University of Glasgow's Geographical and Earth Sciences Magazine

THE DRUMLIN

2026

The Drumlin Team

Charlotte Newell - Editor-in-Chief

Charlotte Newell is a third-year Geography and Economics undergraduate student from Fife. She appreciates all things second-hand and mysterious, especially of the magazine variety. Outside of *Drumlin*, Charlotte has spent her time as a dating show host, paid sandwich artist and a silly-hat-wearer! Growing up, she aspired to be a book editor, and she hopes you'll enjoy *Drumlin 2026* as much as her younger self would have.

Catherine Chen - Design Editor

Catherine Chen is a Master's student on the Human Geography MRes programme from Montreal, Canada. She's been thrilled to design this edition of the Drumlin and hopes that no one is too taken aback from the creative liberties she has taken. In her free time, she likes doodling, doing the NYT crossword, and giggling with her friends. And of course, studying geography. She hopes you have as much fun reading the *Drumlin* as she had designing it!

Lucy Green - Undergraduate Editor

Lucy Green is an Undergraduate Geography student, originally hailing from Sunderland. She has a passion for media, previously editing an award-winning school newspaper at her sixth form in Durham. When she is not editing, she likes playing cricket, listening to Sam Fender or watching a Sunderland game (haway the lads!!). Of course, her main focus is geography and she is excited to be a part of the *Drumlin* team!

Jasmine Patel - Postgraduate Editor

Jasmine Patel is a Master's student on the Human Geography MRes programme, friendly neighbourhood barista and... (most importantly) postgraduate editor and darling of the Drumlin magazine. Often found: crouching over a collage, abandoning knitting projects midway and throwing people around for the university's cheerleading team.

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EDITORIAL

From Charlotte Newell, our Editor-in-Chief!

The Drumlin Magazine returns for another year! *Drumlin 2026* offers a variety of delightful musings on geography and our world, from poetry and personal pieces, to GIS and forestry. As with every edition since 1955, this year's content and design are a reflection of the geographers who made it, and what a creative bunch we had!

Drumlin 2026 includes something for everyone, whether you want to read about the geographies of queer night life (p.36), learn about Glasgow's newly proposed transport system (p.29), or find out what geographical landform you are (p. 26). Duncan Shaw, Editor-in-Chief of *Drumlin 2025*, returns with two incredible articles (p.16 & p.24), sent over to us from Sweden! Thank you to everyone who submitted this year, *Drumlin* wouldn't exist without you.

I'd also like to thank Duncan and his team for reviving Drumlin last year; their hard work made my job a lot easier! It also helped that we got the ball rolling on Drumlin as early as possible, establishing a Drumlin Committee at the beginning of Semester 1. It was exciting to see how people were intrigued by Drumlin, especially those who had just arrived in Glasgow as first year students and postgrads. It was even more thrilling to discover that these students were skilled in the art of magazine making! So thank you, Catherine, Jasmine, and Lucy, for being the best committee; I'm so glad our paths crossed and we got the chance to make *Drumlin 2026* together.

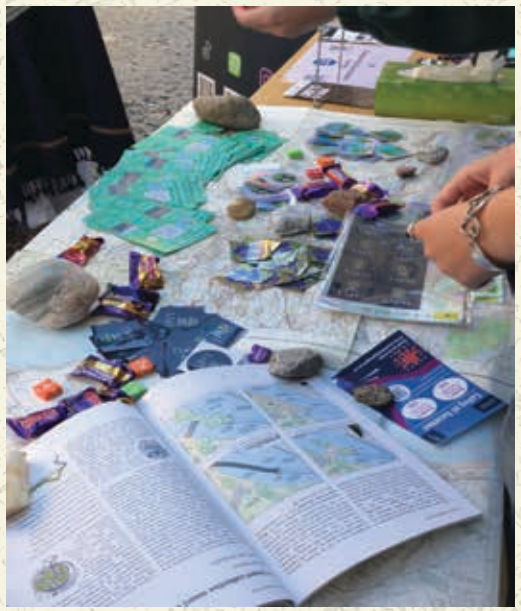
We must also thank the School for kindly providing the funding to print *Drumlin*, allowing us to continue producing a wonderful aspect of GES history. And of course, thanks to Prof. Chris Philo, whom I interviewed on the day he delivered his last lecture at The University of Glasgow. Over 30 years here, he has been instrumental in shaping the School into what it is today, and supporting students who accept the challenge of creating *Drumlin*. You can read more about this at the end of this issue, where Prof. Chris Philo perfectly concludes *Drumlin 2026*, and says goodbye.

Geography Society Yearly Report

Following the 24/25 academic year, I was the only returning committee member, so I was challenged with seeking out an entirely new committee! I was very fortunate to have enthusiasm from all year groups, producing a fantastic team. Our new line up was slightly controversial, as the President, Vice President and Secretary are all Earth Science honours students, but hey, we're all friends… right?
The sign-up social was record-breaking! The 24/25 members must have enjoyed last year so much because they all came back for more. Our final sign-up total reached over 100 members which we were immensely proud of. Everyone was mixing and mingling, and we had a few games set up to help freshers meet their new peers.
Our first proper social of the year was 'Dress for the Wrong Event'. We had many athletes and pyjama parties, and even a full racing suit worn by one of our social secs: Zoe. Next up was a games night in Record Factory hosted by Zoe and Kirstie. We played Beetledrive, which was a completely new game to most and got raving reviews! This social was followed by a Charity Quiz night. We asked participants to bring a donation for the RNLI and answer some challenging rounds by our Charities Convenor Jack, with some easier rounds written by myself, Zoe and Kirstie. Everybody was incredibly generous and we raised a grand total of £140!!!
Our notorious Halloween Subcrawl was the next social of the semester. Our 4 teams each followed a different subway route with 5/6 stops to finish at Oran Mor. We had a range of costumes including the classic Brussel Russel, a couple of American Psycho's Patrick Batemans, and of course the low-effort cat ears/cowboy hat (lol). We had a competition for the best dressed, with the winners all being committee members and a committee member's boyfriend… hmmm suspicious. Special mention to our social sec Zoe and her fantastic lolly-pop-lady outfit, (she was too humble to nominate herself for best dressed).
Next, we had a Guy Fawkes Treasure Hunt! As exams loom and socials become lower on the list of priorities, our numbers halved from the subcrawl. I was very impressed with the social secs for this social. We had to follow hints to find clues in each pub, leading us to a 'what-three-words' code which led us to the University. By this point we had lost Zoe… Instead of finding her, we found Guy Fawkes looking suspiciously like Zoe, with a ginger beard, holding a bottle of Fireball! As it was Bonfire Night, we got to stand on the hill and watch people setting off fireworks throughout Kelvingrove Park. Magical!
The last 2 socials of a very busy semester were a charity bingo night and a Christmas pub challenge. The charity bingo was for Glasgow Food Bank and everyone participating had to bring a donation which I eventually dropped off a week later (oops). '12 Drinks of Christmas' was a fun way to end the semester. Hosted by yours truly, we had to complete 12 Christmas themed challenges, dressed in Christmas attire. Finally, we hosted a charity bake sale outside the library for all those revising. We had a range of different bakes including my vegan banana bread and Carly's top selling brownies. We raised £66 for Send a Goat, which we think will be 2 goats!!! (x2 our target of 1 goat).
The start of the second semester included a successful pub golf where my team won (of course!), and two debate nights: one with philosophy society. We are all very much looking forward to the next social event as we go head-to-head with the Earth Science Society, and I cannot wait for the Ceilidh and the Careers Fayre.
Finally, I would like to thank my fantastic committee for making my job so easy this year. You have all done such terrific jobs. Zoe and Kirstie, you have hosted such fantastic and original socials. You never fail to include everyone or make sure everyone is having fun. Jack D, you have thought of excellent charities and your enthusiasm for all things GeogSoc has been amazing, especially the banner! Matilda, you have been on the ball with the Instagram posts- each post has been so fun and creative. Yourself and Jack M have brought such a lovely presence and enthusiasm to all the socials, always ready for a pint ;). Charlotte, you have incorporated your cool, personal style to the Drumlin. I have loved all the new things you have executed and your commitment to producing a fantastic magazine. Thanks to Cameron who was brought such enthusiasm for all things academic and drinking! Your commitment to the academic events is incredible, I can't wait to see what you bring next year. And finally, thank you to my exec team: Greg, Carly and Aly, who I begged to join the committee this year. You have all been wonderful at helping with everything, from arranging meetings, handling the finances, getting involved in the socials, and putting up with me.
Here's to a great year for the Geography Society!

Written by Eleanor Bradbury, President

Edited by Greg O'Malley, Vice President



GUESS Yearly Report

2024

Since starting a new semester at Glasgow University, our society has grown into a community of lovely people spanning across all years! Despite a whole new committee to start off, we managed to get the hang of it pretty fast and have been working hard to keep the society as eventful, educational and friendly as possible.

We started strong by joining the Freshers Fair at the very last minute - but thankfully, we were blessed with a free stall for us to present our society. Without the fair, we wouldn't have encountered the plethora of students who came to us with different ideas for what they expect and want from the society. Speaking to these students allowed us to accommodate our society to everyone and their needs, helping shape the society we have today. For example, some solely wanted to join for the academic aspect, and some for the community. Ensuring a balance of both has been our aim for this year.

We excitedly started the semester with a few socials: from a destress session of rock painting, to adventurous hi-vis pub crawls. To spread our wisdom, some of our committee members hosted drop-in sessions, mainly aimed at helping first and second years with university work. In early December, we organised a talk from Luisa Hendry about her journey and work across Scotland as an alumna of Glasgow University in Geology! And as the first semester came to an end, we hosted a pyjama themed movie night and finalised our merch sale for the next year.

2025

So far, we've had a 'White Lies' social and a 'Finance vs. Frat boy' social. We look forward to the rest of this semester, in which we plan on collaborating more with the Geography society, as well as the Mining Institute of Scotland for inspiring talks and careers fairs! We are also organising a Ceilidh, which received a lot of interest last year. Furthermore, the Department of Earth Sciences and Geography have recently started hosting student staff socials, where we can speak to staff on a more personal level about their insight on the future of our school of Earth Science. In February, a panel meeting will be held where each society in the Earth Sciences department will voice their opinions on any improvements to be made in order to benefit students and societies. We are excited to take part in this and make everyone's experience with the School of GES as enjoyable as possible!

With many more exciting events and socials to come, none of this would've been possible without such a hardworking and dedicated team, as well as the persistent support from members! Thank you to all!

Nora Salem, President

POSTCARDS FROM EXCHANGE

Esme is a BSc in Geography, studying abroad at the University of Ottawa in Ottawa, ON, Canada!

"I am really enjoying my time here, especially the Climatology and History of Environmental Thought modules."

Greetings from Ottawa!

"My highlight of studying abroad has been all the trips that I have taken so far, especially going to Toronto over reading week with my friends and getting to see Niagara Falls!"

POSTCARDS FROM EXCHANGE

Amina is a BSc in Geography, studying abroad at the University of Bergen in Bergen, Norway!

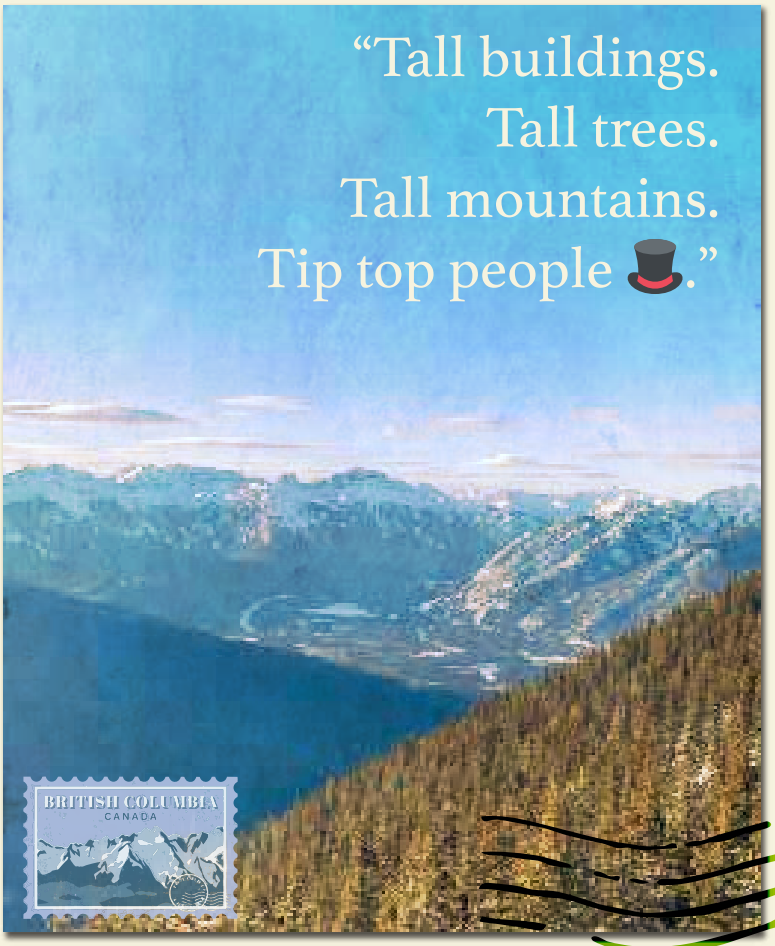
"My highlights so far have been learning to walk on a glacier, staying in cosy mountain cabins and seeing the northern lights from the harbour. "

"On the academic side, I enjoyed taking a field course on the geology of the region, and I'm also taking an interesting course on climate policy."

POSTCARDS FROM EXCHANGE

Matthew is a BSc in Geology, studying abroad at the University of British Columbia in Okanagan, BC, Canada!

"Getting up to some crazy adventures across Canada, with some of the craziest but most genuine people from across the world and some closer to home."



POSTCARDS FROM EXCHANGE

Eugenia is a BSc in Environmental Geoscience, studying abroad in the South Island of Dunedin, New Zealand, Aotearoa at the University of Otago!

"Right now it's the summer holidays here so I'm away in Australia for a couple weeks which is so warm ... I can't believe it's midwinter for the northern hemisphere!
My favourite paper here has been a sedimentary geology one - there are so many field trips here it's awesome ! My favourite travel has been road tripping and car camping round the south island."

"Some highlights from the photos : - living in a sustainability flat and helping out with the sustainability gardening club !! - long beautiful roads here - lots of rocks ! some studied on field trips, some climbed in my spare time - waterfalls, beautiful sunsets, hiking (called tramping here), and surfing in the sea ! - watching the All Blacks play (and win!) a test match against France in July!"

JACK S DONALDSON
4TH YEAR, GEOGRAPHY

THE KONG MOUNTAINS
THE MOUNTAINS THAT NEVER EXISTED: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL GIS PERSPECTIVE

The Kong Mountains first appeared on maps produced by Cartographer James Rennel in 1798 following an exploration of the African continent by Scottish explorer (and colonial benefactor) Mungo Park.

In 1796, two years prior to James Rennels cartographic publication, Mungo was travelling through the African continent and was particularly concerned with the source of the Niger River Delta.

At some point during his charter, he reported being told of a mountain range (depicted in the highlands of Guinea) near a large, powerful Kingdom called Kong. However, these reports were fragmented and misinterpreted with rocky credibility. Despite this, the mountains were produced and then reproduced by multiple cartographic publications on multiple atlases –

without question.

FIGURE 2: THE KONG MOUNTAIN RANGE PRODUCED BY JOHN CARY (1805).

FIGURE 1: AARON ARROWSMITH PRODUCED MAP FEATURING KONG MOUNTAINS (1828).

It wasn't until around 1888-1889 that French military officer, administrator and explorer Louis-Gustave Binger would later appear in the (small village) of Kong and discover there were in fact - no such mountains.

Although the Kong Mountains existence had been disproven they persisted to creep onto atlases. One of the most recent being the 1995 "Goodes World Atlas" that's over a century of fiction, showcasing the might of cartographic authority, power and influence.

