arts documentaries, history features and radio dramas. Before joining the BBC, Tim worked for the International Council for Bird Preservation (now Birdlife).

Tim Dee then spoke on his theme of *Radio and Nature Writing* and the BBC radio series he produces for Radio 4, *Tweet of the Day*.

Good writing comes out of good looking and good listening. Tim started as a bird watcher at six or seven years old, and started as radio producer at about twenty, and has continued being engaged in both activities ever since.

Tim went for a walk this morning. The singing is beginning to thin a bit at this time of year, as birds are busy with their babies. Birds are anxious and are listening.

Tim's first book is about looking at and listening to birds; it is about air, and element where we cannot go, in the sky. His second book is about the earth, our common destination. His third book, which he is writing, is about time: being out of step with nature; getting old, and hearing less acutely than when young; and about the European spring, and the birds migrating from Africa up to the North Cape.

The goldcrest is the smallest European bird. Many people over the age of 45 or 50 cannot hear its high frequency song. Most bird-watching people are middle aged or older men.

How birds listen themselves, and how birds learn to sing, differs. About half the 10,000 species of bird in the world learn their song, while the others have the song innate.

In the case of the willow warblers which have just fledged in Ardtornish, the young will be listening to their father's song, when they are still blind and featherless in the nest, and listening to neighbouring male singers; and then the fledglings will be left by their parents, and fly south beyond the Sahel towards Zambia and Angola, and hang around with other males, silently, except for one or two who'll try a few bits of song. Those who survive will fly north, and those who make it will open their beaks and start singing. The song will be a beautiful, descending trill, an absolute badge of

greenness. It is delayed, stored learning. The bird puts its song to use, defending territory, attracting a mate.

In a combe in Somerset, female blackbirds don't sing. Some female robins sing. Male blackbirds sing from March until about now (June). Older birds sing in the evening. As flowers give way to fruit, singing gets richer. 'As I climbed, I was walking through birdsong...' 'The song thrush is a diarist; the blackbird is a lullaby singer.' 'The evening blackbird song has more *rubato* than its morning song.'

What it might be to listen to a landscape. John Clare's poem 'The Lament of Swordy Well' gives voice to a landscape which has been damaged by man. Now conserved as a site of scientific interest, the land is beginning to recover and its wildlife to talk back.

Four Fields has four areas of broken land: a meadow in the Chernobyl exclusion zone, a field on an abandoned tobacco farm in Zambia, a prairie field at Little Bighorn, the Custer battlefield in Montana, and a Cambridgeshire fen field near Wicken Fen, currently being 'rewilded' by the National Trust.

The fens have a curiously brazen and uncouth bareness. 'That they are all manmade redoubles their power to disconcert.' In the rewilded, rewetted, fen, a pair of cranes mate.

Rewilding, rewetting, unfarming – a film running backwards: the paradox of trying to return. After a point, having committed actions, and effected profound changes, to return is as hard as to go on, as Macbeth observed: 'I am in blood stepped in so far that should I wade no more, Returning were as tedious as go o'er'.

Rewilding is not returning to the wild. New landowners have decided that their version of wild is the one which matters. A new sort of alienation has been created. In a birdwatching hide, 'nothing seen from its shelter seems as real as it does under the sky.... A terminal version of pastoral... the darkest Arcadia... let the water come back, but let us be allowed to step into it also.'

Tweet of the day

Radio producers always say, 'I'll just get a minute of this...' Tim would like to get it *all*: to record the background sound, and the wind, uninterrupted by the speaker. BBC Four made a film with Tim earlier this year, where this element of 'background' sound explicitly came to the fore: *Into the Wind*.

Tweet of the Day is a nice programme to work on. It started as nice birdsong, 60 seconds of talking and 30 seconds of bird song. In the last six weeks, it has just launched a new version, with a dawn chorus in Somerset, following the dawn across Europe. Instead of little 'factoids', it is putting out listening diaries, the experiences of individuals who have had a moment with the bird that is mentioned that day. Tim likes the idea that we have got beyond the factual information. He is grateful for facticity of the world, but also is keen to include what we think we hear when we listen to space. You'll now hear on the programme people who don't necessarily know about birds but who have an experience of listening to birds.

Sara Davies then chaired a question and answer session on Tim's talk.

