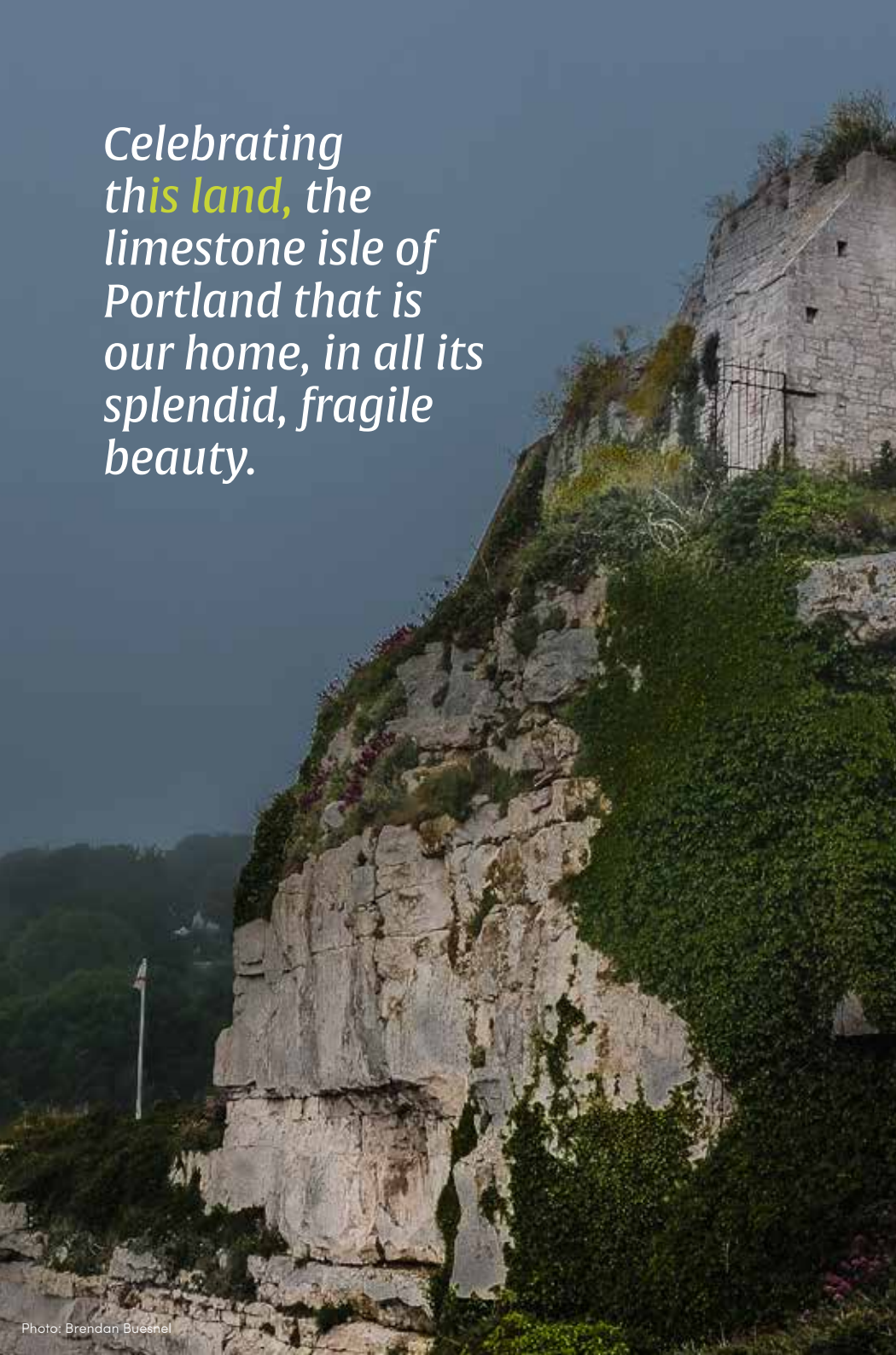




THIS LAND

HOW TO LOOK AFTER AN ISLAND

Celebrating
this land, the
limestone isle of
Portland that is
our home, in all its
splendid, fragile
beauty.



The 'isle' of Portland seen from the mainland... is a dismal heap of stone standing out into the sea, with the ravenous, ship destroying 'race' tearing in front of it, with Deadman's Bay, the scene of a thousand wrecks, to the West, and a fatal shoal, well called the 'Shambles,' upon its eastern side... There is a dour solemnity about the place, about its wall-like cliffs piled up at the base with a slope of fallen stone, about its greyness, its chilling isolation, its melancholy story. It is not expected that beauty will be found upon a rock which is in part fortress, in part a quarry, and in part a convict prison, writes the Victorian surgeon and author Frederick Treves, in his book The Highways and Byways of Dorset, published in 1906.

Considered an industrial landscape, this image of Portland still persists today and keeps the tourists away, leaving this extraordinary place – quite unlike anywhere else in Dorset – for those lucky enough to live here or who have discovered the attractions of this beguiling island.

However, this perception comes at a cost and Portland's incredible heritage and natural environment, although recognised, are not widely appreciated. The island does not get the protection it needs and residents are increasingly concerned. With tourism seen as an economic driver and the island's landscapes now increasingly 'discovered' by visitors, the pressure on these precious environments is being felt and its land has become a contested space.

An island has finite land and resources, and space for residential and industrial expansion is limited. As the drive for economic growth and the impact of climate emergencies collide what opportunities are there for an island to develop a way forward that benefits the local economy while also respecting its environment and communities?

The This Land project explored the unique natural and built heritage of the Isle of Portland and asked questions about how we look after it.

This Land is part of our Common Lands creative programme – hosting open conversations on topics that affect us both locally and globally.

