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Strangled...



...by red tape

The madness of Brexit is causing chaos in many walks of life. The arts and small businesses generally are suffering absurd levels of bureaucracy – and, yes, red tape – lashings of it!

**INSIDE: Tunnel Vision :: Jordi Savall
Stephen Barclay unearthed**

A tunnel vision brought to life in Edinburgh

ONCE DARK and deserted, an old railway tunnel in Edinburgh has been transformed by the biggest mural of its kind in Scotland as part of a community project.

Edinburgh was once served by a network of railway lines but the advent of the car caused a huge decline in rail travel starting in the 1920s, leaving miles of tracks lying dormant around the city. Only at the end of the 20th-century did many of these abandoned pathways begin to be converted into walking and cycling routes.

One such line was the Colinton Railway, once travelled by novelist Robert Louis Stevenson, who would take the train to see his grandfather, Dr. Lewis Balfour, the local minister in a village on the outskirts of the city.

His poem *From a Railway Carriage* recollects his memories of riding along the rails, and is the inspiration for the public art installation displayed in the Colinton Tunnel. Built in the 1800s, the Colinton Tunnel formed part of the Balerno branch railway line from Slateford to Balerno until its closure in 1967.

The project is the idea of Mike Scott and the artist Chris Rutterford. Aided by local organizations and various sponsors, they've turned the abandoned tunnel into a safe and welcoming home for Scotland's largest historical mural, celebrating the industrial, social, artistic and literary history of the local community.

Project chairman Mike Scott explains how the idea began: "I was one of Colinton's Community Councillors in 2016 when the closure of our local bank and half of our local shops meant you couldn't buy a pint of milk or a newspaper in the village and it was clear that something had to be done to bring visitors to keep the remaining village alive.

Talking with colleagues I proposed that our former railway

tunnel, which was dark, dirty and scary, would be a great place for a mural to celebrate our village's 930 year history. A group of seven of us set up a charity, did masses of research, and so the project began."

The total project cost just under £ 100,000. Almost one third of which came from the local community and others who visited the mural. There were also generous grants from the cycling charity Sustrans's ArtRoots Fund, the Armed Forces Covenant Trust, the Turtleton Trust, the National Lottery Community Fund, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) and many other local businesses and charities.



Scott explained: "Over 600 schoolchildren contributed, plus the Pentlands Art Club, and many other volunteers, and we have created a community artwork in every sense. It's been adopted by the village and has been visited by thousands of people from all over the world."

The multi-skilled arts team comprised local muralist Chris Rutterford and graffiti artists Craig Robertson and Duncan Peace.

Stretching over 140 metres, the project took over two years to complete. Chris says: "It's only a millimetre of paint on this tunnel but it completely changes its story. The tunnel was a huge challenge – building the mural around the poem which had historical provenance and also mentioning all the aspects of Colinton seemed like a natural solution. I wanted visitors to feel the same wide-eyed wonder at the heart

of the Robert Louis Stevenson poem – a boy revelling in a journey on a train for the very first time."

The mural has enlivened the 14 mile Water of Leith Walkway and has become something of a focal point. "In these fraught times positive, optimistic spaces telling stories reflecting the kind of society we want to build and demonstrating how it is done is more important than ever," says Chris.

Cosmo Blake, Art and Diversity Co-ordinator at Sustrans Scotland said: "It has been an absolute pleasure to support this project through our ArtRoots programme, which is funded by Transport Scotland. We want the National Cycle Network to be valued and loved by all of the communities it serves – supporting groups across Scotland with ideas to shape their areas and empowering them to improve local National Cycle Network routes are cornerstones of this vision.

"The impact of this stunning, community-driven project has been huge, and we are seeing a significant positive impact on the number of people walking, wheeling and cycling in the area.

"Art is incredibly important in making journeys more enjoyable and attractive for everyone, and we hope the impact of the Colinton Tunnel project inspires more communities to get in touch with their ideas to improve local National Cycle Network routes."

Mike Scott concludes: "We had a tunnel which was black, badly lit, and actually people were scared to walk through it. We wanted to create a safer place and the mural has transformed it. It's very much a community project. Now you'll see people linger and smile, they're comfortable being here." *Colinton Tunnel, Colinton Village, Water of Leith Walkway, Edinburgh, EH13 OJX www.colintontunnel.org.uk*

FRANCES ANDERSON



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Tweed revival by the Tweed

A community interest company at work

THE SCOTTISH BORDERS was once at the heart of the UK textiles business, but recent decades have seen the once thriving industry decline, causing unemployment and low morale.

Now, a charity named ReTweed is reviving both people's hope and discarded textiles, thanks to its dynamic founder and director Hazel Smith. Based in the fishing town of Eyemouth, this pioneering social enterprise provides creative and inspiring employability and entrepreneurship opportunities for women in a community often forgotten in the wider national initiatives.

It offers women an opportunity to gain the skills and experience for creative industry and enterprise whilst producing amazing and original furnishings, fashions and crafts.