- Tim used a clip of Gaelic language imitating birdsong. Does this appear in other cultures? Yes, Tim's been writing about the earliest flutes, made from wing bones of the griffin vulture, not made to imitate griffin vultures, but to imitate the sound of the earth. What was the song of the earth? Primarily birdsong. Birds mimic birds. The crested lark had learned to imitate the shepherd's whistle so well, now the shepherd has to move his sheep to another location, as the birds were driving the sheep dogs berserk.
- Bartok has recordings of birdsong in Transylvania; blowing on leaf. Sing a song of Sixpence.
- Tim commented on birdwatchers being men over the age of 50, while Fiona had talked of the land as feminine, and the human as masculine. Tim: nature writing as a literary subgenre is feminizing of a male tradition of natural history: there is an established idea of an amateur man as a collector and organiser of the world. This feels like a male project. Collecting seems to be more of a boy thing than a girl thing. Young members of RSPB are evenly balanced to the age of 13; there are far more women PhD biologists, but far fewer female Professors of biology. Organising and collecting can be as beautiful as more overtly poetic pursuits. Tim dislikes the anti-scientific, and the notion that it is men who are reducing the world. Men looking at birds on rubbish dumps are engaged in an act of redemptive love, seeing beauty where others can see only unpleasantness.
- The Gaelic 'mandran' is reflected in Tim's writing: a love song, the hum of being out in nature. Tim: losing your hearing, you begin to hear through different organs – more through your chest. You hear the difference between one glen and another glen. The mixture of sound is determining of our experience.

Sara Davies concluded the session, posing the question, if, as Tim writes, analysis of the feathers of a bird can show where the bird has been, could your song in a similar way be shaped by the architecture of where you sing?

Science communication – landscapes, science and policy: reflections on Scotland and New Zealand

The final session of the weekend, prior to a panel reflection and then final summing up, was a presentation by Maggie Gill on *Science Communication - Landscapes, Science and Policy: Reflections on Scotland and New Zealand*.

Maggie was introduced by Annie McKee, ART Trustee and a social researcher at the James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen, who came to know Ardtornish through her PhD research within the 'Sustainable Estates for the 21st Century' project of the Centre for Mountain Studies.

Maggie was Director of the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute in Aberdeen (now the James Hutton Institute), when Andrew Raven was the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Maggie completed her PhD in New Zealand, worked for the UK Department for International Development, recently completed five years as Chief Scientific Adviser for Rural Affairs and the Environment to the Scottish Government, and currently holds a chair in Integrated Land Use at the University of Aberdeen.

Maggie reflected on her own experience, from childhood growing up on a farm in Scotland, through her early work in New Zealand, to more recent return to New Zealand as a tourist.

As a scientist, Maggie has learned that even in science, you have to tell a story: you have to have a beginning, a middle and an ending. This is a story about the rise and fall of sheep, weaving threads of connections between science, land and policy; of unintended consequences; and of how stories play out over time. It is a story of sheep, spanning from the Clearances to Brexit.

When thinking about what she would say for this talk, Maggie started looking at a tapestry on the wall, done by her mother. The tapestry has at its centre an idyllic farmland scene, on a human scale. There are broadleaf trees in full leaf, a garden or meadow of blazing flowers in the foreground, and then, through a gate, a track leading across a green field of grazing white sheep, with a farmhouse to one side. Beyond that field, a golden field – perhaps of corn approaching readiness for harvest. Two small working buildings – a shearing shed, and a barn, perhaps. The sky is blue. All looks well.

Surrounding this central picture is a border design made up of square panels, each sewn in a different, regular geometric pattern and colour palette, with its own internal symmetry. The panels, though each is unique, are linked to one another, and to the central picture, in pattern and colour. They set up visual conversations across the tapestry, from their arrangement around the picture. The central picture and the surrounding pattern panels are framed, bound together, and separated by, a regularly patterned and unifying border design. The tapestry taken as a whole is harmoniously balanced. Maggie's mother was a mathematics teacher. Her tapestry evokes a tension between mathematical and aesthetic sensibilities.

The beginning...

- In her youth, Maggie worked on a sheep farm. The culture in Scotland in the 1960s was that sheep were important. They were washed before going to market. After studying her first degree, in agricultural science, Maggie went to New Zealand to study for her PhD. While living in New Zealand, she had Lawrence, a pet sheep. Lawrence was cleaned, taken for a walk to the shop. The sheep was important.
- Maggie has been made angry by the 'Britain should follow New Zealand' mantra exemplified in an article by Lockwood Smith, former New Zealand High Commissioner to Britain ('New Zealand shows UK farmers how to embrace Brexit: Agriculture can gain from abandoning subsidies and embracing competition', Financial Times February 9 2017).

The middle...