HOW TO LOOK AFTER AN ISLAND

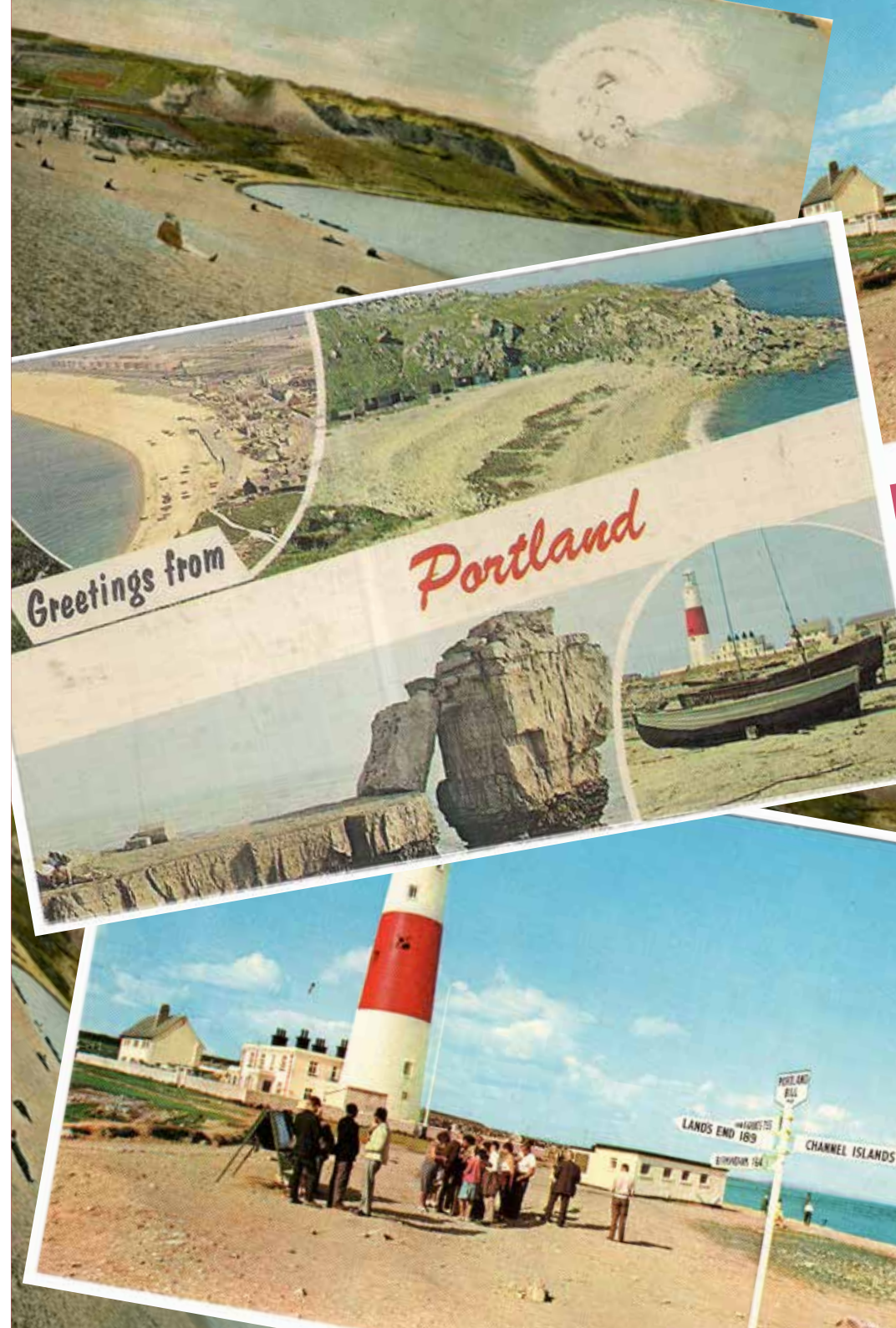
This Land shone a spotlight on two vulnerable sites on Portland – the derelict remains of a Tudor cottage at Brandy Row, Chiswell as an example of a neglected building in a vulnerable seafront position; and the land at the windswept southernmost tip of the isle – the last area of Portland’s original limestone grassland landscape, supporting a delicate biodiversity and where traces of Portland’s past farming history can still be seen – The Last Landscape.

In a programme of knowledge-sharing and creative exploration between residents, visiting researchers and artists, the project explored the past, present and future of these two sites at the extreme ends of the island, researching the documents and memories of Portland’s past and imagining ambitions for its future.

Walks, talks, workshops, coffee mornings and tea parties have shared knowledge and discussed community concerns. Larger discussions and forum events have brought different expertise to the island, adding new experience, and sharing inspiring examples of projects elsewhere.

Artists Anna Heinrich + Leon Palmer, Knead, Emily Tracy and Wildworks created new artworks in response – the result of many hours of collaboration, imaginative making, oral history-telling, data collection and conversations between artists, residents and enthusiasts of all ages.

By putting nature and community at the forefront of our thinking we hope to promote a sustainable future for Portland – supporting an economy that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of Portland – its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture and the well-being of its residents.



LEARNING AND CONNECTING THROUGH WALKS, TALKS AND CONVERSATIONS.

The project invited as many people as possible to get involved through different activities.

There was lots of walking and talking exploring the history and biodiversity of the land. Wildlife walks, foraging walks, herb walks, lost paths, bird walks, new landscapes in the quarries, old landscapes of the commons. All brought different people together in a greater understanding of their surroundings.



There was lots of working and talking too, meeting together in workshops learning skills and contributing to artworks. Conversations during these sessions shared the knowledge and opened up the discussions.

We had tea parties and coffee mornings where people brought drawings and photos and we shared ideas, recorded memories, found stories and rediscovered long lost documents.

Photo: Jayne Jackson



Photo: Pete Millson



Photo: Paul Box

Exhibitions and project newspapers shared the research.

We had campfire conversations, where we got to talk about the landscape and land and who has a say over it, what it means to us as individuals, and how we can all protect it into the future.



Photo: Pete Millson



These smaller conversations became larger conversations where we came together in larger forum events under the heading of How to Look After An Island. An environment forum brought residents together with representatives from land-management organisations to talk about how to look after this land. This led to Future Portland, partnered by Island Community Action (ICA), aimed at exploring positive ways forward. The event brought together a range of speakers, local and national, who are leading the way on developing innovative solutions to the challenges we're currently facing, as well as thinking about what a future Portland could look like.

FUTURE PORTLAND is an ongoing discussion with our community. The project research is supporting new initiatives, and events have inspired people to get involved and work together to support a positive future for the island.