INTERPOLATION AND THE MAKING OF UNKNOWN SPACES

Interpolation is central to GIS because it allows geographers to estimate values in places where no direct measurements exist. Techniques such as Inverse Distance Weighting (IDW), Kriging, Polynomial, Kernel and Spline interpolation transform scattered observations into continuous surfaces. For example, this could be soil samples, rainfall gauge data or pollution plumes. While powerful, these methods also introduce assumptions about spatial continuity and similarity. In places with sparse data, interpolation can unintentionally construct landscapes that appear authoritative but are in fact statistical guesses. Although the certainty can depend on the number of known points, it also depends how the data was sampled. Without clear transparency, geospatial mapping can quietly blur the line between what is known and unknown. The creation of the Kong mountains can be interpreted as an early form of proto-interpolation, using dodgy sources and piecing them together to guess where the mountains were. In the end, the Kong Mountains remind us to be transparent and cautious when 'creating' knowledge from incomplete data and that every maps hides unseen assumptions.

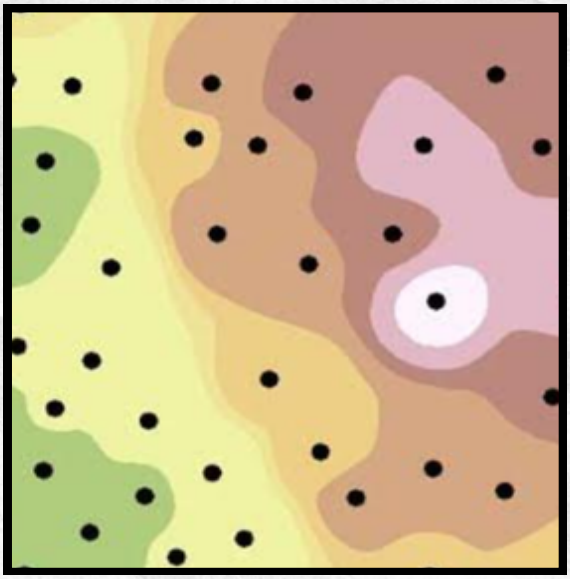


FIGURE 3: EXAMPLE OF INTERPOLATION, WHERE THE POINTS REPRESENT SOIL SAMPLES AND THE COLOURED CONTINOUS SURFACE ARE ESTIMATES OF SOIL TYPES USING THE DATA POINTS

Rethinking Humboldt's Influence on Geography

Written by Jamie Scott, 3rd year History and Geography

Should Geographers be inspired by Alexander von Humboldt? With Andrea Wulf's Royal Society award-winning book "Alexander von Humboldt: The Invention of Nature," there has been increased division on this. Humboldt advocates suggest that he should be considered the founding father of ecology and geography. Those who are not captivated by his literary efforts often suggest that he amalgamated knowledge that primarily wasn't his to benefit from. Here, I will discuss a balanced view of Humboldt in geographical historiography and question how inspirational he was and should be to geography.

Alexander von Humboldt 1769- 1859 was a Prussian polymath, geographer, explorer, and ecologist. While lacking a defining single contribution to science, due to his extremely broad field of study, he is most famous for his 1799-1804 expedition to South America with botanist Amie Bonpland. The extensive literature garnered the expedition and Humboldt, with Bonpland to a lesser extent, fame of being a 'great' explorer that was said to rival that of many contemporaries, including Napoleon. The expedition covered a vast distance over almost five years, covering countries we now know as Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Cuba (Whitaker, 1960). Documented by a comparably large literary output through Humboldt's extensive 30-volume personal narrative of a journey to the equinoctial regions of the new continent (the volume number can change through translation, and so too can the meaning). Many of Humboldt's literary efforts, from personal narrative to Cosmos and, importantly Naturgemalde, were praised by many contemporaries, as the intellectual knowledge an enlightened man can gain from exploration. The sections of this exploration, which the focus will mainly be on, are commonly referred to as the triad of South America- 'The Amazon and the Orinoco, the Andean Cordilla and the Venezuelan llanos' (Pratt,1992, p.123). The significance of this expedition is dependent on which disciplinary lens it is viewed from. Exploration is an inherently interdisciplinary field of study. This article illustrates the shifting historiographies of Alexander von Humboldt's expedition as a scientist, explorer and travel writer, respectively, change the interpretation of the voyage. While importantly, assessing the imperial, colonial, political and socioeconomic context to assess whether we should, "try a bit of Humboldt on for inspiration" as David Harvey recommends (Harvey, 1998, p229). Firstly, one must ask under what circumstances enabled Humboldt and Bonpland to travel on their famous voyage? While keeping in mind the implications of sponsorship, does this increase the tendentiousness of Humboldt's narrative and political and scientific conclusions? King Charles IV of Spain granted Humboldt and Bonpland permission to access the Spanish colonies, under the conditions it was to be self-funded and upon return to provide the royal cabinet garden with flora and fauna (Wulf, 2016). Often historians of Humboldt, such as Andrea Wulf, view Humboldt in a rather positive light, omitting that as part of the quid pro quo, he had to 'Make reports to the Spanish governments in America' (Whitaker, 1960, p.320). The passport was issued in May 1799, as seen in Figure 1. Many advocating for the significance of this expedition often overlook the desires and context of the Spanish monarchy in granting Humboldt and Bonpland access. Importantly, there had been growing unrest in the Spanish colonies, and the end of the 18th century marked significant global ideological instability. America's independence in 1776 and the first French Revolution occurring only ten years before the expedition, were extremely timely. Enlightenment thinking, Anthony Smith suggests, allowed Humboldt and Bonpland to witness the 'Eclipse of old ways' (Smith, 1994, p.231). It is evident that, after Humboldt and Bonpland's voyage by 1825, all continental dominions in possession of the Spanish monarch in South America became independent (Whitaker, 1960). Therefore, the significance of this voyage is at risk of being inflated due to its contextually significant events being extremely important to global historical geography. Spanish sponsorship of voyages of exploration was inherently imperial, seen through Columbus's diaries' continuous mention of precious metals (Columbus, 1893). Whitaker writes:

"America was discovered by Columbus under the inspiration of the Renaissance, so it was rediscovered by Humboldt under the impact of the enlightenment (Whitaker, 1960, p.317)"

While the validity of this statement will be assessed in the latter half, this statement does not acknowledge the contextual framework and tradition of Spanish exploration in the colonies. The voyage of Humboldt and Bonpland was granted as a method to reassert Spanish rule in the colonies due to the increase in independence movements, for example, the movement associated with Francisco Miranda (Pratt, 1992). Under similar circumstance Spain sent French explorer Charles de la Condamine, who travelled to Ecuador in the 1730s, which was only disrupted due to war (Whitaker, 1960). Therefore, in many ways, prior to the voyage beginning, it was already historically significant due to the period of changing global ideological phenomena.

Exploration has always been particular to its context; however, one must begin with assessment of the context, in this case in particular, in order to fully understand the strange twilight period during which Humboldt and Bonpland gained their significance as explorers, geographers, and ecologists.

Now for the part we're most excited to explore. The Pizarro, on board Alexander von Humboldt and Amie Bonpland, left the port of La Coruña on the fifth of June, with a brief stop in Tenerife, they reached Cumana on the 16 July (Humboldt and Wilson, 1995). In November, they left for Caracas. They crossed the llanos of Venezuela, which was notably challenging due to its harsh environment (Humboldt and Wilson, 1995). The electric eel was of great interest to Humboldt due to his previous experiments with electricity. He described the baiting and capture of these eels using live horses that had a barbaric beauty about the violence (Wulf, 2016). They ventured inland in February of 1800 with the goal of building upon the knowledge of previous exploration of La Condamine and proving the theory that the Amazon basin connected to the Orinoco (Smith, 1994). After covering 2,250 kilometres of river, they concluded that systems are in fact connected (Humboldt and Wilson, 1995). Often not depicted in secondary literature, the two travellers were aided along this journey by Father Zea and as Humboldt states: "The monks arranged the necessary Indian labour (Smith, 1994, p.240)." This is often touted as a great journey of exploration and scientific research. While they undoubtedly gathered an extensive amount of measurements specimen and observations along the river, this major discovery, for Europeans, the implication of the wider context shows that this was also the dividing of Spanish and Portuguese territories (Smith, 1994, p.241). Once the implications of the full voyage are displayed, this paper will return to this line of questioning. In March 1801, the travellers arrived in Bogota to meet the Linnean and supposedly 'Spain's greatest botanist, Jose Celestino Mutis (Humboldt and Wilson, 1995).' They leave Bogota in September in search of Captain Boudin in Quito- Humboldt and Amie Bonpland, if not for delays, planned to be on this voyage (Humboldt and Wilson, 1995). However, Boudin decided that they would no longer stop in Quito. In January 1802, Humboldt and Bonpland summited Chimborazo, to a record of 19,700 feet. Chimborazo was believed to be the tallest mountain at the time however, it was the furthest away from the earth core due to earths undulations (Humboldt and Wilson, 1995). It was here that Humboldt came up with the idea of 'Naturgemalde' as seen in figure two, which illustrated the separation of the global vegetations zone. To what extent this was influenced by indigenous knowledge or even European analysis of the Pyrenees is a point of contention in the scholarship. In early 1803 they arrived in Mexico and spend a year in the archives, from which Humboldt gathered the majority of his knowledge for his 'Political essay on the kingdom of new Spain' of which he dedicated to King Charles the IV of Spain and praised his liberal nature, signing ' obedient servant, the Baron von Humboldt (Humboldt, 1811, p.20). Importantly, Humboldt visited Washington in 1804 and befriended Thomas Jefferson, despite Humboldt disagreeing with his views on slavery, describing it as 'The greatest evil that has ever afflicted humankind (Humboldt, 2011). Whitaker importantly highlights the imperial perspective: 'he visited three of the four viceroyalties, or main administrative units' (Whitaker, 1960, p.320). This voyage and the subsequent publications of mainly 'Personal Narrative' garnered Humboldt a fame comparable to that of his contemporary Napoleon (Wulf, 2016). However, the scientific significance of this voyage of exploration, beyond the extensive collecting, is questionable. Matthias Glaubrecht argues that the view of Humboldt as a great connector of geography and ecology was 'Neither his nor radically new for his time' (Glaubrecht, 2022, p. 6). Suggesting that Naturgemalde was the application of previously known information applied to a Latin American context. Mary Louise pratt in a similar style, compares the Peruvian Arpillera with Naturgemalde (Pratt, 1992, p.134). She suggests that Humboldt was merely transporting American knowledge to a European audience, while ignoring the people of South America, which perpetuates the imperial stereotype of inhabited, prelapsarian wilderness (Pratt, 1992, p. 133).
Glaubrecht also objected to Humboldt being the first to complete an in-depth geographical survey of the region in comparison to what La Condamine accomplished (Glaubrecht, 2022, p. 31). Anthony Smith echoes this sentiment, suggesting that the 'Humboldt current' was 'Already well known to everyone who had ever sailed those seas' (Smith, 1994, p. 247).' As a matter of fact, Humboldt did not thoroughly recognise that Jose de Acosta already predicted this observation (Gómez-Mendoza, 2025, p. 253). This begs the question of how much of the exploration's scientific significance was merely a reformatting of indigenous knowledge that was conveyed to Humboldt (Pratt, 1992, p. 194).

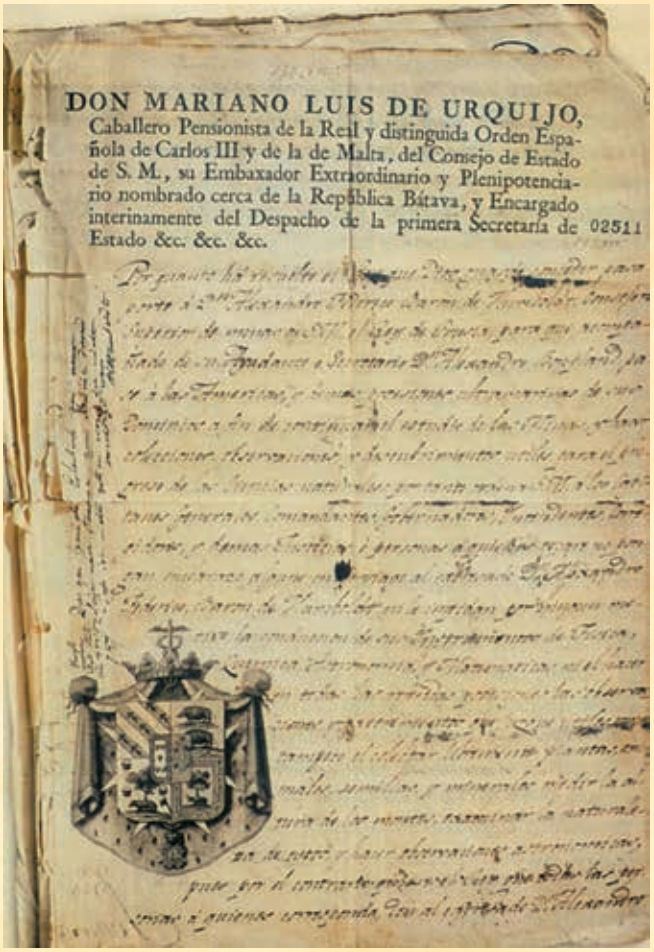

DON MARIANO LUIS DE URQUIJO,
Caballero Pensionista de la Real y distinguida Orden Española de Carlos III y de la de Malta, del Consejo de Estado de S. M., su Embaxador Extraordinario y Plenipotenciario nombrado cerca de la República Bátava, y Encargado interinamente del Despacho de la primera Secretaría de Estado &c. &c. &c.
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Figure 1: Aedo, C. (2018) 'El pasaporte de Humboldt a América', Quercus, 391 (Sept.), pp. 12–15.

Figure 2: Humboldt's Naturgemalde sketch of Chimborazo. Humboldt, Alexander von & Bonpland, Aimé. Ideen zu einer Geographie der Pflanzen nebst einem Naturgemälde der Tropenländer. Tübingen; Paris: Cotta & Schoell, 1807.

These arguments are very much in contrast with Wulf's, which removes indigenous knowledge and history, consciously or non-consciously, in favour of a romantic vision of a 'Solitary genius' (Gómez-Mendoza, 2025, p. 246). Jose Gomez Mendoza suggests that the insignificance of Humboldt's individual scientific discovery is actually highly significant to exploration as he shares the responsibility for the creation of the ideological separation of north and south America (Gómez-Mendoza, 2025, p251)Therefore, views of Humboldt as inspiration for south American liberation, do not carry much weight from a scientific perspective (Whitaker,1960, p321). This is supported on a political level by Humboldt's statement to his friend Bolivar about his country's independence: "I do not see a leader for it" (Whitaker, 1960, p. 321). Despite this, Humboldt remained a great influence in terms of exploration and ideology. Why was this if the analysis of his scientific contributions is underwhelming and not revolutionary, as the chronological juxtaposition of world events might suggest?

The significance of this voyage of exploration came from Humboldt's revolutionary style of romantic travel writing, which made him a contemporary celebrity, changing exploration writing henceforth. Humboldt was greatly influenced by explorers. In his early life, he befriended Georg Forster, who had travelled on Cook's second voyage and written a book called a 'Voyage Around the World.' Forster's writing style was a great influence upon Humboldt, it was 'That of comparative anthropology and geography... endowed with a fine aesthetic sensibility (Smith, 1994, p. 218)." Humboldt's encounter with Forster as a student allowed him to develop what he coined his 'view' mentioned in 'Querelle d'Amérique', attempting to fuse science and aesthetics through systems, displayed as 'endless expansion and contraction of invisible forces' (Pratt, 1992, p. 121).' In this way, Humboldt's work has a completely different interpretation, more akin to art than science. Pratt suggests he attempted to present scientific research in the language and colour of the natural sublime- "Imbued with social fantasies of harmony, industry, liberty" (Pratt, 1992, p. 123). Alison E Martins suggests that this interpretation is somewhat lost in translation, from the original French to English, showing a more isolated European traveller, which is a result of plurality and syntax that redirects the original intentions (Martin, 2011, p. 49). The importance of travel writing and translations is imperative to fully understand the significance of explorations, both through the period eye and a modern geographic post-colonial lens. However, complications arise when a voyage such as this one has so many multidimensional and interdisciplinary points of view that all display a differing degree of significance in terms of the history of exploration and geographical contributions.