- The geography of New Zealand is broadly similar to that of Scotland: land use maps and capability maps of Scotland show that relatively little land is arable, most is rough.
- Sheep are intimately involved with the history of Scotland. 'The year of the sheep', 'Bliadhna nan Caorach' – 1792, was an uprising against the Clearances of the Highlands for sheep. The role of science has played a significant part in the social, economic and thus ultimately environmental changes: farmers were improving sheep by breeding, so land owners realised they could make a profit. There were unintended consequences: the farmer improving his

sheep had no idea this would lead to the clearing of the land. There was also increased polarisation of the poor and the wealthy due to the value to be had from meat and wool.

- Sheep were introduced to New Zealand in the 1770s.
- Since the 1970s, the EU and its effects on markets and subsidies have had a major impact both on UK and on New Zealand.
- In the 1960s, wool contributed 33% of all New Zealand's agricultural exports. In the 1970s, there were 60 million sheep to 3 million people in New Zealand.
- Globally, agriculture today produces 17% more calories per person than it did 30 years ago, despite 70% population growth.
- However, it is not just science which drives production: it is interwoven with policies. In the 1970s, the UK joined the European Union and started to pay into, and receive subsidies from, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). New Zealand was then locked out of traditional markets. In response, New Zealand introduced production subsidies and export incentives to support its farming economy and to protect it from the shock of suddenly lost markets.
- It is now well known that it is very hard to return to a non-subsidy economy after adapting to subsidies. However, New Zealand withdrew subsidies after ten years, in the 1980s. Productivity increased, the number of sheep decreased from 60 million to 30 million, and the number of dairy cows increased (largely to feed the growing Chinese market for dairy and meat products).
- Policy decisions led to unintended consequences. The 1980s EU subsidies led to 'milk lakes' and 'butter mountains', as production exceeded demand. In response, the EU introduced milk production quotas.
- The 1990s brought CAP reform, introducing agri-environment schemes and capping headage payments for sheep. In the 2000s, there was increased emphasis in the CAP on environmental policies, decoupling of policies from production and a move to area-based payments, as the EU grew.
- The CAP made up 71% of the EU budget in 1984. This was down to 39% in 2013.
- In 1986, producer support as a percentage of gross farm receipts was 19% for New Zealand and 39% for the EU. But there were hidden costs of negative impact on the environment.
- Unintended consequences are generated and can be addressed, using policy and science
- 90% of natural grassland on UK lowlands has been lost since 1945.
- The condition of Scottish lowland grassland sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) improved from 41% to 72% between 2000 and 2010 (UK National Ecosystem Assessment 2011).
- Flying over New Zealand on a return visit in 2014, it was alarming to see the impact of large scale irrigation to grow grass and intensify dairy farming, including next to lakes, where the effluent from cattle will pollute the water. The controls the CAP put in place have probably protected Scotland from great environmental damage from such developments as NZ has suffered.
- Algal growth, as a result of excess nutrient run-off into the water system (nitrogen and phosphorous), brings the risk of bacterial contamination, costs of cleaning the water for human use, and the changing colour of the water, impacting negatively on tourism.
- During this recent visit to New Zealand, Maggie went to Lake Wakatipu, in an outstandingly beautiful area by the Remarkables mountains. Some houses on the lake had cost eight

million New Zealand Dollars and were second homes. The wealth funding their development and purchase was from sheep farming. Comparisons may be drawn with London, in terms of vast differential levels of wealth and inequitable distribution. This is arguably the equivalent of the Clearances in Scotland.

The ending...

That is the end of the story (for now). There is a long way to go in working out where agriculture should go following Brexit. As closing points for now:

- There is no easy template to follow for Brexit.
- We should not follow a template from New Zealand.
- Science has unwittingly contributed to power imbalances.
- Policy should be a moderator for sustainable development.
- Being multidisciplinary is important: science does not have all the answers.
- 'We' need multiple voices to suggest direction.
- This brings us back to the purpose of The Andrew Raven Trust: Working to help the communities of Scotland, in particular rural communities, following the principles of sustainable development.

The presentation was followed by a *question and answer*, chaired by Annie McKee.