BRANDY ROW: CHISWELL

On the seafront at Chiswell is a small plot of land owned by Dorset Council – currently used for fishing stores. In one corner stands the derelict remains of a stone cottage – the last traces of what was once a picturesque row of 17th Century thatched cottages – featured on picture postcards and the cover of novels.

Built directly on the beach, these cottages took the full brunt of storms and tidal surges. What remains has survived the ravages of weather, sea, and demolition.

Situated in an at-risk area, with sea levels rising, in very poor state of repair, with no listing or historical surveys, can this potential community asset be saved? And what are the challenges for coastal communities vulnerable to climate change?

The project has been researching this site and while posing these questions has gathered stories of the past of these homes, as well as thoughts about their future.

Working with our group of community researchers has brought up many memories, connected families and sent us off in intriguing searches for lost documents to help tell the story of this neglected part of Portland's past.

Stonehall – the former United Reformed Church at the bottom of the hill in Chiswell – provided a fitting venue to share these stories, along with historic accounts of Portland's past, which are usually hidden in archives.



All that remains ...

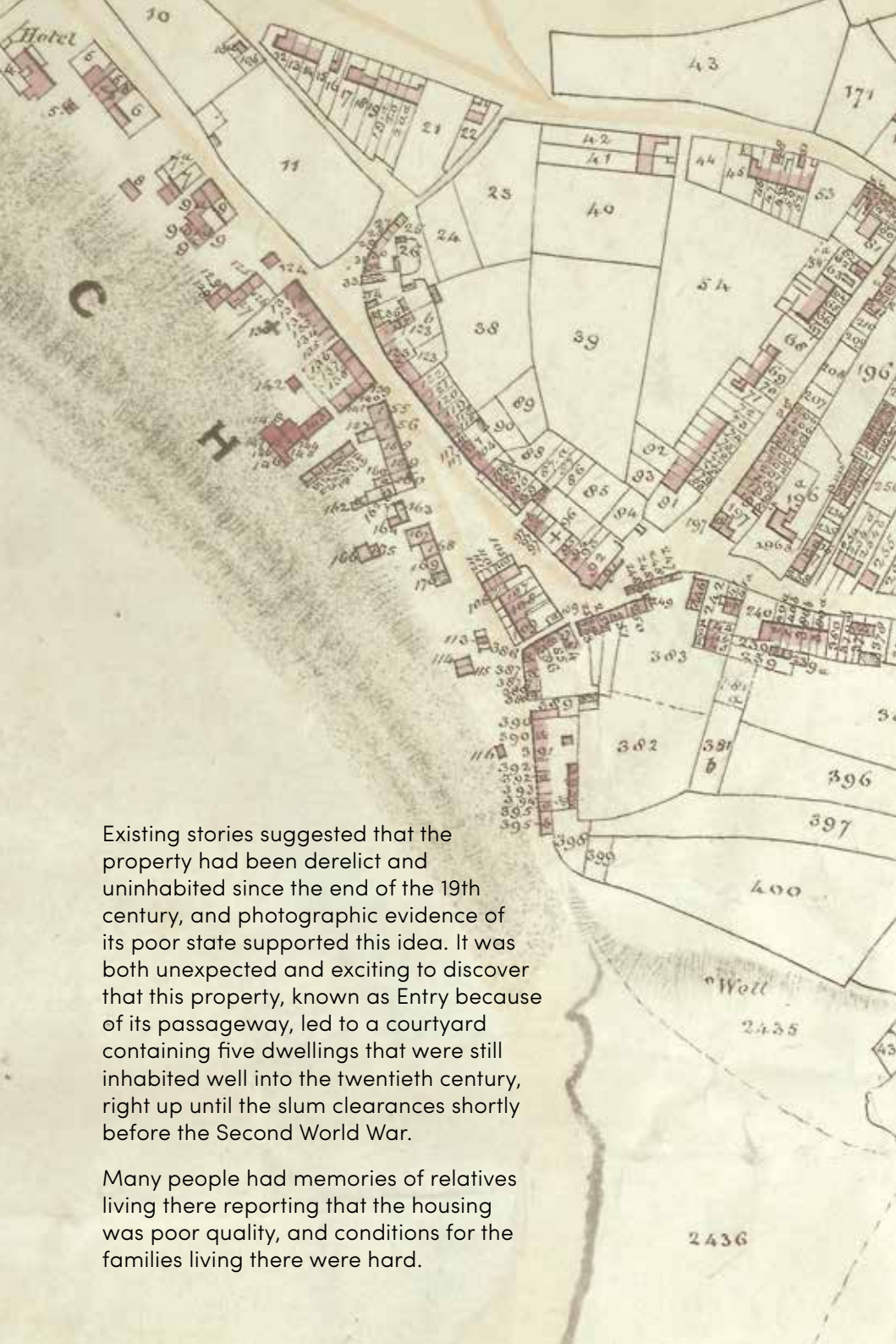
The doorway known as Entry is the only recognisable element of this row of 17th century cottages. This doorway gave access to a row of homes behind, housing families up until the slum clearances of 1935.



Cottages at Chiswell, Portland

COTTAGES AT CHISWELL, PORTLAND

55677



Existing stories suggested that the property had been derelict and uninhabited since the end of the 19th century, and photographic evidence of its poor state supported this idea. It was both unexpected and exciting to discover that this property, known as Entry because of its passageway, led to a courtyard containing five dwellings that were still inhabited well into the twentieth century, right up until the slum clearances shortly before the Second World War.

Many people had memories of relatives living there reporting that the housing was poor quality, and conditions for the families living there were hard.



Tom (Guts) Gibbs in the doorway of Entry
Photo: Penny Piddock

STORMS & FLOODS

Stories of shipping disasters and heroic rescues dominate the history of Chiswell. The power of the sea is ever present in accounts of life here on this vulnerable bit of coast.

Inevitably the weather featured a lot in our conversations, especially the dramatic storms that hit this coastline and have such a devastating impact.

The inhabitants of Brandy Row were no strangers to daring rescue operations. This illustration, which originally appeared in *The Illustrated London News* on 22 September 1877, depicts the two Portland ferret boats launched from Chiswell to rescue survivors of the collision between *The Avalanche* and *The Forest* off Portland on the 11th of that month.