While, for many reasons I have outlined, I am sympathetic towards academics such as David Harvey calling academics to 'Try on a little Humboldt for inspiration', one must take care to assess the expedition as part of a much broader political and socioeconomic picture (Harvey, 1998, p229). This voyage of exploration must be understood as a product of a complex historical process that made geography an academia and landscapes that it was applied to (Sluyter, 2004). Humboldt and Bonpland's work served more as a significant influence on later narrative exploration writers, rather than being scientifically groundbreaking. It is also still unavoidably defined by the era of imperial power, leading the way for exploration and, to a lesser extent, science.

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Guess the Flag!

Written by Cameron Glendinning, 3rd year Geography

Geographers are famous for their love of maps, flags and understanding of the uniqueness of different places across the world, so here's a quiz to test your flag knowledge, across cities, sub-divisons of countries, nation-states and international organisations. Good luck!

1. Which flag is this?
A) Trinidad and Tobago
B) Kiribati
C) Cuba
D) Barbados

2. Which post-Soviet flag is this?
A) Kazakhstan
B) Uzbekestan
C) Kyrgistan
D) Russia

3. Which U.S. state flag is this?
A) California
B) Idaho
C) Oregon
D) Alaska

4. Which city's flag is this?
A) London
B) Paris
C) Montreal
D) Boston

5. Which country has purple in their flag?

A) UK
B) Russia
C) Dominica
D) Uruguay
E) South Sudan

6. What is an alternative name for the Scottish Flag?

A) Grand Ol' Flag
B) Andy's Banner
C) Union Jack
D) Wiphala
E) Saltire

7. Which country used this banner before they faced revolution?
A) Denmark
B) Sweden
C) Bulgaria
D) France

8. Which country's flag is this?
A) Bhutan
B) Pakistan
C) South Korea
D) Indonesia

9. What is the only country with a non-rectangular flag?
A) Germany
B) Columbia
C) Nigeria
D) Cameroon
E) Nepal

10. In 1937, Haiti changed their flag for what reason?
A) It was too similar to Licthenstein
B) They had a revolution
C) The U.S. President said it was ugly
D) It was too similar to Austria

11. How many stars are on the EU flag?
A) 11
B) 10
C) 12
D) 13

12: Which current national flag has been in use the longest?
A) Egypt
B) Japan
C) Denmark
D) Sweden

Do trees communicate and cooperate in the 'wood wide web'?

The science, pitfalls, and potential of a popular narrative

Written by Duncan Shaw, MSc Forest Ecology (SLU)

Introduction

Ideas that trees may communicate, cooperate, and form connections akin to human societies (i.e. anthropomorphism) have existed for a long time (Robinson et al. 2024). However, highly publicized experiments (Francis and Read, 1984) which were then supported in the field (Simard et al. 1997) provided scientific backing to these ideas through the resource sharing mechanisms of common mycorrhizal networks (CMNs), popularised on the cover of Nature as the 'wood-wide-web'. Recently, ideas of tree communication and cooperation have surged in the media in response to popular science books (e.g. Wohlleben, 2015; Simard, 2021) which made direct attempts to anthropomorphise trees through CMN-related processes. While these narratives have proven popular, they have also come under recent scrutiny. In this piece, after evaluation of the science and recent concerns, I argue for upmost caution when it comes to anthropomorphisms, which may cause more harm than good.

The Scientific Basis

In 1997, Simard and colleagues published a landmark study which labelled ectomycorrhizal Douglas-fir and paper birch donor seedling with carbon isotopes (13C and 14C). By measuring isotopic abundances in adjacent receiver seedling tissues after 9 days, they found a net exchange of carbon from birch to Douglas-fir. Since less labelled carbon was found in adjacent arbuscular mycorrhizal cedar seedlings, the authors concluded that common ectomycorrhizal linkages facilitated this net transfer. This especially occurred when Douglas-fir seedlings were shaded, suggesting that overstory trees may subsidize shaded understory trees (Simard et al. 1997). Read (1997) subsequently hailed these findings as shifting the paradigm from competition as the preeminent interaction in forests, towards community distribution and coexistence.

Since this experiment, other high-profile isotope tracing studies (often co-authored by Simard herself) have reportedly supported these conclusions (e.g. Teste et al. 2009). Another key hypothesis within this body of literature is kin recognition and preferential resource transport from mature trees to genetically related young trees via CMNs (Pickles et al. 2017). This is the basis of the familial 'mother tree' metaphor of Simard (2021). In addition to resource transfer, CMNs have been proposed as a channel for 'communication' between neighbours and kin via biochemical signalling (Gorzelak et al. 2015). Simard (2018) extends these arguments, suggesting that the topology and function of CMNs is akin to neural networks, ascribing 'human' traits of memory and intelligence.

Some Emerging Problems

When reading scientific papers, media reports, and popular books on this growing body of literature, it is easy to get enthusiastic over the idea that plants may form collaborative groups and families, conversing and cooperating through the wood-wide-web. However, even since Simard's seminal paper, there were doubts over this narrative shift (Robinson and Fitter, 1999). More recent experiments and observations, especially in the European boreal forest, have shown that proximity to large trees actually has a negative effect on regenerating seedlings (Figure 1a), which is released when trenching removes belowground competition (Högberg & Högberg, 2022). This does not necessarily disprove work on CMNs, as many of these studies were conducted in the temperate forests of British Columbia (BC), and it seems likely that any CMN cooperation effect is highly context dependant. Simard et al. (2025) also claim that observations in BC show under-canopy regeneration (Figure 1b). Methodological and academic issues have been highlighted which weaken confidence in CMN-related research. For example, scientists have pointed to problems with mesh barrier techniques used to exclude fungal connections to control for alternative soil pathways (Karst et al. 2023), and argued quantities of carbon isotopes detected in receiver plants relative to excluded plants may not be 'biologically significant' (Henriksson et al. 2023) or even part of the plant tissue (Robinson and Fritter, 1999). These are valid issues that must be resolved, although it is difficult to establish a quantitative threshold for what is a 'biologically significant' amount exchanged. Possible alternative pathways for labelled carbon to be incorporated into receiver plants (e.g. mass flow or hyphal turnover) (Henriksson et al. 2023) are hard to overlook, especially considering the difficulty in confidently controlling for them.

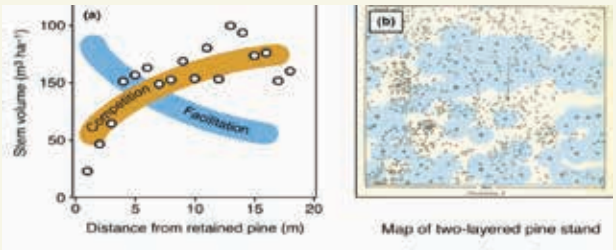

Figure 1a

Edge effect on forest regeneration

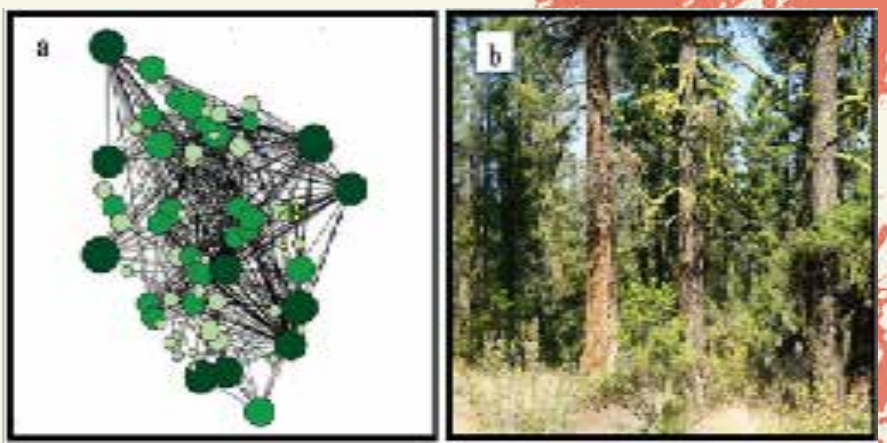

Figure 1b

There has also been suggestion of positive citation bias in CMN-related papers, inflating support for resource sharing hypotheses (Karst et al. 2023), encouraging – and likely also encouraged by – popular support for the narrative. Conceptually, cooperation via CMNs may fundamentally contradict ecological principles of evolution and competition. Simard et al. (2025) argues that despite all the uncertainties and alternative pathways, CMNs still provide the most parsimonious hypothesis. Contrary to this, I would argue that in order to go against the fundamental evolutionary grain, more data is required to prove beyond reasonable doubt.

Should we anthropomorphise trees?

Beyond academic concerns, this debate has wide-ranging societal implications, especially regarding terms that have been derived from and supposedly backed up by CMN-related research. Such anthropomorphic terms as 'communication' and 'mother tree' potentially increase pro-environmental behaviour (Williams et al. 2021) and can be used as a pedagogical tool to assist societal ecological understanding. This is the justification for Simard (2021) using anthropomorphisms liberally, along with the hope that it may help reform outdated forestry practices (Simard et al. 2025). However, problems may arise if management is influenced by narratives that are exaggerated orunsubstantiated. Ensuring connections with mother trees could provide an important service for natural regeneration in managed forests but may also lead to increased competition (Henriksson et al. 2023). It is my view that more research is required for CMNs to be a basis for management, but in the meantime, there are many, more substantiated reasons for reforming forest management (Prescott, 2024). Language is important, and the use of anthropomorphisms may obfuscate precision and create ambiguity for public understanding of ecological concepts (Som & Dobson, 2024). Some scholars have even utilised these narratives to advocate for social utopianism. Nixon (2021: 367) sees a "reconceived forest [which] offers a scientifically informed allegory of a more just society in which redistribution favours communal survival." Regardless of whether CMN claims are substantiated, we tread on dangerous territory when human socio-politics are explained and justified by nature, and vice-versa. I think it is also worth noting, agreeing with Som & Dobson (2024), that this anthropomorphising should be distinguished from many indigenous worldviews, which tend to decentre the human altogether, instead seeing nonhumans as intrinsically valuable in their own right. Indeed, there are also dangers to valuing trees only because they share traits with us.

Concluding remarks

Convincing, peer-reviewed science exists supporting the presence and function of CMNs in transporting resources between trees. There are also legitimate concerns over the data and methodological aspects of this science. Both are hard to ignore, and, at this conjuncture, it is difficult to navigate what can be said with confidence. This is why the clarity and accuracy of communication is vital. In this respect, while the jury may be out on the scientific specifics, it is clear there are dangers associated with anthropomorphising trees when talking about CMN-mediated processes. In addition, it seems to me genuine science around CMNs is being dismissed because of media sensationalization and overemphasis on anthropomorphism. Finally, before we can consider CMNs in management, more research needs to be done, particularly in regions outside the Douglas-fir forests of BC, formulating novel methodologies in search for the truth of these fascinating systems.

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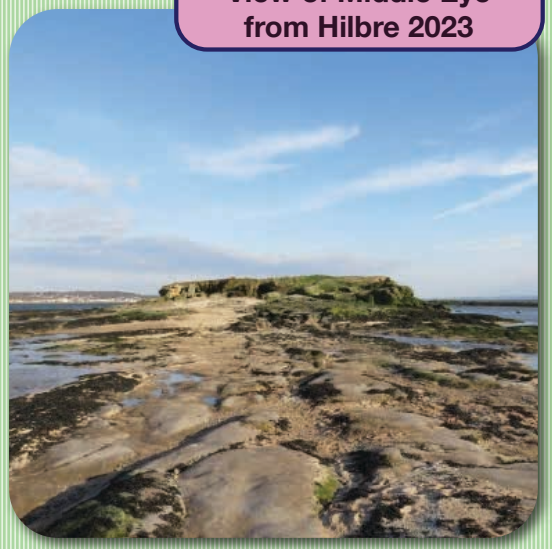
MY TRIP TO HILBRE

Written by Antonia Maddan

3rd year Geography and Social Public Policy

I spent the first week of 2026 on the island holiday of my dreams. No, it wasn't Barbados or Bora Bora, it was Hilbre Island. Haven't heard of it? I'm not surprised. Hilbre Island is a small island off the coast of West Kirby, a small town about 40 minutes from Liverpool City Centre. The Island is about 500 metres long, only 11 acres in area, and is a 2 mile walk from the coast at low tide. The island is a nature reserve and a registered site of special scientific interest, home to only a few buildings. There is the Bird Observatory, the Seal Observatory, the old (abandoned and quite creepy) keepers house, the canoe club (which STILL doesn't accept female members in 2026?!) and the Moorings, where we stay. The Moorings was built by my great-great grandfather in 1906, a West Kirby local and avid sailor in 1906, as a place for him to stop in-between sailing trips and to dry his canvas sails. Despite not being the most glamourous of holiday houses, with no heating, plumbing, electricity or drinking water, the Moorings is now shared and cherished by over 100 members of my family. There used to be a full-time keeper on the island, but there have been no permanent residents since 2012, meaning that over summer, we are often the only ones on the island at high tide. This has also led to several adrenaline inducing incidents, where we have had to use our boats to rescue misguided walkers or swimmers from the shore to prevent them from being swept out to the rough Irish sea. We have also had various run-ins with beached marine mammals of various sorts, primarily seal pups, whom we have awkwardly shuffled back into their watery homes. I could ramble on about the history, folklore, tourism, police lockdowns (yes, lockdowns plural) and rescue stories of the island for pages and pages. However, I have decided to write about the most important part of Hilbre, the nature of the island.

View from inside the moorings, 01/01/2026



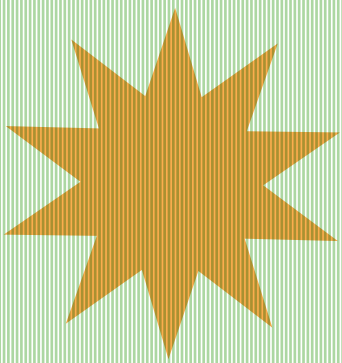
View of Middle Eye from Hilbre 2023

Picture of the old lifeboat station, 01/01/2026

Hilbre has a variety of wintering birds, especially oyster catchers which occupy the estuary at low tide and Middle Eye (a smaller island next to Hilbre) at high tide. Larger birds such as Whimbrel, Curlews, Shags and Little Egret are also residents of the island. Small birds on the estuary are most commonly Turnstones, Sanderlings and Ringed Plover. The bird observatory carries out monitoring and ringing of birds throughout the year. Steve, one of the principal bird watchers who stays in the observatory, has noted that he has seen a significant change in the species and numbers of birds on the island in the last 15 years due to global warming. Empirically, we have also recognised a change in the sea species present around the island in this time. I remember when I was younger, it was very rare to see a jellyfish at Hilbre. In the event it happened, they were relatively small, about the circumference of the base of a mug. In recent summers, the sea has become a much more treacherous place to swim, and we have spotted jellyfish almost the size of dustbin lids washed up on the shore.

Besides our wobbly enemies, the sea is primarily dominated by seals, which are one of the key sources of tourism to the island. At high tide, the sea is filled with bobbing seal heads, coming very close to the island. At low tide, the seals form an impressively large colony on West Hoyle Bank, where they bask in the sun in their masses. We do not venture near enough to the West Hoyle Bank to disturb them. Despite our attempts to stay away from the seals, they are curious creatures and often bob up very close to our kayaks. There have been other reported sightings of marine animals, bottle-nosed whales and dolphins, common variety dolphins and common variety porpoise, although we have not been lucky enough to see these. The nature of Hilbre Island is very precious, and council and community organisations such as 'Friends of Hilbre' work hard to maintain its biodiversity. This is particularly relevant today, as global warming and noticeable sea level rise threaten habitats on and around the island.