- Reflections on the future of farming for Ardtornish? Livestock farming has to keep going, but it has to be very cautiously done. We cannot plough up peat land, as that will produce carbon. So, we need to use the land to produce food to protect other land from being ploughed up to produce food. As we understand more, we should apply our knowledge to our farming systems
- How about investing more in moving away from a meat-based diet in the west? In considering this, separate pigs and poultry meat, which compete with humans for grain. At the moment, there is enough grain. Beef consumption is starting to decline. It is not a question of either / or, but of moderation. On policy, Maggie would focus on portion size. We should have the choice. There is so much waste. If we are going to change people's views, let's start changing people's attitudes to the amount we eat.
- Why are cattle so important, compared to sheep? Are cattle full stop bad, or is it just the dairy industry which is damaging? As soon as you pull back on some elements, there are all sorts of different consequences. We could be looking at rare breeds, and more diverse pastures for cattle, so we can sustain the beef sector without increasing quantity.
- Is there an environmental movement in New Zealand? Do communities feel their lives are threatened? The Government of New Zealand has set up 'Our Land Our Water – National Science Challenge', to which Maggie is an adviser, aimed at improving production and productivity while maintaining and improving land and water quality for future generations. All initiatives joining this challenge must include Maori culture and Maori people on its steering committee. <http://ourlandandwater.nz/>.

- In New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840, transferring governance to the British Crown. The treaty recognised Maori ownership of their land and gave the British government sole right of purchase. Despite contention and controversy about the original terms and the subsequent interpretation and application of the treaty, there is resistance among Maori rights groups to the nullification of the treaty and the transfer of the rights of the Crown to the government of New Zealand. The wish to remain under the British monarchy reflects that the treaty was signed by the Queen (Victoria), providing protections to the Maori and their rights, and so is important.

As a brief interlude before the panel reflections session and the close of the weekend's sessions, Orla Shortall, an agricultural sociologist at the James Hutton Institute, then recited two poems. These were love poems to the sea. In Aberdeen, Orla swims in the sea twice a week, even in winter. It's good to survive and to feel good about it each day.

Orla, whose performance name is 'Sparklechops', runs a monthly spoken word night in Aberdeen, 'Speakin' Weird'. As well as performing slam poetry across the UK, she is active in engagement and awareness events on matters including equity and the social, environmental, animal welfare and health dimensions of agricultural practices.

Panel of Reflection

To revisit and reflect on ideas that have arisen since the weekend convened on Friday evening, a *panel discussion* was chaired by Sally Thomas, head of the Land Use and Biodiversity team at the Scottish Government and ART Trustee. The panel comprised Will Boyd-Wallis, Annie McKee, Chris Hannan and Hayden Lorimer. Will, a past ART Trustee, is Head of Land Management and Conservation for the Cairngorms National Park Authority. He formerly worked for the John Muir Trust. Chris is a playwright, whose work has been performed across Scotland and England and has been produced by Shakespeare's Globe, the National Theatre of Scotland, the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre and the Old Vic. His most recent work, 'What Shadows', is about Enoch Powell and identity politics.

Will reflects...

- Adam described himself as a colander. He is more like a whisky still. The book is a distillation. The ingredients that go into the still need to be the best quality. We've come out with a great range of blends over the years. Savour and take in sips. Beautiful, distilled gems of wisdom distilled over the years.
- Friendship is hugely important. So much of influencing what happens on the land depends on making relationships.
- Science, fact, emotion, intuition all play their part: how we pick up on things in nature - we cannot under-estimate their importance. The Gaelic understanding of the relationship between people and nature. From Fiona's Canna archive, the potency of the recording of the hundred-year-old Mary playing the piano, with Fiona, today, singing alongside her playing. The take-away point, we should support the drive to keep the archive on Canna and in good condition. Reminiscent of Mingulay, where the community left in 1912.

- Conversation is hugely important. Speakers organise talks. Often the best gems come afterwards, when the questions come and speakers relax and respond.
- In the book *Notes from Morvern*, Adam has succinctly achieved quality over quantity.

Annie reflects...

- The weekend started with voices of Morvern. Jennie mentioned we are all strangers and pilgrims. An overwhelming theme has been about love. Everything emerges from love of each other and love of land. Depopulation of the heart, and coming together through love. The importance of being with is important; hard to sum up in a journal paper. These soft ways of being, we should use them.
- Learned a lot from Adam, in the process of preparation of the book. Realised the value added by Adam in his writing: how you write is important, as well as what you write. We are all writers, in one way or other: we write shopping lists; and every new tweet is a publication. We have responsibility to hold power-holders to account. Maggie talked of the importance of stories: we should tell stories in our research.
- Something special happens at the ART weekend. Rather than going round in circles as Adam said, maybe a speck of dust flies off the turntable and goes elsewhere. Andrew Raven would have wanted us to go forward with his energy, not just be talking about what he would have done.

Chris reflects...