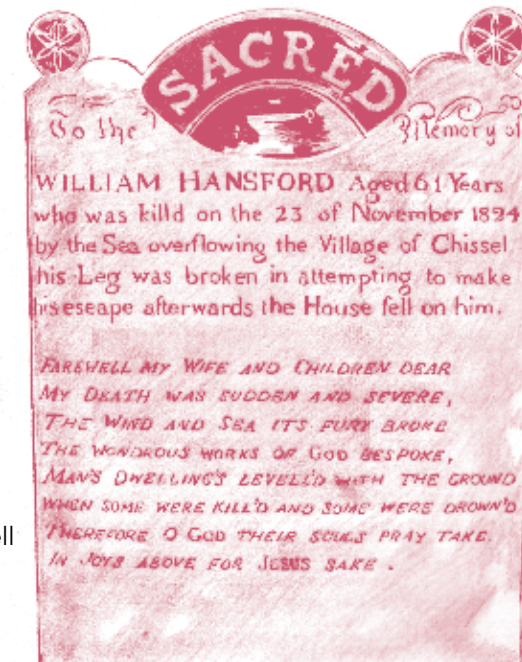


November 22nd 1824. In the Evening of this day, which will ever be memorable for the dreadful Catastrophe which caused such destruction along the whole Western Coast of the Kingdom, the Village of Chisel was nearly destroyed, twenty six of the Inhabitants drowned, and upwards of eighty houses damaged or washed down by a tremendous Surf which broke over the Chisel Bank, and tore every thing away with irresistible violence before it. This awful Visitation was occasioned by a heavy Gale, which, happening at a Spring Tide, and commencing from the South South East, increased till eight o'clock, when it blew a most dreadful Hurricane, such as never had been known before in the memory of Man. At nine

↖ A first-hand account of the impact of the Great Gale of 1824.



The cottages on Brandy Row have been witness to hundreds of years of storms and floods. The mirror pictured here once hung in a first-floor bedroom of 149 Brandy Row and shows the height the water reached on the night of the great gale of 1824. The mirror now hangs in Portland Museum and features in Heinrich + Palmer's artwork.



Gravestone of William Hansford who was killed when his house fell on him during the Great Gale.





Photo: Richard Broome



“Very atmospheric and new insight into a well known landmark”

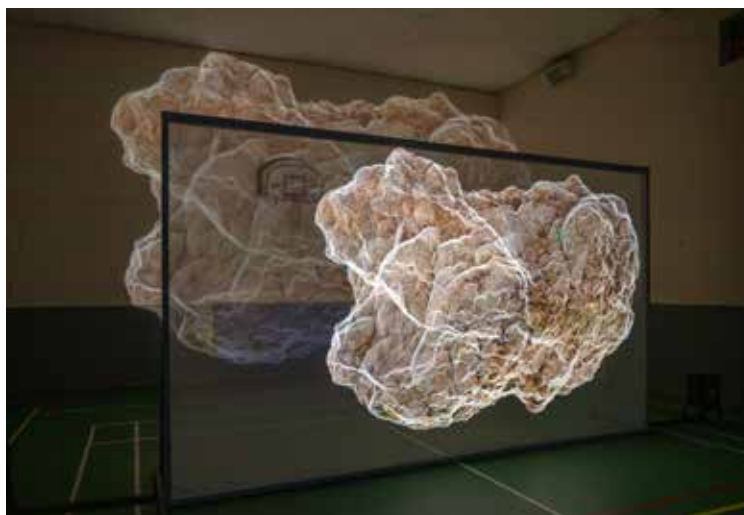
ENTRY

ANNA HEINRICH + LEON PALMER

Early photographs depict a building quite different to the one you can see today yet throughout time the doorway, known as Entry, has remained a constant threshold to the ebb and flow of community life and the elements.

Inspired by the community led research that uncovered the stories of the people who lived here, artists Anna Heinrich and Leon Palmer worked with Lidar survey technology to create a 3D scan of the Brandy Row site. Combining this data with photogrammetry of local artefacts, archival imagery, film and time-lapse footage they created a breathtaking projection and audio installation that captured the past and present of this vulnerable building. Entry was shown at the Islanders Youth Club in East Weares.

“This is the most beautiful thing I have seen or been moved by in a long time”





"We did the audio walk first. Really moving. I got a lump in my throat hearing people talking about the landscape and the area and how it is changing. Even though I've never been here before, it was really moving."



WEATHER OR NOT STATION

KNEED

Artist collective, Kneed, worked sensitively and over a long period with a wide array of community groups, including young people, library users and chip shop customers, gathering memories, stories, rumours and imaginations of the past, and present, of Brandy Row. Recordings from these sessions were woven into an audio narrative and broadcast as a forecast for the future.

The Weather or Not Station talked about how the weather has affected the cottage and shares views on what the cottage might become – a fishing museum, a shop, a young person's gaming hub... let's see!



"Very contemplative. There were times when it stops and tells you to look at something, reflect, turn around and face the sea. That was lovely for me. I used to be away at sea a lot."

Photo: Paul Box

Photo: Jayne Jackson

Photo: Pete Millson

What happens now with Brandy Row?

As part of the project, we asked people what they thought should happen with the site. Should it be saved, restored, demolished, developed? The answers were inspiring. With so many at-risk buildings on Portland a challenge lies ahead, but Brandy Row needs to be added to the list as a piece of social history, for its role in Portland's past and its witness to so much of Portland life at the edge of this vulnerable coastline. A meeting place on the seafront, the doorway where people gather still - an Entry to the past but with potential for a new future.

need a 'museum' collection of all the arch and allow people to enter the building as they would have in the 1900's and before.

And

Recreate the interior

A community art space, for people of all ages to come and take part in workshops, and talks, a space for creative collaboration and thinking!

Save it, as it was, with information. History - we mustn't lose it.

a drop-in centre where people share skills, -do workshops, draw, sing.



whatever is done needs to be flood proof. made of local material, I think I would prefer a museum based on the original structure of the dwell

Restore & showcase as a piece of Portland history. Have a working kitchen & serve traditional dishes throughout

Fishing Museum past + present
I would agree with this idea. Fantastic idea.
Shaz



A shipwreck museum

↑
I second this!