Grey Seal in the Dee Estuary - Summer 2024



Wall in Main Room of the Moorings, 2025

View of Middle Eye from Hilbre, an hour before high tide 02/01/2026

Binocular view of Oyster Catchers 02/01/2026

Binocular view of Herring Gulls and Oyster Catchers on Middle Eye 02/01/2026

View of Hilbre and Middle Islands from West Kirby, 2022

OUR COLLAGES

We hosted a collaging session earlier this year - check our our creations! As it turns out, we geographers can be quite the creative bunch! Maybe a geography degree really is just an arts and crafts project.


THOREAU WOULD have
for the colours of the sunset. He saw no need for recourse to dry
science to explain the changing colours of the evening. Regardless
heart- shaped animals
still live on the mudstones and shale
the earth body beneath the feet
the Universe may be infinite,
the Moon always faces Earth.
animals got bigger.
The petticoat of old leaves
wrap the landscape.

Pictures that inspire me as a Geographer

By Cameron Glendinning
3rd Year Geography

Geographies of SADness

Written by Hester Parr

Professor of Geography, Geographical and Earth Sciences

Winter can be a gloomy time in Glasgow and Scotland! This article communicates something about my current research life in a government funded project called 'Living with Seasonal Affective Disorder' (SAD). I have worked on questions of mental health and illness for many years as a social and cultural geographer and I became interested in SAD because of living in Glasgow and its local weather patterns. Although there was lots of medical research on SAD, there was not any human geography and so I sought funding with an interdisciplinary team to fill this gap. The story of the research project and who staffs it can be found here: gla.ac.uk/research/az/livingwithsad/
Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is contested condition in that it has an uncertain precise cause, diverse epidemiology and is surrounded by a substantial technical debate focused on whether this is a special category of 'disorder' or subset of clinical depression. Partly because of that debate there is a lack of national advocacy for people who experience this condition in the UK. Despite this uncertainty, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and other mental health organizations, do communicate about SAD to the general public and estimate that it affects 3 in 100 people in the UK. There are various debates about why darker places than the UK do not always equate to higher SAD incidence rates – with all sorts of reasoning – from national diagnostic norms, to the significance of light of snow glare, to the 'winter attitude' that comes with latitude. This contextual background and the debates about SAD as a category can be read about in our 2024 paper in Progress in Human Geography (see references below).

Our intervention as human geographers was to work with the 'lived experience' of SAD in Scotland, in order to understand more about how people relate to light in their everyday lives and to see if using a 'geohumanities' approach might change anything about common winter experience. Geohumanities in this context refers to practice-led methods, informed by arts and philosophical thinking about the relations between humans, space, place and landscape. In the 'Living with SAD' programme we conducted a UK-wide survey (350 very detailed responses); in-depth interviews, mood surveys and ethnographies of a specially designed 'Wintering well' workshop programme. The programme was arts-led and was designed around what people reported in the survey as things that make a difference to their lived experience of SAD. It was also designed in light of our interdisciplinary expertise in the research team (across psychiatry, human geography and arts-practice). We had 20 volunteers to the programme (with a waiting list of 150!), which ran across one winter.

In the 7 workshops based in Glasgow we related and reflected SAD everyday lives, went outside together to think with the light, talking, reading, sharing, writing with poems, rituals, and strategic planning. From these workshops, we have collated a range of strategies and messages and prompts to create some public guides to help people find a new way of living in winter and to be empowered to re-think their winter lives. The intention here was to encourage new relationships with outdoor nature and light in particular and also social pathways to making connections with others who might also find winter hard.

The project has produced both academic writing (see references below) and the public resources include a free online course produced by our psychiatrist partner, a guide for community leaders to start support groups for people with SAD and a poetic guide to winter: gla.ac.uk/research/az/livingwithsad/winteringwell/resources/
We have undertaken 100s of pieces of evaluation of our public resources and have harnessed these into evidence which tells us how our research helps people with SAD to 'rethink winter' and 'rethink SAD'. This work has attracted a lot of media attention, and the research has featured in print press such as The Guardian (https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/dec/26/the-pioneering-light-boxes-helping-orkney-islanders-avoid-seasonal-affective-disorder) Radio 4 (We have a series called 'Winter Well': (bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002kq3c); and podcasts (bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0gqzyq5). This public engagement via the media shows how human geography research can help shape public attitudes to environmental relations.
At present, we are working with a range of public libraries in Scotland to roll out 'Wintering Well' loan boxes which contain our resources, as well as a SAD lamp. Building community partnerships like this helps to make human geography relevant to the needs of the people of Scotland and co-produce 'a geography that matters', to use the words of the famous geographer Doreen Massey.

Human Ecology of the Cairngorm Forests: a Critical History

Written by Duncan Shaw

MSc Forest Ecology (SLU)

The Great Forest of Caledon: Forest Imaginings

"First comes Scotland in its primeval grandeur of mountain, forest, and flood, the war cry of the sturdy aborigines finding an echo in the woods wherever the tribal battle was waged… Here is Scottish freedom in embryo" (David Nairne, Notes on Highland Woods, 1892).

The Caledonian pinewoods on the northern side of the Cairngorm massif are considered by many a large remnant of what was once a great pine forest that covered all of Scotland – a forest that has featured greatly in the Scottish imagination, but which has also been the focus of much debate: the Great Forest of Caledon. The tale goes that this forest was used as protection by generations of Scottish peoples (Picts, Scots, Jacobites) taking refuge from their outside invaders (Romans, Vikings, English) who sought to destroy it. After the Jacobites fell in 1745, the Scots were forced to fell the mighty trees, "signalling the end of the glory of Caledon" (Smout, 2000). Caledon highlights the important value of forests to Scottish historical identity and resistance (Newton, 2014), and the Cairngorm pinewoods have been seen as a last bastion of Scottish culture: an "undefeated" remnant of this ancient forest. However, as Smout (2000) argues, the forest is, "in every sense of the word, a myth," a claim that is nowhere better exemplified than by studying the long history of human-forest interactions in the apparently 'untouched wildwood' of the Cairngorm forests. Primaeval beginnings A pioneering pollen study from Abernethy by Birks (1970) shows, as the climate improved after the last ice age, primary succession eventually led to the arrival, expansion, and long-term domination of Scots pine at c.7000 BP. This composition appears to have been relatively stable until the influence of human activities. Therefore, the pollen record seems to support the idea of Caledon to some extent, at least in the Cairngorms. However, wider regional studies show that a much more diverse range of primaeval woodland (e.g. birch, oak, hazel) covered most of Scotland with only a core region of pine – although even this likely had a substantial birch component (Edwards et al. 2019). The timing and causes of the decline in the original forest may also shed doubt on Caledon…

Indigenous Use and Sheilings

The traditional view was that early human settlement was not large enough to have a meaningful influence on the natural vegetation in the Cairngorms (Pears, 1968). More recent scholarship now emphasises the potentially large legacy effects that small-scale but long-term indigenous land-use can have (Norstedt et al. 2025; Smout, 2000). Pollen data shows decline in forest cover as early as Neolithic times (c.1700BC; O'Sullivan, 1977), with later declines also in the Dark Ages (c.500-1000 AD; O'Sullivan, 1973). These activities would have included local forest clearing and rough grazing which led to a more open forest, with heathland ground cover. From at least the 11th century until the Highland Clearances, the sheiling land-use system was practiced in upland Scotland (Holl & Smith, 2007). This involved the seasonal movement of livestock from lowlands to summer sheilings: upland hill pastures and their associated settlements. Glenmore was the end point of an important route from the Morayshire plains, and sources suggest there were as many as 180 sheilings in Glenmore and the surrounding area (Holl & Smith, 2007). Despite the system being no longer in practice, the legacy effects on the structure and extent of the forest are potentially great. Due to their location at the upper forest margin, the treeline elevation may have been suppressed due to grazing and the felling of trees for hut construction. A unique character of these pastures is low density, large veteran pine trees, which still stand proudly as a relic of this older management practice.

The forest was also exploited by highland peasants in other ways. The upland areas of Scotland were disconnected from international markets, so subsistence materials were necessarily extracted locally. Timber was also a source of tradable goods for peasants, with Inverness markets drawing birch and pine from Abernethy and Rothiemurchus (Smout, 2000). Population increase also led to more grazing by domestic stock, preventing woodland regeneration and promoting a more open wood-pasture. This evidence suggests these forests were modified by human activities in ways that would have, perhaps dramatically, shaped the character of the original pinewoods. This was through no foreign invasion and destruction, but gradually, by indigenous people through local subsistence land use systems, beginning well before the mythological destruction of Caledon in the 18th century.

The Age of Logging

By the 18th century, lairds realised and exploited the commercial potential of Rothiemurchus, Glenmore, and Abernethy through substantial timber extraction by southern speculators, a process tied to the Highland Clearances that devastated both local peasant communities and the forests. The York Building Company leased Abernethy in 1727 from the laird and the first commercial exploitation began (O'Sullivan, 1973). Logging continued in Rothiemurchus and Glenmore through the 18th and 19th centuries, reaching a peak in 1812, coinciding with the Napoleonic wars due to the increased timber demand and the expansion of home industries (O'Sullivan, 1973; Smout, 2007).

During this period, the forests were virtually clear-felled multiple times, with millions of trees extracted, almost all sold in the south (Smout, 2000).

Notably, many of the early extractions were unsuccessful due to there being too few marketable trees (Smout, 2007), perhaps a testament to the extent of previous indigenous impact, through their cutting of modest sized wood, leaving a younger, smaller forest. By the mid-19th century, management practices advanced to ensure that regeneration could begin to take place alongside felling (O'Sullivan, 1973). Non-natives were also planted to help regeneration (Smout, 2007).

The consequence was that, despite continued exploitation and near-clear-cutting, the forests regenerated throughout the 19th century. Therefore, these pinewoods, far from being an untouched remnant of wildwood are, as Smout (2007) puts it, "the outstanding example of a pine forest's ability to recover from heavy economic use… [they] are there because they were permitted to regenerate, not because they were spared the woodman's axe." Overall, the idea that 'outsiders' came to destroy Caledon may be flawed both in the sense that it had already been heavily modified by indigenous Scots, and because the lairds themselves seem to have been the drivers of exploitation for their personal gain. It is possible the contracted southern land managers were actually relatively shrewd in their management to maintain the forest.

A recreational landscape

Except for two pulses of further intensive felling during World War I and II and the planting of Forestry Commission plantations in Glenmore, the general decline of the timber industry opened the forest up to other, recreational land uses from the end of 19th century. Large parts Abernethy (O'Sullivan, 1973) and Rothiemurchus (Smout, 2007) were enclosed into sporting estates for hunting due to the pastime's increasing popularity among the elites based on romanticised Victorian myths and aesthetics of the Highlands following Queen Victoria's Balmoral visits. Potentially in contrast to this, the 20th century saw large parts of the forest, especially Glenmore, opened up for use by normal people. Outdoor recreation, such as camping and hiking, increased from the 1960s, as a major road into Glenmore was built; the first ski infrastructure was built in Glenmore in 1961. For the first time in centuries, common Scots had access and freedom to use these forests. These different uses by different classes perhaps exemplified the historical conflict between 'elite' and 'peasant' forest use.

Restoring Caledon?

In 1954, the Cairngorms National Nature Reserve was declared, with policies in place to protect and regenerate the pinewoods. However, deer populations remained very high, in part due to continuing demand for sport hunting. By the 1970s there were shifts in attitudes around the place of deer in forest management, with a greater acknowledgement that they were limiting regeneration. Since the 1990s, the major land managers of Abernethy (RSPB), Rothiemurchus, and Glenmore (Forestry Commission) have undergone extensive deer culling operations, in many areas reducing the very high densities to below the threshold required for regeneration (Gullett et al., 2023). This has led to woodland expansion, especially at high altitudes, and young pines regenerating between old, open 'wood-pasture' structures (Holl & Smith, 2007; Gullett et al. 2023). This partnership was formerly established in 2014 as "Cairngorms Connect", with a 200-year commitment to landscape-scale restoration of the forests. It is now well agreed that these Cairngorm pinewoods have been degraded from their "natural condition", and restoration management should take place. But what historical reference point do we restore to? This is complicated by the extremely varied land-uses of these forests throughout time, creating a highly cultural landscape which is a palimpsest of these different legacies. Care must also be taken that these pinewoods are not then used uncritically as a natural reference point for other pinewoods. Smout (2000) proposes that the myth of Caledon has been used in the 20th century by foresters and conservations alike to encourage their images of a reforested highland. It is likely to also have a lingering impact on how we envisage a restored Cairngorm pinewood and may lead to mismanagement. Some argue restoration should focus on the reestablishment of processes, including cultural processes like shieling grazing which produced old veteran trees of high biodiversity value (Holl and Smith, 2007).

Reflections

A critical reading of the history of the Speyside pinewoods reveals long-term use and impacts by elites and common folk. The latter is often overlooked despite their large and continuing ecological legacies. What can be seen today is a mosaic of structures, of patches with distinct legacies: modern coniferous plantations around Loch Morlich; open wood-pasture at the forest margin in Glenmore; young pine regeneration on moorland along the River Nethy; proud granny pines next to hunting lodges in Rothiemurchus. Clearly these woodlands are not the untouched remnant they are commonly perceived as, and this understanding of human ecology is crucial for future management. Looking to the future, we need to question how much our reference points are informed by (often sparse) palaeo-ecological data, and how much are they informed by mythology and national identity? With that said, the myth of Caledon is only one (perhaps misinformed) story, and this history is only one history. Whether about extinct predators, or indigenous land stewardship, there is undoubtedly an important place for stories and storytelling in shifting mindsets towards a more sustainable future for these forests.

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QUIZ: WHICH GEOGRAPHICAL LANDFORM ARE YOU?

Written by Matilda Ross, 3rd Year Geography

Answer some questions on what your dream holiday looks like – keep track of which symbol you get...a spiral 🌀, moon 🌙, star ⭐, or sun ☀️....add them up at the end and we'll tell you what geographic landform you are!

1. How far in advance do you book a holiday?

🌀 9 months in advance – the prices are super cheap!!
🌙 A few weeks, no need to be waiting months and I didn't know what my plans would be before then
⭐ I let someone else book... my only role is to send the money and enjoy the ride
☀️ A few days before – Skyscanner was showing bargain deals, who can resist a little getaway

2. Who are you going with?

🌀 My family – usually ends up a hell of a lot cheaper
🌙 Just my best friend, 2 is a crowd and 3 is a riot!
⭐ Myself – I want the freedom to do whatever I want
☀️ My friend group – split the cost and double the fun

3. How are you getting there?

🌀 Bus – takes forever but cheap cheap cheap (I am a student after all)
🌙 Train – environmentally friendly and the views are to die for
⭐ Roadtrip – fun on the way there, fun while we're there, and fun on the way back (just don't make me the driver)
☀️ Flight – no fuss, just get me there as quickly as possible!

4. What's the weather going to be like?

🌀 Chillyyy – love a snowy, cosy holiday
🌙 Not too hot, not too cold – but enough sun to get a tan
⭐ Mild temperatures, I'll be active and, on the move, so won't want any heatwaves
☀️ HOT HOT HOT I'm escaping Scotland and want that scorching sun

5. What's the destination?

🌀 Mountains – hillwalking, skiing, sign me up!
🌙 Beach – time to sunbathe and enjoy those waves
⭐ City – culture, food, museums, architecture... What's not to love?
☀️ All-inclusive 5-star hotel – get me those unlimited piña coladas ASAP

6. What are you there for?

🌀 Sport – I love staying active, and what better place to do it than in a brand-new environment with so many exciting things to see
🌙 Culture - learn more of another language, soak in the history, explore new music
⭐ Lazing around – factor 50 and a good book is all I need
☀️ Fun with my friends – and you never know who else you'll meet!

7. How many drinks are you averaging a day?
🌀 Only a couple in the evening – water only in the day if I want to stay hydrated
🌙 Bottle of wine with meals – tasting the culture, right?
⭐ However many I'm feeling on the day – might be 1 beer, might be 10 jagerbombs
🌞 Infinite!! I'm here with my friends, what else are we going to do after all that sight-seeing?