- Having difficult conversations is important. The weekend is a demonstration of how to do that.
- There are plural, diverse perspectives and centres of power. If a new business comes in, it adds a new centre of power and adds to the richness of the place.
- George Orwell spoke of the use of language, Adam speaks of the toxicity of language ('community', 'estate'). Chris has just written a play on Enoch Powell and the Rivers of Blood speech. In researching for the play and Brexit, Chris has come to feel language is not fit for the conversation.
- 'Racist' and 'racism' have become problematic words. We throw the words into the discourse. But we are racists. As a three-year-old, when asked who was walking past the window, Chris said they were 'three Protestants and a Catholic', and his parents repeated it for the rest of his life, with pride. People at school, at church, at work, were discriminatory between the two groups. We sometimes think it's OK to be racist if you're the one at the wrong end of the stick. Racist was also 'community'. There is intense emotional power of a working class person singing a certain song. It makes us identify 'them' and 'us'.
- In the Brexit debate, it is shocking that huge swathes of people were dismissed as 'racist' without exploring what their interest was. We know from Nietzsche, Marx et al, we are all racist. It is easier to come to a conclusion if we acknowledge this.

Hayden reflects...

- The land estate in Scotland is a complication of landscape. Ardtornish seems as gnarly and complicated as any other estate in Scotland.
- Story operates as an oblique form of commentary. Operating in the space between fiction and non-fiction seems to be where writing finds itself nowadays. Enjoying landscape is a baseline currency we can all trade in.
- Words are the minor art form, when set beside the actual making and managing of land: writing about the land is a minor art form that stands alongside.
- So, what can we do as ART reflects on its ten years? The particularity of experience must always be set together with others. Half of the population lives next to tidal waters. So, at Ardtornish we are part of half the world's population. This is both a literal and littoral realisation. It throws up the ongoing possibility of emergent solidarities and allegiances.
- Progressive localism is recognising the particularity of place and at the same time recognising the experience of others. Who are we twinned with? Social Scientist and geographer Doreen Massey asked, what are our geographies of responsibility? Where might we make friendships that are beyond this place?

Sally Thomas chaired a *question and answer* session on the panel reflections

- The idea of story as an oblique way of getting into a commentary. The way science works is also a story. The structure of a scientific paper is itself a story. It is not oblique, but it is a story. We need both the direct and the oblique. Emily Dickinson said 'Tell all the truth but tell it slant'. This relates to the poems and ways of telling the story, instead of seeing as binary or paradox.
- Formalising a relationship is desiccating it, dividing people into groups. Language is shaping how we think, rather than vice versa. Should we try to move English in the opposite direction?
- None of the panel has addressed the core point about relationships being about power. Address power and all will come from that.
- Involvement in place making is a human right, a way to start challenging the centres of power.
- Listening to the land is vital. Place names often go back to ancient heritage. The name 'Ardtornish' is Gaelic and Norse. Gaelic itself is a hybrid. To prevent language becoming toxic, we need to be sensitive to the use of words and language. This weekend we have had an embarrassment of riches in literary talent. We understand the general through the particular: this is metaphor.
- We spoke of the 'voice of the writer'. Listening to the poems and songs of Meg and Fiona, it is not just the written voice. There is importance in two-way communication between the speaker and the writer.
- To improve our use of words, many languages are available; it is about the choices we make about which languages and which words we use.

- We know very little. You know things about me that I don't know. You can see me; but I cannot see me. It is about me acknowledging we need each other to understand ourselves. Speaking together is very important.
- In north eastern Nigeria, British colonial officers wrote down the names of hills and features as they heard them spoken by residents when they asked, to get these names translated into English later. In due course, the transcriptions were translated and were read out. The 'names' translated into such phrases as 'I have no idea; can you remember what this hill is called?'

Priscilla Gordon-Duff – *Final summing up and close from the Chair*

The weekend gathering closed with a few words of personal summing up by Priscilla Gordon-Duff, Chair of the Andrew Raven Trust, following which guests took lunch and dispersed.

- What I take away is how I can put a little of this into practice in my life. My hope is that we take away a bit of what we've heard. The empty chair in the panel reminds us of Andrew. He was so un sentimental.
- Thanks to Adam and Mandy for articulating and producing the book; to all the speakers for giving us diverse presentations in diverse ways; to the invitees for participating; and to Nigel and Isla for their hard work preparing the weekend.
- Enjoy lunch, remain in conversation, wherever you are, and have a safe journey home.

<http://www.andrewraventrust.org.uk>