Ram Shack!
Portland Products
Micro Brewery + Tea

Roller disco?
Bowling alley?
skittles alley

FLOOD & COASTAL RISK

Constant shaping by sea and weather has created our spectacular coastline – a dynamic, continuously changing environment, but one that is a challenge for coastal communities. The need to prepare and try to protect is an ongoing issue and a dialogue around how this can be achieved as a community is vital. Improving the sea defences to maintain and protect residents, wildlife habitats and businesses – can themselves change the look of our coastline, and while it may reduce the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, those risks do not go away. It's a conversation that continues to be explored with Dorset Coast Forum.

WHAT ARE THE THREATS TO THIS AREA?

There are currently a number of increasing pressures on coastal management in this area, which are expected to worsen with climate change and as sea levels rise, including aging infrastructure, erosion, beach migration and land instability around Chesil Cove and the West Weares.

The impacts of climate change on coastal processes and water levels are becoming harder to predict and Dorset Council, working in collaboration with the Environment Agency and with support from BCP Council, Dorset Coast Forum and technical consultants AECOM, are developing a new Portland Underhill to Wyke Regis Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) strategy.

Following the first round of engagement with local residents, businesses and visitors in autumn 2023, there was a clear consensus that there's not only a need to reduce the risk of flooding and erosion as the climate changes, but also a desire to protect the things people love about the area. These include the local nature, biodiversity, visual beauty, and sustainable

transport routes such as the Rodwell Trail. These responses show people's passion for the area, highlighting that a balance is needed between protecting the coastline and enhancing the area for everyone.

An example of a key issue in the area is the access to Portland via the Causeway. At Chiswell, the beach is held by hard defences first constructed in 1958 and upgraded in the 1980s, allowing limited space for further migration at this eastern end of Chesil Beach. However, along the A354 the beach may eventually roll back onto the road or suffer a catastrophic breach. There's also the risk posed by sea level rise and climate change to the causeway road from both the Lyme Bay and Portland Harbour sides. The project team is currently analysing the physical processes of the area – how these interact with built structures, and how these may change in response to climate change.

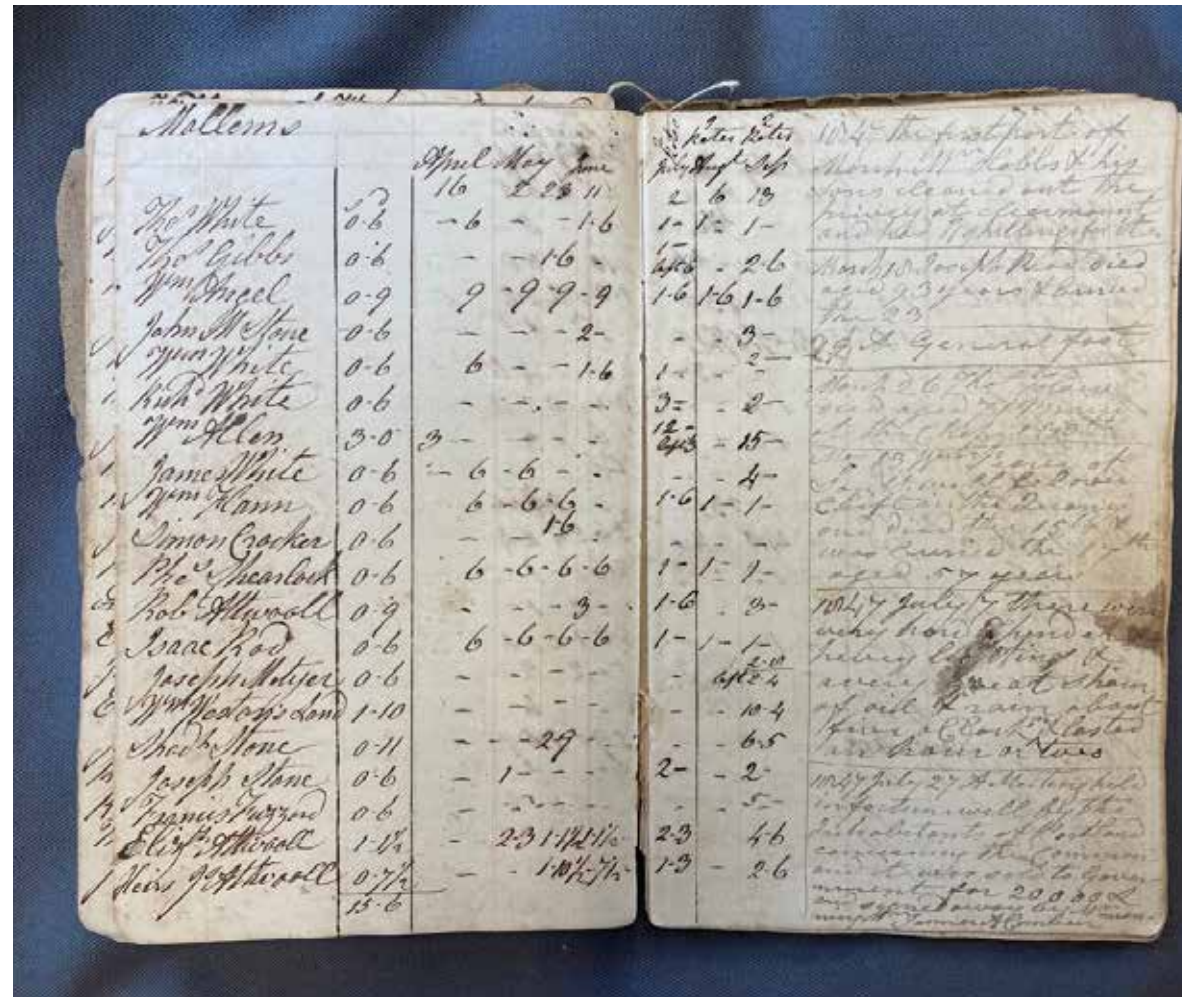


RESEARCH & ARCHIVES

The history of Portland has been well documented thanks to excellent books by Stuart Morris and websites such as the Encyclopaedia of Portland History by Ashley Smith. All cite the same handful of historic texts as reference sources, and it is these documents that have shaped our understanding of the history of the island. Seeing these original sources brought home the significance of preserving memories, documents, and images in the telling of a story. That these documents survive and are available for research is thanks to our museums and archive centres. They play an important role in safeguarding our past, collecting and preserving records for future generations and looking after histories that might otherwise be lost, as our project has discovered.