8. What souvenir are you bringing back?
🌀 Postcards for my family – takes up less space and I can journal all my experiences at the same time
🌙 Things I found – shells on the beach, a ticket stub, a flower I can dry
⭐ A curiosity I found at the local market – clothing only made in that country, an interesting painting, a book in a different language
🌞 Drink! And some of my favourite foods while I was there

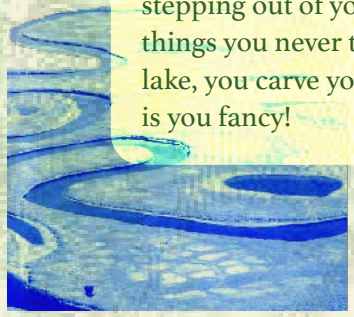
9. How are you recording your trip?
🌀 Photos on a camera – simple and I can easily access them to look back on fun times
🌙 Journalling – nothing would compare to my thoughts when experiencing all these new things
⭐ A collage book – I can let my creativity flow while reminiscing!
🌞 Social media – my TikTok drafts are full after time spent away

If you got mostly **SPIRALS** 🌀:

You are a cave! Caves are deep, timeless, and wonders of nature. Like the earth, you are reliable, organised, and grounded. When it comes to a holiday, you are still always up for a good time (it might just mean you planned it ahead MONTHS ago). Hey, nothing wrong with scheduling some fun into your calendar. Although you enjoy staying active and exploring new places, you enjoy luxury and staying in your comfort zone. Like a cave, you are earthy, stubborn, and dependable, with not much that can shake you!

If you got mostly STARS ⭐:

You are an ox-bow lake! Different from the rest, an ox-bow lake diverts from the normal path of a river to forge its own route... just like you! You are individual and unique, which is apparent in your holidays. Could never catch you following the crowd! You are always up for a laugh and enjoy the spontaneous things in life –holidays are for fun, stepping out of your comfort zone, and trying things you never thought possible. Like the ox-bow lake, you carve your own path and do whatever it is you fancy!



If you got mostly MOONS 🌙:

You are a coral reef! Like the haven of biodiversity in the watery terrain of the ocean, you are unique, nurturing, and mystical. Your holidays are introspective and educative, you're always open to new cultures and people (all while bathing in some sun, of course). Holidays are a time for reflection and fun, just like how a coral reef has the excitement of biodiversity and the enrichment of an ecosystem.

If you got mostly SUNS 🌞:

You are a volcano! Fiery and unpredictable, and at times explosive, you are a lover of life and will do anything under the sun that involves spontaneity and adventure. Your holidays are unorganised and messy, but that under no circumstances mean that they aren't an absolute blast! You and your friends may spend a lot of money, but memories are forever, right?! Like the volcano, your holidays can be potentially destructive, but also active, awesome, and in most cases life-giving!

"Living and Dying Well as Mortal Critters": an Approach to Urban Environmentalism

Written by Jasmine Patel, MRes Human Geography

Utopian visions of environmentally conscious living often leave the city behind. Fantasies of harmony with the earth play out in the rolling green hills, far from the dense and multicoloured grit of the city. However, there are more people living in urban areas than ever before, and there are new ways to live gently.

In the face of climate crisis, it is hard not to wax lyrical on the image of a pre-industrial society: no microplastics in the drinking water, no heatwaves warming the oceans to temperatures comparable to that of a cup of tea- dolphins and whales as begrudging compatriots in a sea-wide stew. In the face of exploitative global capitalism, the idea of living off the land feels especially appealing. Connecting with nature feels radical in comparison to the overconsumption shoved down our throats at every turn in the urban world.

The idea of modernity is built on colonial legacies, as is the imagined line between the physical world and the human world. Nature has been treated as something to conquer and has felt the blade of exploitation throughout history. Reconfiguring approaches to the world around us means deconstructing this world view and embracing our position as just one of many mortal critters crawling around on the crust of the earth. There is no "universal modernity" that can be achieved under capitalism, it is only possible to achieve through exploitation and marginalisation of a perceived Other- be that a class or race of people or the landscape of the earth itself (Weatherhill, 2025).

The Romantic period refers to an era of European history in which the non-human world was revered within many forms of art at the time. In literature, poetry and prose, the natural world becomes a physical representation of people's inner spirituality as the industrial revolution began to change the landscapes people were used to (Siegrist & Berthold, 2025). Romantic values still influence the way nature is treated today, in terms of tourism, land management and media portrayal, however the ideology is not entirely innocent. Imagery of the natural world and Romantic yearning for a perceived past ignores the brutal histories of colonisation. While respect for the earth does inspire many contemporary visions of environmentally conscious living, the way in which this is imagined can be problematic. The Romantic does not explicitly oppose capitalist exploitation- the movement emerged in a time where Eurocentric imperialistic ideology ran deep, and the brutalities of colonisation cannot be sifted out from a rich European's case of mountaintop enlightenment. Hierarchies were pushed upon the natural world despite surface-level reverence and respect. Thousands of native species across the world were eradicated not only as a side effect of imperialism, but as a purposeful method to control populations (Menozzi, 2013).

Eco-fascism is on the rise: a political stance that weaponizes the often-conservative approach of Romanticism and impact of industrialisation and human activity on the natural world to excuse white supremacy (Hancock, 2022; Shukla, 2021). A recurring theme in ecofascist ideology is population control as a solution to issues caused by the climate crisis. Perpetuating the view that humans are a disease on the planet ignores the fact that a very small percentage of the population is responsible for large scale greenhouse gas emissions (Hancock, 2022). Fascism preys on existing cultural ideas and twists them to support ethnonationalist goals, and ecofascist ideologies has hurt many marginalised communities across the world. So let us pull from the fraying underfunded edges of the humanities in conceptualising a framework for climate action that does not reinforce the legacy of colonialism nor rely on instruments of capitalism. Let us turn our attention to pieces of literature that reimagine the natural and human world as connected and reliant.

Ursula K Le Guin's 1972 science fiction novel "The Word for World is Forest" tells us of a forested far-away planet, colonised by a future species of human. The residents of this planet have a harmonious, non-exploitative relationship with the land, in which their relation to nature is a defining part of their identity. Le Guin forces you into the blood-soaked shoes of the coloniser- this figure cannot conceptualise different populations as worthy of respect and autonomy and violently attempts to tear down the native societies of the planet Athshe. Le Guin takes the ideological undercurrent of imperialism rife within our society and draws it to the surface with her writing, encouraging the reader to imagine less destructive ways of walking the earth. The motivations of the coloniser are real and present in our own world, not simply a byproduct of narrative license.

Imagining a new society is a theme within Paul Monette's "Sanctuary," a novella situated within a magical forest under the guardianship of a genderless witch. The balance of the forest is upset when the power-hungry apprentice of the witch turns the diverse forest population against one another with propaganda and other politically manipulative strategies. Eventually the forest rights itself and the rifts that have formed between its inhabitants are mended. The tale emphasises the fragility of societal systems and the possibility for reimaginations to become real, harnessing the revolutionary potential of its characters albeit in a more playful setting than our own. The flimsiness of the reasoning that inhabitants of the forest use to turn on one another hits home within our own world: how many times have categorical differences been weaponised in the interest of power?

While both Le Guin and Monette utilise the matrix of Romantic imagination to situate their writing, they are not bounded by its limitations. The importance of working within one's own environment is obvious within both pieces: not yearning for a past, rather constructing a future. "There is need for a new vision that reunites human beings with all their relations in the world, and that vision is necessary to sustain a very difficult struggle. We must recognise that the world is a limited space but that our imaginations, our mental universe, is infinite." (Osorio, 2011, p. 300).

Hope alone cannot become the building blocks of a new world order. It is important to feel the losses inflicted by late-stage capitalism on a personal level, without becoming paralysed by it. Within grief, there is the opportunity to imagine alternatives to hegemony (Osbourne, 2019). Modernity as a structure reinforces the idea of a singular reality, rather than embracing the contrast and dissonance in any one interpretation. "We failed to save The World, but there are other, subaltern worlds here, accessible if we attend and care for them", (Osbourne, 2019, p. 5).

So, we must not strive for an idealised past that may not have existed as we imagined it. Living and dying well as mortal critters means embracing a holistic view of our world. It means complicating assumed categories of "us" and "them", it means radical care and consideration for that which surrounds us, be that a crowded urban landscape or an isolated stretch of green. Just because one visualisation of utopia did not come alive does not mean that there are not thousands of other imaginaries ready and waiting to be harnessed.

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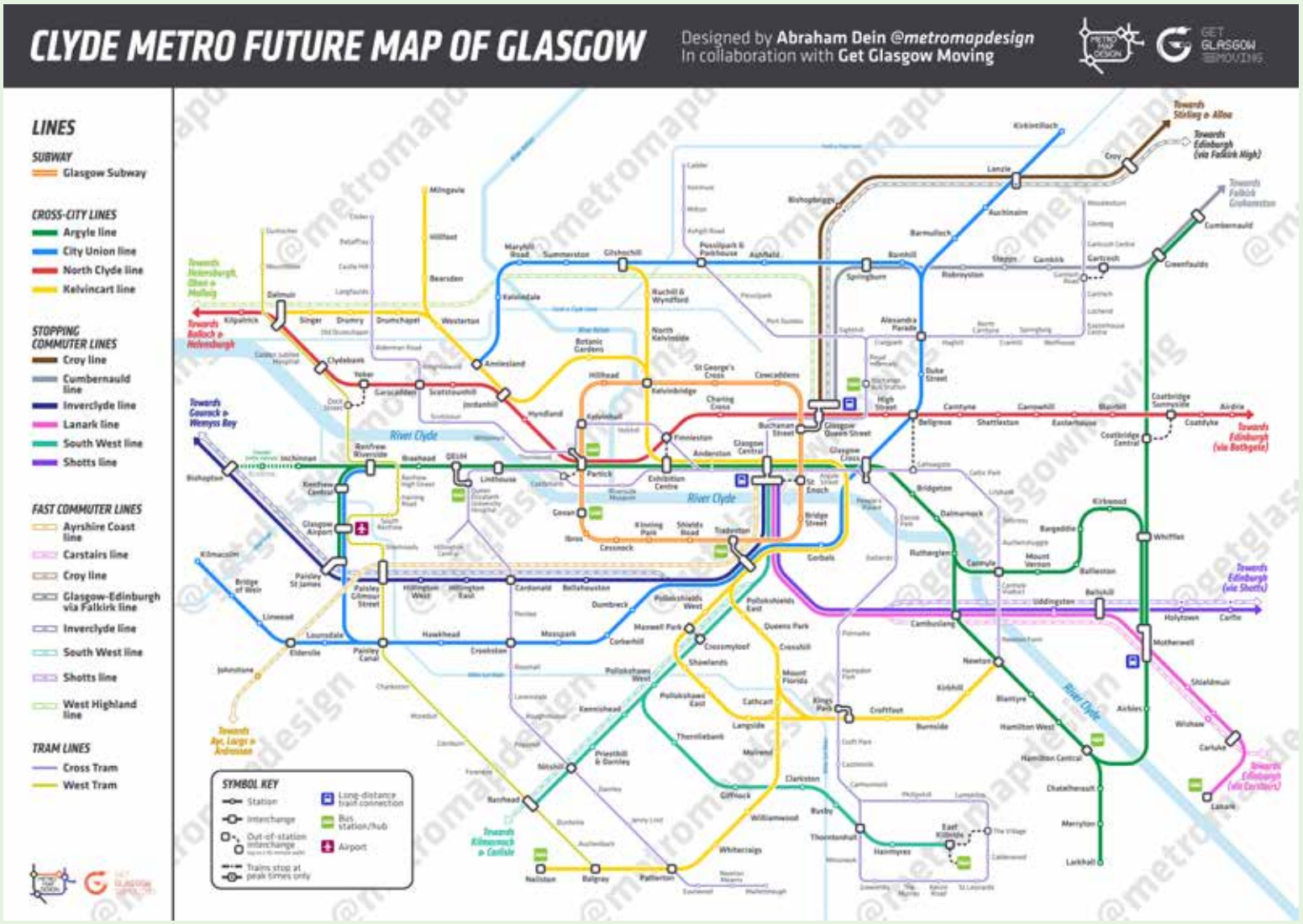
The Clyde Metro:

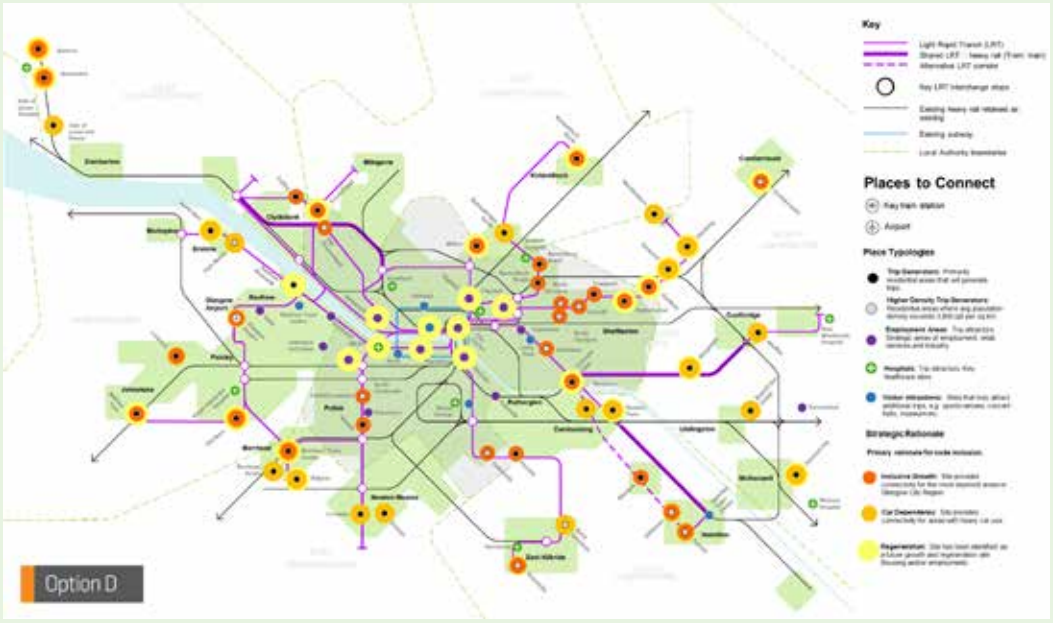
Unpacking the Plans for Glasgow's Transportation System

Written by Fion Jardine, 1st Year Geography and Politics

Everybody who knows me knows I have an interest in urban design and, more specifically, public transportation. It's why I study Geography after all. So, as you might expect, when Get Glasgow Moving (the leading campaign for improving Strathclyde's public transportation) posted a short video across many social media platforms depicting the future of Glasgow's public transport system, everybody sent that Instagram Reel straight to me. That's how I know this video has been circulating widely in the Glasgow area. If you have not seen it, the video briefly runs through many of the things GGM pushes for, such as re-nationalising the bus network and introducing a seamless payment system, but the main focus of the video is a map of what Glasgow's rail network of the future will look like after the completion of the Clyde Metro project, an all-encompassing overhaul to the rail system in the Glasgow area put forward by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT). This map seems to have generated a lot of buzz in the city, with an exciting vision of a London Underground-esque rail network, including areas that currently aren't served by rail. However, the video does not make it entirely clear that this map is NOT produced with any involvement by SPT (to my knowledge). It is produced by Abraham Dein, who posts custom metro-style train maps on Instagram on behalf of Get Glasgow Moving. Many people who sent me this video seemed to be under the impression that this was an official map, but it appears to be merely GGM's interpretation of the information in SPT's publicly available Case for Investment (CFI) documents.



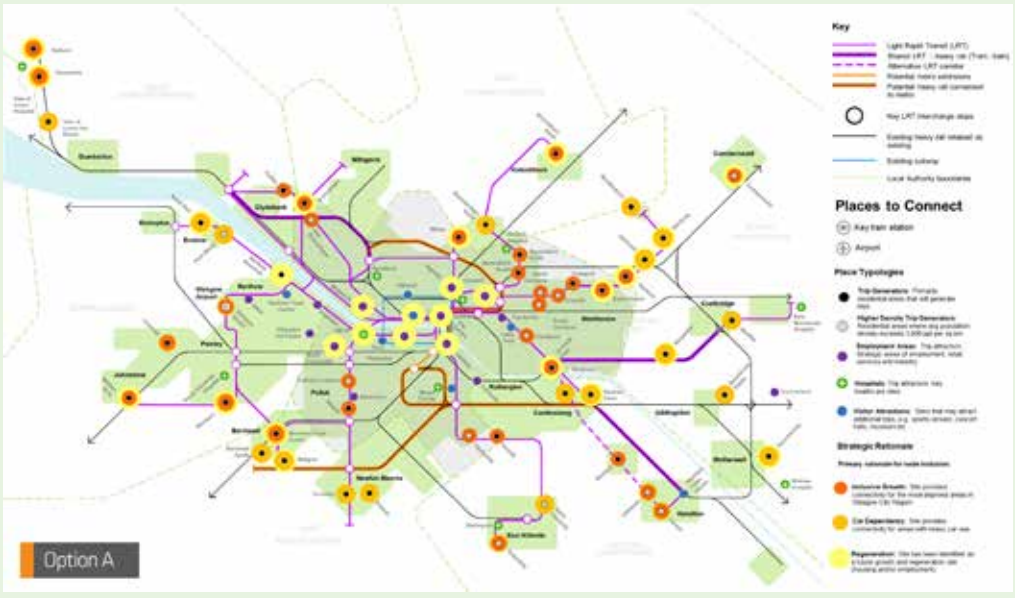
As such, this moment would seem a good time to break down what we actually know about the real plans for Clyde Metro. Public communication on what the project even entails has been quite poor. To put simply, Clyde Metro is the name of a masterplan covering many expansions and upgrades to the rail network that have been proposed over the years. The CFI is projected to be complete in 2027, hopefully allowing work to begin. It's a very long-term project encompassing many different smaller projects, and as such. It will likely be decades before everything put forward as part of the plan will be completed. The project will be funded through the Glasgow City Region Deal (a funding package given to the 8 council areas near Glasgow). The Clyde Metro CFI Stage 1 Overview Communication Note, published in May of last year, puts forward four different options for what the future of Glasgow's rail network will look like: A, B, C and D. It includes a map of what each version of the project could look like, although these maps are extremely vague and take wild liberties with geography, making it difficult to know exactly what route some of the proposed lines will take. Get Glasgow Moving's map mostly interprets SPT's Option C, but elements of Option A, which the GGM committee prefers to have been mixed in.

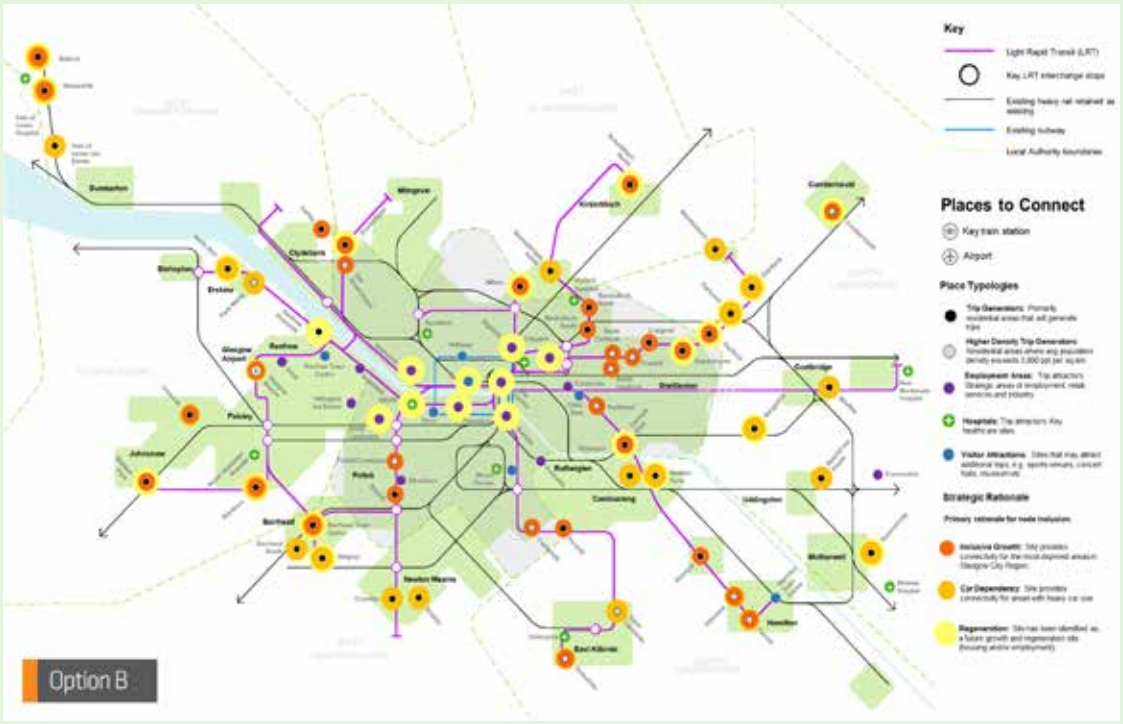


Option D is the least ambitious option, but therefore probably the most affordable. It only includes new tram lines. It would see an extremely extensive tram network built covering the entire city. It's difficult to say, looking at the map, exactly where these lines would go (and trust me, I could pore over this map for hours trying to figure it out), but it appears we could see trams to destinations as far as Kirkintilloch, East Kilbride, Johnstone, Moodiesburn, Coatbridge and Hamilton. It could also provide service to deprived and transport-starved areas such as Parkhead, Dennistoun and possibly Possilpark. There will be a tram connection to Glasgow Airport, which is long overdue a rail link, as well as Braehead and Silverburn shopping centres, and the Queen Elizabeth and Stobhill hospitals.

Skipping back to Option B, this option is almost identical to Option D except several tram-train lines have been added (trams that run on street for part of the route and on National Rail lines for another part of the route). This would make trams to Dalmuir, Coatbridge and Hamilton much faster for about the same price, but could make the network less reliable and more capacity-constrained due to sharing track with mainline trains.

Option A is a further evolution of Option B, adding one actual metro line, consisting almost entirely of converted National Rail lines (meaning higher capacity and frequency than these lines could previously provide). This line would be constructed by upgrading the old City of Glasgow Union Railway (CoGUR), a viaduct of track which runs through Gorbals and Trongate, which is infrequently used at present. This viaduct would allow trains from the Cathcart Circle lines (which cover most of the south side) to run through the city centre to the Maryhill line (covering the north side) via the Springburn line (covering the east end), all of which would be converted to metro operation, creating one continuous metro line from Anniesland to Neilston or Newton via Springburn and the city centre. This idea is not entirely new; a similar idea has been proposed before under the name Glasgow Crossrail, but the plan is not without its flaws. The Cathcart Circle, Springburn Line and Maryhill Line trains currently run out of Glasgow Central and Glasgow Queen Street, right in the heart of the urban core. The CoGUR, which they would be rerouted along only the skirts around the edge of the city centre, the only station within the LEZ would likely be at Trongate. Thus, the city centre would actually be less accessible for people on these lines than it is now.





The final option, Option C, is by far the most ambitious option, and the one that is (mostly) the basis for GGM's map. It has a heavy focus on metro lines. It includes converting the Paisley Canal line to a metro and re-extending it to Kilmacolm where it terminated until 1983, building a new metro line to Kirkintilloch town centre and having both of these be branches of the cross-city metro line outlined in Option A, crossing the city via Trongate. Additionally, an east-west metro tunnel (the city's third east-west rail link) would be built between Exhibition Centre and the city centre, which curiously follows the exact same route as the existing Argyle Line tunnel, but is not marked as an existing line being converted to metro, implying that this will be a brand new tunnel built perhaps next to or underneath the Argyle Line. After the Exhibition Centre, the line diverges into several branches, one heading through the west end and past the University along an iconic abandoned railway alignment, the remnants of which can be seen all over the west end (including tunnel portals near Inn Deep and an entire abandoned station visible through the ventilation shafts hidden in the bushes in Botanical Gardens). The existing lines to Milngavie and Dalmuir (via Singer) would be rerouted along this alignment, along with a short branch to somewhere around Maryhill Tesco. To the south, the line would cross the river and run along a brand-new alignment serving QEUH, Braehead Shopping Centre, Renfrew Town Centre, Glasgow Airport and Paisley Town Centre, along with a branch to Erskine. which currently has no rail service. Many of these metro lines would replace tram lines from the previous options. Option C is obviously the option we can all hope for, the full realisation of the grand masterplan. It would cost a fortune and probably take decades to construct fully, but Clyde Metro only provides a long-term guideline for future projects, which will be completed incrementally over a very long period of time. In fact, as with any infrastructure masterplan of this sheer scale, it is very likely that it will not end up looking like any of the options shown to us at all. Despite the sheer massive scale and ambition of these projects, there are still bizarre decisions shown. Most notably, the usage of the CoGUR viaduct through Trongate as opposed to digging an entirely new north-south tunnel through the heart of the city connecting to Queen Street and Central, a proposal put forward in a Connectivity Commission Report by Professor David Begg in 2019, along with some of the earliest elements of plans that would go on to become Clyde Metro. This would be far more expensive but would provide more direct connectivity and is not at all unprecedented. It also appears east-west metro trains will terminate at the city centre, a decision so odd that GGM has chosen to show trains from this line continuing onto the CoGUR viaduct (An older version of the Clyde Metro map does seem to show this, but it does not appear to be possible to build such a connection without demolishing much of the city centre, which is why I'm assuming the plan is for trains to terminate in the city centre somewhere). This and other bizarre decisions considered, we can only hope that the planners will make the right decisions in the end when realising this vague map and bring Glasgow's transportation system into the 21st century.

The Netherlands is famous for being one of Europe's lowest-lying countries, with around a quarter of its land sitting below sea level. Protected by an extensive system of dams, dikes, and sea defences, flooding is often seen as the nation's greatest environmental threat. That assumption was challenged in January 2026, when Storm Goretti swept across the country. Northern provinces experienced up to 15cm of snow, accompanied by strong winds. The NL Times note this as the heaviest snowfall the Netherlands had seen in five years. According to the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI), snowfall has declined sharply due to climate change. Sixty-five years ago, De Bilt weather station near Utrecht recorded an average of 23 days of snow cover per year. Recently, that figure dropped to around three days, and snow rarely settles for long. Given these statistics, it is understandable why the Netherlands has invested little in snow-clearance technology such as gritters, snow ploughs, and heated infrastructure. However, Storm Goretti exposed the risks of planning for the "average" climate rather than the extremes. The most visible impacts were felt at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, which became the world's most disrupted airport for five consecutive days, according to FlightRadar24.

Around 3,200 flights were cancelled, leaving hundreds of thousands of passengers stranded, including hundreds of University of Glasgow students, travelling on connecting flights for the new semester. In an exclusive interview with a Schiphol customer service agent, Medina, she states, "The situation was extremely intense and overwhelming. I had to hand out a large number of hotel vouchers to people whose flights were cancelled. The queues became very long, and passengers were understandably frustrated, tired and stressed after waiting for hours with little clarity about when they would be able to travel. Agents were doing their best to manage the situation, but the combination of bad weather, safety procedures, and the sheer number of affected flights caused the entire airport operation to be heavily disrupted. On top of that, many agents were unable to come to work because of the weather conditions. Trains were not running at all, and there was heavy traffic on the roads, which led to even more staff shortages and added pressure on those who were already working". One major issue was infrastructure. Unlike airports in Canada or Scandinavia, Schiphol does not have heated runways, and lacked sufficient de-icing fluid. Each aircraft requires two layers of de-icer to depart safely in icy conditions, quickly creating a national shortage. Dutch flag carrier KLM announced it would send vehicles to Germany to collect 100,000 litres of de-icing fluid itself, enough to help around 300,000 passengers continue their journeys. As the country's main hub, even short delays in fetching this supply had knock-on effects One delayed aircraft to cancel dozens of onward flights, leaving passengers with no alternative routes in or out of the country.

...Ready

Turning to rail travel offered little relief. NS trains and Eurostar services were cancelled, as much of the rail infrastructure was not designed to cope with snow. Once again, this was considered an unnecessary expense in a country where snowfall is usually rare. And in the off-chance you were rebooked on another flight or train? You were lucky to even arrive at the airport or train station. Many of Holland's narrow roads between frozen canals were left ungritted and uncleared. Local councils relied on homeowners to clear streets themselves, making travel unsafe or impossible. In effect, the country became completely non-functional wit no way in and no way out, which also left supermarkets such as Albert Hijn with many empty shelves. Scottish influencer Olivia Purcell reported being stranded in Amsterdam for twelve consecutive days after her easyJet flight was cancelled. In a series of TikTok videos, she reflected on unexpected positive outcomes of the disruption, explaining how it allowed her to gain cultural knowledge through the kindness of locals who helped her to live like them. She highlights this kindness through her Airbnb host, Tjakko de Vos, a well-known Amsterdam hockey player, who allowed her to stay free of charge during the disruption. However, this rare event might become more common. Storm Goretti was classified by the BBC as a "weather bomb", an unofficial term used by the Met Office to describe explosive cyclogenesis. This occurs when a storm's central air pressure drops extremely rapidly, intensifying wind and precipitation over a short period of time. Warmer ocean waters, caused by climate change, provide extra energy that allows storms to "bomb out" faster and become more intense. While scientists suggest the frequency of these storms may not be increasing dramatically, their severity clearly is. A 2025 NASA study found that extreme weather events have doubled in intensity compared to the 2003–2020 average. The KNMI has warned that the Netherlands must prepare for more frequent and severe extreme weather events. Attribution studies show that extreme rainfall in Western Europe is now 1.2-9 times more likely and 3-19% heavier due to human-caused climate change. Storm Goretti highlights a key socioeconomic issue: how should countries adapt to increasingly unpredictable weather? Is it economically sensible to invest heavily in infrastructure for rare events, or does failing to prepare risk even greater disruption? As climate change increases the intensity of extreme weather, events once considered "unlikely" may become far more damaging. Storm Goretti suggests that surviving the future climate may depend not just on protecting against the most common hazards, but on being ready for the unexpected.

for it?