Archiving is an ongoing process, acquiring materials and assessing what to keep of our past, and our present, and how to catalogue it so it can be easily accessed in the future. Often, it's not official documents but diaries and notebooks that are the most illuminating. This is what makes John Way's diary such a poignant document, as it records not just church accounts but also includes notes of contemporary events that both document and evoke a sense of the people and place. Chance discoveries in house clearances and car boot sales have recently led to significant documents being rescued by residents and saved for future research.

Dorset History Centre in Dorchester and the Portland Local & Family History Centre at St George's Centre, Reforne hold vast collections of documents recording the island's past and they welcome additions to their archives. Our project has collected oral histories and newly found documents to add to these archives.



An archive search for a 19th century document referred to in various publications as 'John Way's diary' initially drew a blank, prompting fears that the original document had been lost, until our research inquiries suggested it could have been catalogued under a different name. It transpired that the same document was also known as 'William Pearce's Collecting Book' and was subsequently found.



Photo: Pete Millson

THE LAST LANDSCAPE: SOUTHWELL & PORTLAND BILL

There's more to Portland Bill than the lighthouse! There are two more lighthouses for starters – the Higher Light, once the home of Marie Stopes and now a holiday let, and the Lower Light, now the Portland Bird Observatory, which has been recording bird sightings for over 60 years. These records were the inspiration for Emily Tracy's 2023 installation, Constant Effort.

This treeless, windswept landscape is steeped in history and mystery. The last remaining area of the island to escape major quarrying, its fields and commons have survived almost intact. Here traces of Portland's agricultural past can still be found, with ancient strip field systems still visible, as well as evidence of prehistoric occupation, including the remains of an 8,000-year-old Mesolithic settlement.

Portland Bill's geology, coastal position, and large areas of open land support an incredible diversity of plants and wildlife, which are dependent on the maritime and limestone grasslands.

Yet this apparently rugged landscape is increasingly threatened by development and ever-increasing visitor numbers, raising questions about the effectiveness of current levels of environmental protection.

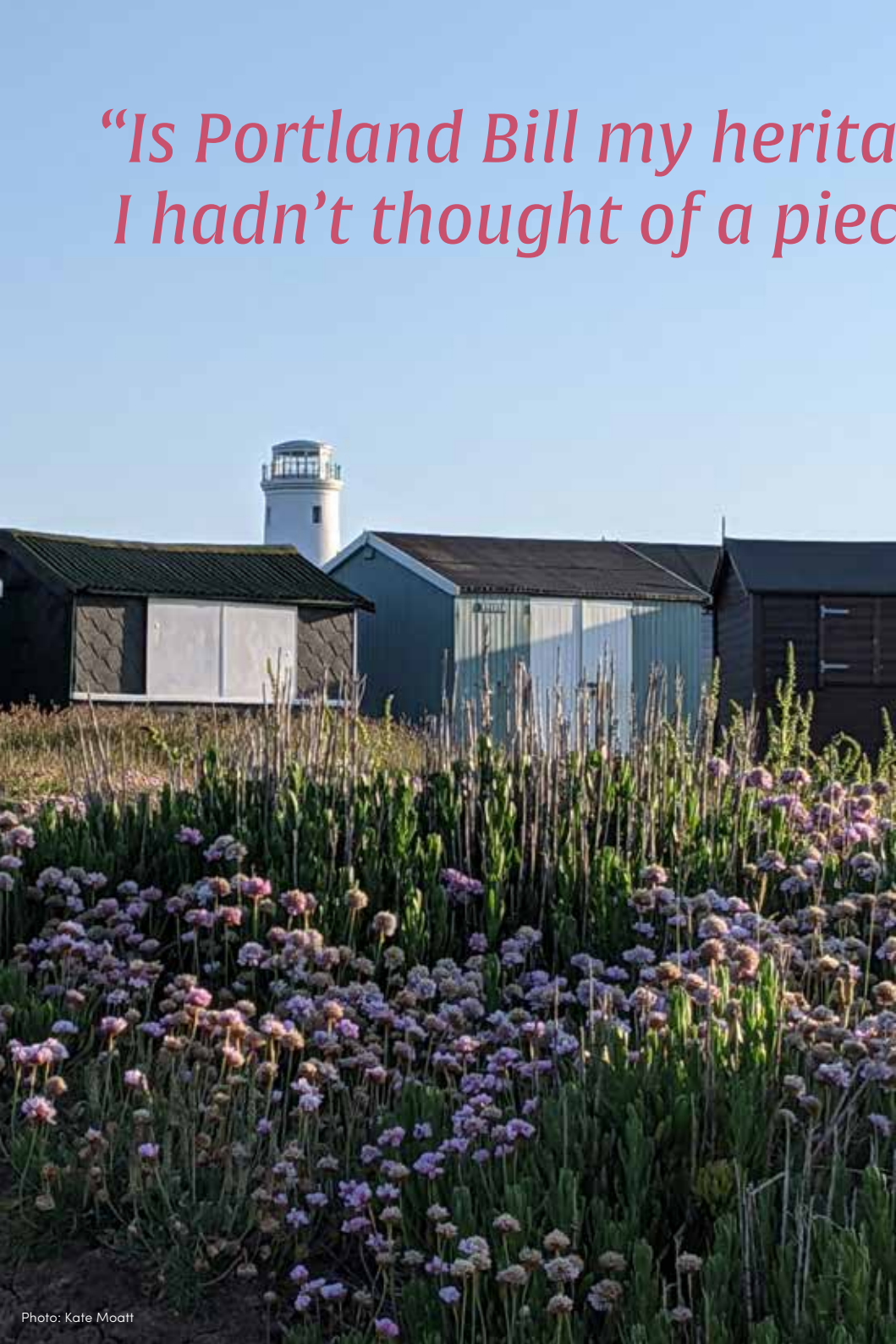
People use Portland Bill in a wide range of different ways, with walkers, bird watchers, hut owners, horse-riders, cyclists and many others all having their own priorities, and the debate over how to balance leisure and commercial activities with the area's fragile ecology is only likely to intensify in future years.