Written by Bryan Formosa
3rd Year Geography and Economics

GEOGRAPHIC DOT-TO-DOT

By Fion Jardine, 1st Year Geography and Politics

Below are 10 photos of locations within the City of Glasgow. If you can correctly mark the exact location each photo was taken on the map on the next page with a dot, and then connect the dots from 1-10, it will reveal the shape of an iconic character. Name the character correctly to win!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

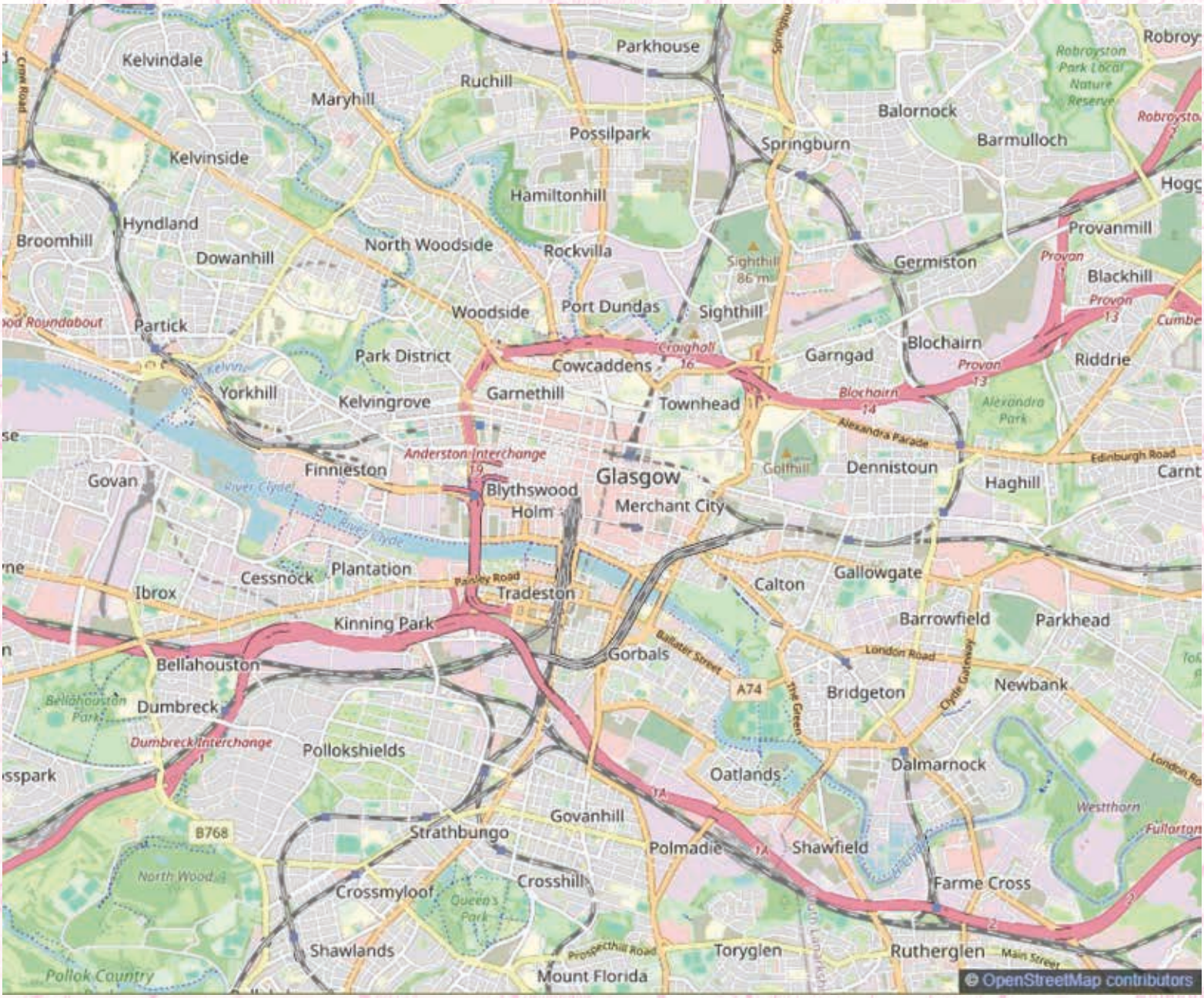
6.

7.

8.

9.

Fill out the map and see if you can name the iconic character!



Answer: Pac-Man!

Dykes versus FLINTAs: The Pop-up Nights Replacing Lesbian Bars

Written by Jasmine Patel, MRes Human Geography and Chelsea Daniel, MLitt Film and Television Studies

Within the history of queer studies, lesbians have been argued to be invisible, with most foundational texts contending rather with the gay man. In queer geographies, there are reasons given for this gap: according to Geographer Julie A. Podmore, this is because "lesbian forms of territoriality at the urban scale have been relatively 'invisible' since their communities are constituted through social networks rather than commercial sites" (Podmore 2006, 595). Now, in the 2020s, lesbianism has never been more visible, credited to the activism of lesbians past and the creation of publics in the digital sphere. However, in this visibility comes the creation and commercialisation of the lesbian night or club takeover, often referred to as Dyke Nights or FLINTAs (Femmes, lesbians, Inter-Sex, Nonbinary, Transgender and A-Sexual). These events are just as valued digitally as they are physically in their attempt to create a counterpublic. This article, examining the 'lesbian' nights and spaces in Melbourne, London, and Glasgow, will engage with the notion of commercialised lesbian nights and whether these are an act of defiance of the mainstream public, or rather a broadening of the public, symbolising an absorption of what was once 'queer' by the mainstream.

Queer geographies have long been defined by their opposition to the public or main space. In response to marginalization, queer spaces have been community-led and historically a curated space, one that avoids the oppressiveness of the heterosexual public. "Like many women, queers frequently are suspicious, fearful, and unable to relate easily to the fixity and certainty inherent in most dominant ontologies of space and place" (Knopp 2007, n.p). Due to the heterosexuality of the world, historically, there exists a danger in queering the public; visibility came with danger. Furthermore, "many queers actively seek out movement and other liminal experiences (e.g., placelessness) as part of larger identity quests (Knopp 2004 in Knopp 2007, n.p)." These spaces were built around ideas of "pleasure, as well as safety and security" (ibid.)
It appears, at least digitally, that in the trend of closure of these spaces, mostly gay clubs, the pop up or Dyke night, has begun to take its place. In the place of the fixed and permanent, there is a temporary night. With this pop-up culture, comes an emphasis on the internet, specifically social media, as the new word of mouth, or the 'if-you-know-you-know' approach of spaces past. The fixed counter-public is now a temporary adaptation of the public.

The temporality of the 'dyke night' or 'FLINTA', as they can be colloquially referred to, could be argued to be a logical step in the queer public. It plays into the "placelessness" that is inherent to the queer practice, a playing into the liminal the queer body lives in (Knopp 2007, n.p). It has parallels to phenomenologist Sara Ahmed's idea of the queer orientation, one that is not in the linear. "To queer phenomenology is to offer a different slant to the concept of orientation itself" (Ahmed 2006, 14). Could the removal of a physical space and rather a temporary site of joy slant the concept of the public itself? Or, is the act of taking over a space for a moment simply an expansion of the public to include previously maligned bodies?

This essay contends that making this case ignores the role of the digital public embedded within these pop up nights identity; these nights merely adapt the public for the night. Is the rise of the dyke night an absorption of identity under neoliberal publics? Many conceptualisations of the internet define it as exclusively a tool to be utilised, rather than an established part of societal frameworks. Internet spaces cause friction between notions of the private and the public, complicating definitions of space. Jón Ingvar Kjaran writes that space is not stable and fixed, and therefore space can be queered. (Kjaran 2016, 250). Queer spaces can be understood as counter publics, which Nancy Fraser defines as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs" (Fraser 1990, p. 67). However, the idea of what once were queer spaces or counter publics has undergone a shift. Queer geographer Greggor Mattson wrote in 2015 on the role of homonormative placemaking and San Francisco, exploring the erasure of gay nightlife. He argues that "homonormativity was spatially institutionalised in its ability to grant cosmopolitan consumers, gay and straight, the ability to 'take place' throughout the city." (Mattson 2015, 3146). With nightlife being a mixed space for straight and queer, he argues that queer nightlife can be absorbed into the public, rather than being a resistant act. Public spheres are "plagued by forces of commercialisation and compromised by corporate conglomerates", according to Papacharissi, and as queer community making is pulled further into the mainstream, it inevitably falls victim to commodification (2008). Mattson discusses the idea of 'spatial capital', arguing it to be a privilege to "shift styles temporarily", referring to queers who shift between homonormative and outwardly queer (paraphrasing Grazian 2007, in Mattson 2015, 3146).

'Spatial capital' is an important factor to consider when exploring the FLINTA's events or Dyke Nights. It would be remiss to consider that these temporary nights occur in gentrified neighborhoods, whether it is the inner-north suburbs in Melbourne/Naarm, the Southside of Glasgow, and the London borough of Hackney. As these neighbourhoods drastically change from places for recent migrants and the working class, the pop-up nights create a temporal experience, encouraging a tourist behaviour among the growingly affluent queer communities who frequent these gentrified locales. "A growing body of scholarship suggests that, at least in some locales, gayvillages are in 'decline', while other areas of the inner city are being 'queered' through the increased visibility of LGBT people, marking a transformative socio-spatial reordering of sexual and gendered minorities" references scholars Nash and Gorman-Murray (2014, 757). The writers here are referencing inner-west Sydney, however there are cultural similarities to this neighbourhood and to the ones we will be exploring. Nash and Gorman-Murray further argue that due to the institution's and nation states' new acceptance of 'gay-ness' from marriage to the military, there is an acceptance and visibility in mainstream culture, specifically for cisgendered queers, that the working class and migrant communities do not receive. This is not to say queerphobia is still not a threat to the communities that frequent the pop-up nights, but rather that the pop-up style in place of the counter-public can in turn harm other communities also marginalised by the neo-liberal order.

Digital ethnographies

Ethnography finds its roots in anthropology, a discipline historically at fault for reinforcing "us" and "them" boundaries between researchers and those "under study". Ethnography has evolved with time, beginning to dissolve these hierarchies and understanding sociological phenomena from the inside out. Within queer geographies, contemporary research tends to emphasise positionality and its role in shaping the research produced- when studying queer spaces, a fellow queer person is more likely to be invited to become part of the community than someone lacking this proximity. Digital ethnography refers to the shift in qualitative techniques following the continually-dissolving wall between digital and "real world", and offers a method of observation that can occur without face-to-face access. However, digital ethnography usually relies on the cultivation of an online space where participants discuss a predetermined topic. In this case, we assume a role that is sceptical and silent, letting the carefully cultivated media presence that pulls queers in for tailored events find us. As members of the target audience (young, queer, interested in a party), we can use our vantage point to assess to what extent queer nightlife advertisement and event planning falls victim to assimilation politics and strays from the radical roots of queer community.

The nights we have chosen to analyse digitally were not picked because of the night's popularity, but rather to highlight the different ways social media is used as a tool for FLINTA's nights promotion. For example, Ponyboy in Glasgow is an internationally recognised queer club night, whose online presence includes magazine promotion. However, Ponyboy is not FLINTA's specific, so it has not been chosen for analysis, though that would be ripe for discussion for broader queer club nights use of the digital public. There are also pop up events that exist outside of night life that have a common online presence, which tend to be fundraising focused. However, this is beyond the scope of this paper, but is worth exploring in this context further.

Dykotomy

Dykotomy is Melbourne/Naarm based, describes itself as "FLINTA+ club night" in their Instagram bio, for DYK(E)S of Naarm. Using the phrase Naarm, the traditional name for the city colonially known as Melbourne, whilst also including two different phrases to curate an inclusive identity. The bio also has a google form link for DJs and Performers who are interested in performing at the club night, highlighting an emphasis of the local community. In their highlights, Dykotomy advertises 'mob tickets', a reference to Indigenous attendees receiving free entry. There are only 39 posts on the Instagram account. The 'grid' highlights social media posts of various formats, from reels, promotional posters, and photo 'dumps' of attendees that emphasise ethnic diversity of the attendees. There is also a brand aesthetic priority that combines community and broader cultural references, to Paris Hilston to the non to lesbian femme butch bar culture. It is proudly "Dykey" in its presentation and promotion, but it is still a Dykey-ness that values aesthetic presentation and digital popularity that is linked to a more youth public over queer specific public.

Plastyk

Plastyk is a pop up night based in London with a set performance venue. It advertises its role through its Instagram bio, "a rave for dYkes" - censoring the word in a way that still makes it clear to it;s chosen audience. Similar to Dykotomy, it places an emphasis on values driven community space. In their Instagram page, there are two links. One is for a "gofundme" and the other is to join a whatsapp group chat, emphasising a community focus. Furthermore, there is a 'pinned' Instagram post that outlines discount codes for "Trans, POC or Disabled" attendees. Plastyk uses less cultural references in their Instagram postings than Dykotomy, and instead leans into rave aesthetics with the heavily stylised and filtered photo dumps as an event round up. There is also merch available which is advertised, along with the DJ line up. Plastyk is a brand, as much as it is an advertised community space.

Polka Dot Disco Club

Polka Dot Disco Club is an event based in both Glasgow and Edinburgh. This page does not include the phrase Dyke unlike Dykotomy, and its main reference of it being FLINTAs is the Instagram bio, "FLINTA-run club night", and the use of the three hearts in pink, purple, and blue referencing the bisexual flag colours. The Instagram account grid includes DJ line-up advertisements, night round-ups through photo dumps, and graphics advertising upcoming themed nights. Polka Dot Disco Club night as a page is less community focused in it's set up in comparison to Dykotomy or Plastyk with the professional photography use rather than the more casual photo dump and the lack of google form for public use. Besides the coloured hearts, there is no political or visual reference to values on the Instagram account promoted in the same way as Dykotomy and Plastyk. It is more of an event promotional tool, not an attempt to be a community promotional tool. What distinguishes Polka Dot Disco Club as an account is it's almost hiding from Dyke references and aesthetics in its presentation. Without the knowledge of FLINTAs as a term, its flagging is less clear.

While these events differ in their aestheticised pride of FLINTA's identity, they all highlight on a digital flagging to advertise that it's a FLINTA's night. Furthermore, all three accounts use similar techniques to promote the night. All three accounts use the event round-up trend in their digital presence. This style of posting creates a digital public that prioritises promotion over the event's purpose, with Polka Dot Disco Club being the more obvious example. The focus on the temporary, through the event promotion and photography round up on Instagram, could be read as a queer negotiation with the public as it helps create a kind of liminal affect to the digital user. However, by relying on the digital public to promote this temporary counter public, these nights are still engaged in the dominant public. The idea of the counterpublic fades into the background, and the potential for online environments to queer concepts of space is diminished.

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FINDING THE

Written by Alex Comerford, PGR

Can rhyming couplets heat a city? Would a haiku power a steam turbine? Probably not, but I still think poetry can be very useful. Let me explain.

I have recently ventured out on a PhD studying Caledonian rocks. These rocks were formed during the Caledonian mountain building episode 490-390 million years ago and are found across Northern Europe and North America. My research focuses on three regions – Scotland, Ireland and Norway. The purpose of the PhD: establishing how much useful heat is stored in these rocks. It is common knowledge that a PhD is no trivial undertaking. The empty gaze of your average third year PhD student speaks volumes on the scale of the challenge. The adage 'it's a marathon not a sprint' is one I try to employ in pacing my own work. But how to does one maintain the motivation to put one foot in front of the other? When discussing PhDs with a friend who is now in her second year, I received some golden advice:
'Alex - find the poetry in your PhD!'
This wonderful suggestion lit a spark in me. When I consider what drew me to a PhD, this is it. Unlike the imagination-death I have experienced in some workplaces, research brings the opportunity to look to the horizon and consider new possibilities. As with poetry, scientific endeavour doesn't just concern the rational. Scientific pursuit aims to reflect the beauty inherent in the universe, just as poetry does. Indeed, numerous prominent scientists have been likened to mystics. The scientist-poet David Whyte even considers poetry to be more precise than scientific language.
This may not be the mindset of your average third year PhD but I wonder - why not see if poetry can keep the spark of inspiration smouldering?
In this article, I attempt to draw a connection between poetry originating in Caledonian landscapes and how it may benefit my geoenergy research. Following are excerpts from poets writing about the landscapes of each target region. These poets are: Scotland's Nan Shepherd, Ireland's John O'Donohue and Norway's Jon Fosse. And so to Scotland, the namesake of these Caledonian rocks.

Scotland: 'The Hill Burns' by Nan Shepherd

'...Out of the defiant torment of Plutonic rock,
Out of fire, terror, blackness and upheaval,
Leap the clear burns,
Living water,
Like some pure essence of being...

In Nan Shepherd's poem, she draws a connection between the water emerging from the Cairngorm granite and the fiery origin of the pluton itself. This is as if the water is a product of the fiery origins of the rock. This is highlighted in the poem's title, with the double meaning of the word 'burn', both to combust and the Scots term for stream. In this process of movement from sinister depths to a joyful 'leap' into the surface world, the water takes on spiritual power, becoming near-animate. The image could be likened to the Scot's gaelic origins of the word 'whisky', uisge beatha, meaning 'water of life.'
A key theme here is the link between water, rock and the sacredness of it's purity. The emergence of clean water from rock has always been essential to our survival, as well as capturing our imagination. This giving of the earth for the nourishment of living creatures could be seen as a deeply loving act.
I am reminded of a quote from my next poet, John O'Donohue. To paraphrase his book, Anam Cara, 'When you love a landscape, it loves you back.'
On a recent trip to the Cairngorms in late spring, I understood the meaning of this notion in an embodied way. Having spent much of my early life exploring the bleak but breath-stealing contours of the Cairngorm massif, I have come to love it in an enduring way. I recall being cosied in a tent near Ryvoan bothy, drifting to the edge of sleep. Here, I sensed the feeling of being loved and seen by the land around me. In this state of near-sleep, I felt the granite close by, like a long-standing friend who never forgets you. In this presence was a clear aliveness, as one might experience a fully conscious being who was aware of my presence.