Photo: Des & Shirley

Conflicts between the needs and desires of different parts of the community around land use, and different ideas of what a sustainable future might be, is a continuing conversation.

*“Is Portland Bill my heritage? I suppose so.
I hadn’t thought of a piece of land like that.”*



Whilst the landscape of the Bill may be a contested space, it is home to many. The stories we have gathered of this landscape are from living memory, spanning the latter half of the 20th century to the present day. The area clearly holds a special place in many people’s hearts, both visitors and residents.

Interviews with beach hut owners explore the history of the Bill’s beach huts, and with it, its landscape and ecologies, revealing the unique character, as well as the changes in the Bill’s natural environment and species loss over the last half century. Oral histories from the residents of the Bill give insights into what it is like to live in such an unusual environment. residents describe life in a place with a 'millionaires view for ordinary people'.

The expanse of time that these memories span come with a sense of loss that is tangible in people’s stories of the Bill. There are fewer crabs and lobsters now than there used to be, and fewer fish. But there is also perhaps more awareness of its fragility and a greater attention to, and sense of responsibility for, its flora and fauna because of a growing realisation of its scarcity.

The collective memories of the ‘hutters’ and Bill residents provide a record of what has been lost, absences haunt the stories of what is no longer heard, seen, tasted. But along with the stories of loss, there are hopeful moments, of changes in thinking about how the land is used, or how it should be used, of Portland sheep and bee orchids, of crickets and storm petrels. And most of all, a sense of the uniqueness of Portland’s last landscape, its fragility and preciousness.

Recordings and transcripts of interviews for the project are now held in local archives.

A Farming Landscape

The drawings of Samuel Grimm in 1790 and descriptions by visitors such as Leland in 1542 give us some idea of what Portland was like pre-quarrying. All describe a treeless, open grassland of grazing sheep, with villagers thriving on growing crops and fishing, managing to supply all their own needs.

The village of Southwell and the land that runs down to the Bill is the last bit of Portland, revealing what the island's landscape was like in the past. Fields still follow ancient boundaries and the medieval strip lynchets create undulating patterns across the gently sloping land. Known on Portland as lawnsheds (the shed actually being the baulk of earth between the 'lawns'), these multiple narrow strips were cultivated alongside open grazed common lands. By all accounts the land was productive despite the wind and thin soils. Farming practices were developed in response to the harsh environment and continued on the island long after new ways had been adopted on the mainland. Enclosure of the land came late, fiercely resisted by the people here.

“There was a Public Meeting about sharing the Commons and the Parish land but almost all the inhabitants were against it.”

John Way's diary, 7th July 1846.

Sturt Common

Large areas of the Bill are common land, giving residents and visitors open access to roam. These lands are the remnants of Portland's old common grazing fields. Contrary to popular belief common land is privately owned land, but with 'rights of common' over that land, traditionally sustaining the poorest people in rural communities who owned no land of their own, providing them with a source of fuel and pasture for livestock.

At one time nearly half of the land in Britain was common land, but from the 16th century onwards the gentry excluded commoners from land which could be 'improved' through agriculture. That is why most common land is not found in areas with low agricultural potential, but areas which we value for high conservation significance and natural beauty.

The common land here at the Bill forms part of the Crown Estate and is managed locally by Portland Court Leet. This involves maintaining the balance between preserving important geological features and protected grassland habitats against increasing pressures of public access for leisure and recreation.

That this area of common land survives at all is due to the extraordinary efforts of one resident, Stuart Morris, who when the Commons Registration Act 1965 was introduced, took on the huge challenge of registering Portland's common land – a task that kept him busy for the next 30 years. It is thanks to Stuart's dedication and research that Portland's common lands remains accessible to us all.



GRASSLANDS

This timeless landscape changed dramatically in the 19th century, with the arrival of the railways and steam-powered machinery. Up to this point, stone could only be taken away by boat, but rail tracks and steam engines enabled the quarries to move inland, and before long the old field systems were being dug up and destroyed, along with the island's once-rich archaeology. Standing stones, barrows, ancient storage pits, Bronze Age pots and Roman coffins all disappeared, their details and locations largely unremarked and unrecorded. All that remains of them is their names: Kingbarrow Quarry, for example, or Inmosthay.

Luckily for us, although quarries consumed most of the island, its southern tip, from Southwell down to Portland Bill, was largely left alone. These grasslands may look rather scruffy and unexciting, but they are hugely important as rare survivors from that earlier time. Their soil may not have been disturbed for hundreds, and in some cases possibly for thousands, of years, and their wealth of plant and insect species reflects this deep and continuous history.

We're often urged to plant more trees to improve the value of our environment, yet it is these undisturbed grasslands that preserve the richest ecology on the island, even if you have to look closely to appreciate its wealth of interconnected species.

While some areas have recognition as SSSIs or SACs, which are intended to protect them from damage and development, these official designations are hard to enforce, and often have little effect on how a site is managed. Portland's grasslands may look

completely natural, but they only came into being, and have only survived, by being carefully managed – usually by being grazed by livestock. Without such ongoing management, they can quickly disappear under scrub and brambles, as large areas already have.

This project has, we hope, raised people's awareness of the unique nature of Portland's surviving grasslands, but there are many challenges still to address. How do we balance the demands of tourism, leisure and ecology? How can we best preserve our natural heritage, while maintaining public access and without covering the Bill with fences and signs?

Portland Bill is an internationally important site for migrating birds, attracting hundreds of different species at different times of the year, including rarities such as hoopoes, long-eared owls and ospreys. Many of these birds fly straight overhead, using Portland's distinctive shape as a marker on their journey, but many stop for a while to stock up on food – mainly insects and small mammals.

Fewer birds would stop here were it not for the range and variety of grassland plants, which support a huge number of insects, which use the plants for shelter and for food. Some insects have evolved to rely almost entirely on a single species of plant, such as the burrowing ivy bee, or the chalkhill blue butterfly, whose sole food plant is horseshoe vetch.

Even the driest, shortest, bunny-nibbled turf can support a surprising number of plant species, while longer grass is an important habitat for ground-nesting birds such as skylarks, whose endless song can still be enjoyed at Portland Bill.



Here are some of the other special plants, birds and insects you might encounter in the Last Landscape.



Autumn lady's tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*)

These delicate little native orchids pop up quite suddenly in autumn, as their name suggests. They're pretty hard to spot, being only 10cm tall, with tiny white orchid flowers, but they're also extremely distinctive, as the flowers are arranged around the stem in a looping spiral. They tend to grow in the shortest grass, often on cliff ledges.



Bee orchids (*Ophrys apifera*)

The most striking of all Portland's wild orchids, bee orchids are rather rare and very beautiful, with two or three flowers on a short stem. Each pink and brown flower looks (and smells) sufficiently like a female bee to deceive male bees into attempting to mate with them. Sticky packs of pollen then stick to the bee, which unknowingly carries the pollen to another orchid, enabling cross-pollination.



Early gentian (*Gentianella amarella ssp. anglica*)

Our native gentian is a striking little flower, and becoming increasingly rare: Portland is one of the relatively few places in Britain where it is still to be found. They grow in short grass in limestone areas, and in spring have tall, upright flowers with four or five pinkish-purple petals and a fringe of pale hairs in the centre.



Wheatears (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

These pretty, lively little birds pass through Portland in large numbers as they migrate in autumn and spring, and can often be spotted feeding on insects in the grasslands at Portland Bill. The male birds have a pinkish-orange chest and distinctive black wings, with a flash of white beneath their tail.



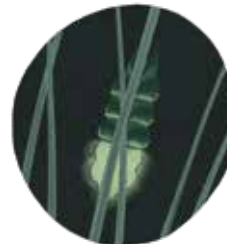
Chalkhill blue (*Polyommatus coridon*)

On a still August afternoon you can sometimes see hundreds of chalk hill blue butterflies fluttering among the tall grass stems on Portland's meadows and clifftops. Over millions of years they have evolved alongside horseshoe vetch, the little yellow pea relative that grows in abundance on the cliffs, and this is now its only source of food.



Little owls (*Athene noctua*)

The Last Landscape has its own resident little owls, which can often be seen during the day in the quarries near the Bill. Britain's smallest owls actually originate in Europe and farther east, but they were introduced here in the late 19th century and quickly spread, though their population is now thought to be in decline.



Glow-worms (*Lampyris noctiluca*)

Though they're beetles, not worms, glow-worms really do glow! At least female glow-worms do. They need really dark nights for their glow to be seen. Wingless adult females climb a grass stem on dark nights and light up to attract a male which has wings but doesn't glow. Luckily Portland Bill, is relatively free from light pollution, so in June and July it's a good place to see glow-worms, as well as the stars!



“Really great way to present complex data – thought-provoking and fun.”

CONSTANT EFFORT

EMILY TRACY

Emily Tracy created an installation in the tower of the former Lower Lighthouse, now the Portland Bird Observatory. Stacks of archive and storage boxes containing painstakingly cut-out paper birds, moths, flora, and fauna formed a visual analogue of the incredible data collected here over the last 60 years of monitoring. Constant Effort was the result of spending time asking a lot of questions to the people who run the observatory, as well as some of the many people who visit it.

This work was made through collective creation, working with small groups and gatherings, and sparked many conversations about the rich intertwined ecology that exists in the Last Landscape.

“Lovely – love seeing the records brought alive – feels more tangible.”



		Black Redstart.
1		Redstart
131		Wainchat
261	capture.	Stonechat
1911		Wheatear
	departures:	

18/07/17
 Bristle tail: 1
 Willow beauty: 1
 Rusty foot: 1
 Rusty dot: 2+1
 Brambling: 1+1+1
 Knot grass: 1
 Crested junc: 1+1+1+1
 Ruffie junc: 1
 a. hrm: 1
 purplewing
 ox tongue: 1
 rband wave: 1
 BBE: 1+1
 rtundella: 1
 foot: P
 14/8

“Working on ‘Constant Effort’ has been about conversation”

Photos: Jayne Jackson

Extract from the performance written by Portland resident Pam du Val.

PORTLAND SPEAKS

Rooted and girdled, alone yet encircled, I awoke in bright day to sea star, fleabane, viper's bugloss, restharrow, self-heal, bryony and bedstraw, wild salt bending and hot little suns lifting their faces to the one sun, a patchwork threadbare bald spot blanket of colour and rushing green under the sweet high limitless blue.

I hear again the crash of Pulpit arch collapsing into sea. I feel the tide and its wild horses vibrate in my breastbone, I do not fear the clash or the surging to shore, I love to taste the salt on my lips. I am in one place, and I, Portland, declare, shot into the heart of the storm, that I am alive and that my mind is free.



Photo: Kim Cullimore

UNCOMMON LAND

WILDWORKS

The Isle's ancient beginnings and speculative histories tell stories of a land of ritual, ruled by the seasons and their symbolism, and where fire was used for celebration, community cohesion and as a beacon for seafarers.

Renowned outdoor theatre makers, Wildworks, were inspired to create a modern ritual for this landscape, where people and symbolic animals come together in celebration. Featuring residents wearing masks created in workshops, the performance took audiences along the coastline at dusk in an unforgettable atmospheric experience of fire, song, and costumes. It was a mind-blowing mix of natural landscape and human movement at the very south of the island, the Last Landscape.



Photo: Jayne Jackson



Photo: Paul Box



Produced for b-side's This Land project, 2024.

This Land has produced a quarterly newspaper, sharing stories and research by the project. This publication celebrates the island and some of those stories.

Content written & compiled by Amanda Wallwork, Dr Jeanie Sinclair and Catherine Bennett, with contributions from Steve Christmas, Sally Watkins, and Christopher Stocks.

This Land project was produced by the b-side team: Rocca Holly-Nambi, Sandy Kirkby, Amanda Wallwork, Sally Watkins and Catherine Bennett.

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