And so to Ireland, with a poem by O'Donohue.

Ireland: 'A Burren Prayer' by John O'Donohue

'...May the wells that dream in the stone
Soothe the eternal that sleeps in our bone.
May the contemplative mind of the mountain
Assure us that nothing is lost or forgotten...'

In O'Donohue's poem, he is reflecting on the landscape of the Burren, found in Co, Clare. The Burren is O'Donohue's childhood home and features prominently in his writings. The Burren itself is formed of Carboniferous limestone, creating a unique pavement landscape overlooking the Caledonian mountains of Connemara.
O'Donohue's works are often nourishing like the waters to which he refers. Usually generous in spirit, they offer a balm to the care-worn soul. This is illustrated in the invitational nature of his language, with the word 'may' drawing the reader into a spirit of gentle reflection. 'The wells' to which O'Donohue refers are sacred in Irish mythical culture, deemed to have healing properties as well being a practical, potable resource. The notion of waters 'dreaming' links them to the unconscious mind of humans, as well as describing their subterranean nature.

POETRY IN A PHD

The 'eternal' that sleeps in our 'bone' is a reference to this human connection. In Celtic mythical culture, humans are considered to be formed of the clay of the earth, linking us inextricably to it in both our spirit and physical needs. Echoing Nan Shepherd, mountains are considered in this poem to be a conscious presence, capable of memory and contemplation. This gives them a benevolent, reassuring character, like mystics watching over the happenings of the wider world. These themes are carried into our final poem, written by Norway's Nobel Prize- winning Jon Fosse.

Norway: 'The Mountain Holds its Breath' by Jon Fosse

'...then the mountain stood there
then the mountains stood there
And that's how the mountains stand there
And stoop downwards
and downwards
into themselves
And hold their breath...'

In Fosse's poem, the Caledonian rocks of unnamed Norwegian mountains are, again made humanlike, engaging in the physical acts of 'standing' and 'breathing'. There is a comedic simplicity to the repetition of the word 'stood', which could be likened to a zen koan. Indeed, the purpose of a koan is to challenge 'dualistic' thinking, to help the reader perceive reality in a clearer way. This complements the meditative imagery used by O'Donohue, granting the mountains an introspective wisdom. The 'stooping' of the mountains also gives them a wizened demeanour, carrying the literal weight of millennia in their rock. Having endured ice-sheets, endless erosion and the evolution of life, I wonder what is it the mountains are holding 'their breath' in anticipation of?

Where the Poetry Meets the PhD

It is the general scientific consensus that mountains are not animate beings, at least by any conventional definition. It is not widely postulated that water has a consciousness. It does not take a budding postgrad to make this assertion. Gaia theory, posited in the 1980s by environmental scientist James Lovelock, conceptualises the entire earth-system as a living, synergistic organism. But how could this apply on the scale of a single mountain or stream?

To me, what the above poems nurture is an experiential, emotional connection with Caledonian landscapes. It allows you to love them. Story and metaphor are a resource for the human soul, just as water and rock are a resource for our human society. Story enables us to access the essential resource of beauty through use of our imagination. One of the key applications of my PhD is harnessing geothermal energy from Caledonian rocks. This technology harnesses heat, stored in water and rock, to bring ease in our modern lives. It can do so in a sustainable way that enhances our lives with minimal impact on the surrounding environment.

Many would argue that, perhaps rightly, humanity's typical approach to resource extraction violates natural laws. Many would also argue that this has blowback – climate change, resource scarcity, ecosystem degradation. Poetry aside, these consequences are economically catastrophic. No amount of financial investment can stop a record-breaking hurricane in it's tracks.

So perhaps our poems have something to offer us here. If we perceived the mountains, or the water they hold, as living entities, would we be so careless in our relationship with them? If we expressed deep gratitude for the heat being generously radiated from within the earth, would I be inclined to drink it like our third instant coffee of the day?

If we felt authentic love for a landscape and experienced it as tangibly loving us back, would we wish simply to give pieces of it away? Purity, healing and sacredness have been characteristics of water for time immemorial. Perhaps we have forgotten essential ways of seeing that the rocks of these poems remember. Ways of seeing that our elders knew when they experienced the earth as a wise being to be communed with. The same way in which these esteemed poets perceive these landscapes.

To be pragmatic: good engineering works with the forces of the environment it operates within. Design in keeping with natural laws enables greater efficiency, saves resources and protects life. This is why I choose to research in geothermal energy. It provides a solution that can honour a necessary balance in natural systems.

My Take Home

Perhaps my research into Caledonian rocks can be a pragmatic act of love. An act of love for the landscapes that matter to me and for the beings that rely upon them for life. Indeed, the immeasurable heat resource that the earth provides could ease the struggles of many people, if shared generously. So it's likely you'll find me over the next few years topping myself up with the odd poem on a coffee break. Who knows, it may be just the ticket to keep me engaged.

God forbid, it may even make me a little happier.

Geography Connections

Written by Julia McCauley
2nd Year Geography

Are you a fan of the NYT Connections game? Take a stab at this version created just for the Drumlin. Organize these words into 4 groups of 4 - each group sharing a common theme or characteristic. The key is at the bottom to check your answers!

SCHOOL	DRUMLIN	VALLEY	BEACH
BUTE	COW	SPIT	SKYE
TOMBOLO	MULL	SEABASS	SPICE
VIOLATE	BAR	LEWIS	THORN

ANSWERS: Scottish isles, Words that contain instruments , "___- girl", Depositional landforms

An Interview with Chris Philo

Our Editor-in-Chief Charlotte Newell sat down with one of the legends of the UofG Geography department, Prof. Chris Philo, right before delivering his very last lecture.

CN: When did you come to the University of Glasgow?

CP: I arrived in October 1995. I came from the University of Wales, Lampeter, which was my first lecturing position after I had done my undergrad, postgrad and postdoc in geography at Cambridge. I applied for a senior position as a Chair, but I was only a lecturer at the time, so this was rather presumptuous. A friend of mine at the University of Strathclyde, Mark Boyle, knew some of the staff here and said there might be more flexibility in the position than advertised. So, I put in an application and I was interviewed here on a surprisingly warm, sunny day. And I actually did get appointed! I was thirty-four at the time.

CN: Was that a young age to become a professor?

CP: Yes, I think I was the youngest professorial appointment in geography in the UK at the time. So I was very proud I got that position. I had a lot of support from Professor John Briggs, who was the Head of Department at the time. I'd had a brilliant time in Lampeter, a small place in West Wales, where for various reasons, I ended up being quite senior, quite young. I'd only finished my PhD in 1992; it took nine years to finish it, which of course is not allowed anymore!

CN: What changes to the department have you been involved in since 1995?

CP: I would feel that it's probably fair to say that I played a role in developing human geography, what we call a critical, scholarly human geography, at Glasgow. We now have a very successful Human Geography Research Group, which has been nationally recognised and highly rated. Indeed, in some measures we are the best performing unit in the whole university (in relation to national [UK] research assessment exercises). So I'm very proud of that too.

When I joined, the overall department was called the 'Department of Geography and Topographic Science', a very different entity to what it is today. It became a 'School of Geographical and Earth Sciences' when I was the Head of Department from 2001-2005, and the current title was my suggestion as the simplest way to encapsulate all its new and diverse elements. This change formalised a relationship between geography and earth science at Glasgow. This merger has been very successful, arguably more so than similar mergers that have occurred in other places under less collegial circumstances.

CN: How have you been involved in Drumlin over the years?

CP: There had been a hiatus from 2009 until last year. It is amazing that Drumlin had been published by students almost continuously from the mid-50s to 2009. It was set up as a joint enterprise, although certainly seen primarily as a student thing, but staff clearly had quite an input – and even to an extent 'vetted' it – at the start. It is an extraordinary resource. I am a historical geographer, I have a historical turn of mind, I like old stuff! I've managed to look at all the copies produced over the years. It was partly antiquarian interest; partly a learning experience, because I figured out I would understand a lot about the constitution of geography, as something that was researched and taught at Glasgow, through this medium. To some extent, it's allowed me a look at Glasgow geography through the eyes of the students, which I think is fascinating. I wrote something that appeared in Drumlin; the editors rightly truncated it because it was way too long – everything I write is too long! – but I sent the fuller version to a few other people who I thought might be interested. In 1998, Ron Johnston commissioned me to do a version of it for the Progress in Human Geography journal (Philo, 1998). I made an argument in there about how Drumlin reflected a certain kind of 'middle-level' academic knowledge, where, as it were, the work between academic staff and students meets. Where students would be writing something for Drumlin, that would inevitably reflect something to do with the way they've been taught, sometimes critically, whereas staff would be writing in a slightly more accessible way than they normally would in their academic journals. And that idea seemed to interest quite a lot of people, because it gave a sense that academic geographical production isn't simply about what the professional academic geographer does, but neither is it simply popular geography as it appears in the news, the media, and so on: this middle-level version of geography was arguably something else again.

CN: Members of the department that I've spoken to have described you as a very important figure here and a role model for the effort you pour into your teaching. Having seen your students become lecturers, what do you think is the importance of student-staff connection within university teaching?

CP: Firstly, I must say thank you for those kind words. I have tried, over the years to, I guess, not really to think of myself as a role model as such, but I guess that I have tried (if not always successfully of course) to model a certain kind of collegiality, a certain kind of kindness towards each other – staff and students – at every level within the School, from the grumpiest old professor to the eagerest new recruit. That has very much mattered to me and my own identity. I have particular pride in the fact that people like Cheryl McGeachan and Emma Laurie have come through the ranks, from being undergrads that I taught, to being lynchpins of the department. But yes, teaching has always been very important to me. I'm not the most natural of teachers in front of a class; I've had to teach myself to be more engaging.

I have a slight tendency to stick with the textual material that I have prepared and a hesitation about making eye contact with the students because, when you are standing alone at the front, students can be a little bit scary! When I first taught here back in the late-1990s, we still had overhead projectors.

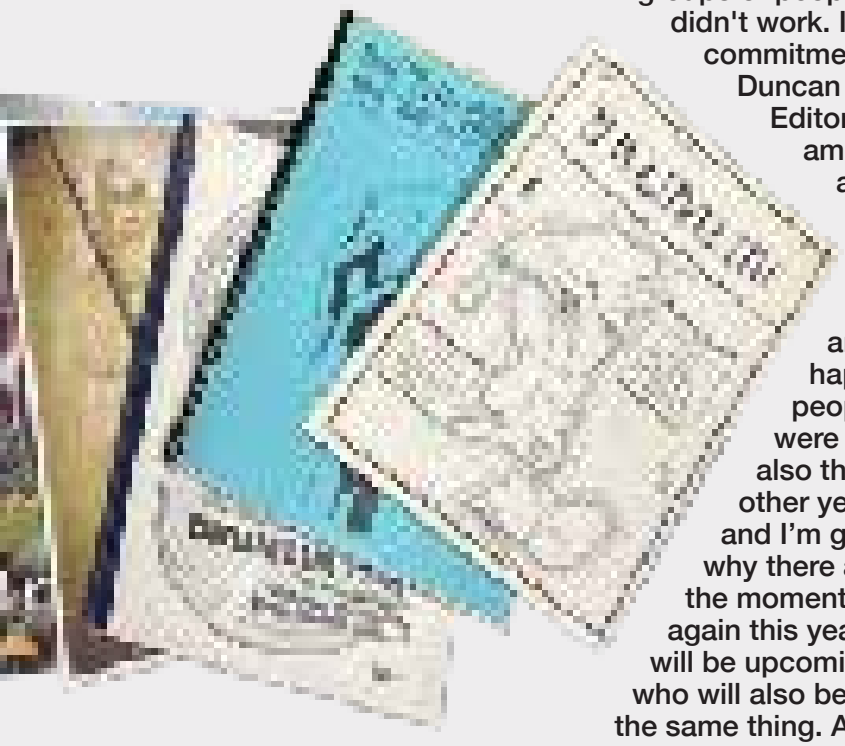
I would write in bright colours on the transparencies and do lots of little drawings, which I still occasionally scan into my PPTs now. I used to like having two slide projectors so I could swap between the two, and it was quite fun!

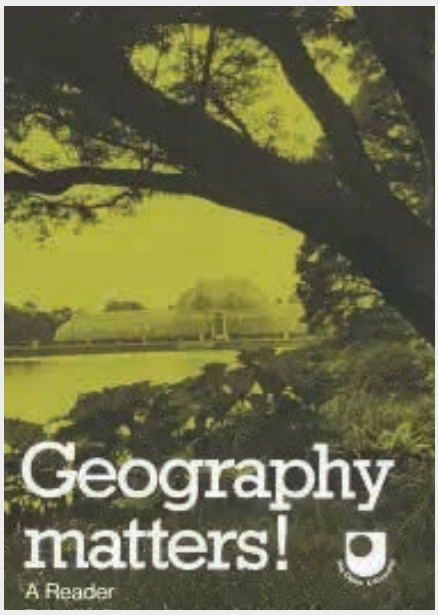
I continued using the old projectors much longer than other people, and once a first year student emailed to congratulate me on the use of this innovative new technology! Ah yeah, back to the future!

But yes, I think good relations between students and staff make for a happy department and successful students! It makes for staff who feel more satisfied that they're doing a good job. I think it was easier back then for students and staff to make those connections; there was a smaller department and more regular, often quite informal socialising between staff and students. I think in those days, students had a real sense of belonging to the department. There's a danger of making it seem like the grass was greener back then, but I do think certain things were easier. There's absolutely no doubt that students feel under pressure now: a lot of them work more than they did back then, when arguably they had more time to do Geog Soc – which used to hold lots of events, often involving both students and staff – and of course to edit and contribute to Drumlin.

CN: What do you think it means for the department that Drumlin has returned?

CP: There were several attempts to reboot Drumlin, with relatively small groups of people, and it just didn't work. It is a big commitment. Last year, Duncan who was the Editor was an amazing individual and had a very good team around him. A lot of people kicked in effort, and as a result it happened. The people involved were very happy but also their colleagues in other years took notice, and I'm guessing that's why there appears to be the momentum to do it again this year. I hope there will be upcoming generations who will also be inspired to do the same thing. And instrumentally, it's a really good thing to put on your CV!





CN: Finally, is there anything that you would like to say to current or future students that may be reading this?

CP: I think I will go with the corny 'geography matters' line, the title of a book that was published many years ago edited by Doreen Massey and John Allen. Geography matters, and it really does matter. I am an absolute, passionate, convinced believer in geography, not just as a formal academic discipline, but more as a way of thinking, a perspective on the world, a sensibility that brings things together. It makes things coherent, whilst always being very aware of how things differ: how things differ from place to place, between different sets of people and practices in different places. It's a brilliant discipline for realising that one size does not fit all, whether that be a theoretical perspective doesn't fit all, or that a form of governing society does not fit all. I think that geography has an incredible capacity and vibrancy if properly taught, researched and thought about critically, to illuminate our world, and along the way allow a few shards of light into how we might make that world better, which is pretty drastically needed right now. Thanks is owed in this respect – for helping me to arrive at, and be convinced about, this simple but important vision – to all those generations, those 30-odd generations of students that I have taught at undergraduate and also postgraduate level. I can remember a lot of the names: I would say I've met very, very few 'bad pennies' who are geographers, partly because I so firmly believe that geography itself is such a wonderful 'currency' in which to trade both academically and for a wider world.

References
Massey, D. & Allen, J. (eds.), 1984, Geography Matters!: A Reader (Cambridge University Press).
Philo, C., 1998, 'Reading Drumlin: academic geography and a student geographical magazine', Progress in Human Geography, Vol.22, pp.344-367.

OUR GEOGSOC CEILIDH

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