ReTweed's founder Hazel grew up in Berwickshire and, returning in 2015, she recognized the area's unseen but acute needs around poverty, isolation, low aspiration and the associated challenges to health and well being. With the strong Scottish Borders textile heritage she saw an opportunity to create a social enterprise delivering craft, textiles and heritage skills to those facing these barriers.

For 30 years she worked with Scotland's Third Sector, with Government and the EU, with most of her career focussed on addressing inequalities (social, health and particularly gender). She volunteered with Women's Associations in rural Senegal, setting up community enterprise projects and on returning to Scotland supported a social enterprise on the Isle of Skye; specialising in upcycling.

"This is a distillation of so much of my past work," says Hazel. "At a time when welfare reform cuts are impacting most acutely on women and those who are vulnerable, we need to provide innovative solutions to promoting social and economic justice."

"ReTweed offers that opportunity and since we are using 70% recycled materials, we're also protecting the environment."

With a growing demand for ethical fashion, crafts and furnishings, ReTweed is harnessing that market, meeting both social and environmental objectives, providing successful manufacturing, creative industry,



Hazel Smith, founder and director of ReTweed

and unique and quality products for their customers.

The mission is to build routes into education, employment and enterprise for women facing barriers through the provision of sewing and upcycling skills training through their innovative free 12-week course, using waste textiles. This is underpinned by the environmental philosophy of promoting a reduce, re-use, recycle and repair culture for the area.

ReTweed aim to offer women a new way to think about their futures, supporting them to identify their creative skills and aspirations, and to allow them to gain the skills and experience for creative industry and enterprise whilst producing original items which are sold to raise money to sustain the project.

The free training programme allows women to learn basic skills in craft, design and technology. Each student learns how to use a sewing machine and create a range of furnishings, fashions and crafts which are sold to raise money to sustain the project.

Their partners in Business Gateway, Borders College and across the area, work with them to deliver opportunities for further learning and career pathways, including promoting opportunities for students to develop their own enterprises.

Sarah McDougal, who has lived in Eyemouth for more than thirty years, was one of the first students on the ReTweed course in 2016.

Sarah says: "I joined ReTweed's training programme as I felt a bit lost, without a purpose, once my two girls started school. I immediately loved the friendliness at ReTweed and I enjoyed getting the chance to learn new skills. I had never sewn before so

my first time was with ReTweed. I have since inherited my great grandmother's 1962 Singer sewing machine and it's so special to be using something my nana had loved."

As well as delivering craft, design and technology training and teaching sewing competency, ReTweed also delivers on the Greener Scotland agenda of reducing, re-using and recycling. At least 70% of materials will be recycled and their products are made using environmentally sound methods.

Looking to the future, ReTweed is going on the road by offering shorter intensive skills-based courses for women in more remote and rural areas with no access to public transport or with care responsibilities. And it is hoping to revisit their ambition to develop a "ReMake Festival" in Eyemouth encouraging local creatives, makers, businesses, educators and communities to come together around their wider environmental philosophy of promoting the reduce, re-use, recycle and repair culture in the area.

Hazel concludes: "We want to grow this training and enterprise model, inspiring and working with other individuals and organisation who want to replicate the Eyemouth prototype or create their own version of ReTweed across other parts of Scotland and the rest of the country. And of course, to keep making and selling beautiful, imaginative and covetable items from fabrics rescued from landfill that showcase the skills and stories of the women that make them."

www.retweed.com

FRANCES ANDERSON



Editorial Comment

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Red tape? We've got plenty!

IT COULD WELL BE, as our distinguished columnist Nick Jones suggests, in this issue, that bands of music makers and troubadors will overcome the obstacles put in their way by Brexit and somehow let their music be heard across Europe once more.

Maybe. But the damage being done to the arts, science and business by the madcap policy forced upon us by a clique of mainly privileged Tory extremists is already immense.

The Covid pandemic, a hugely biased right wing press and a massively costly Downing Street spin operation have so far managed to obscure the most serious effects, but the truth is slowly leaking out.

Musicians being forced to stomp up hundreds in order to cut through the red tape to perform in Europe. (One hapless pianist was forced to find £600 for the necessary visa clearance to give one concert in Barcelona.)

Science is suffering too from the barmy 'Make Britain Great Again' withdrawal from joint European programmes.

Ironically, fishermen, who campaigned with one of loudest voices in support of Brexit are amongst the worst losers. The

Not me, guv – I just take the loot

THE FOUNDER of the world wide web Tim (or Sir Timothy) Berners-Lee is right to feel some disappointment at the way his creation has grown up.

The altruism which accompanied the initial development of the idea has been sadly lost as greedy fingers have worked their way over its high minded ideals.

All attempts to bring some ethical and fiscal standards to bear on the big beasts who run the show have proved toothless.

The mega structures that dominate have shown how easily they can sidestep any attempt to set standards or impose fair taxes on their massive profits.

Time and again, with very rare exceptions, they have managed to dodge regulation

A bridge to Nowhere – or a tunnel?

Mary Gladstone speculates on mooted plans for a permanent link between Scotland and Northern Ireland and remembers that the man behind them has form when it comes to bridges

DURING the early 20th century, Poland was so irrelevant on the European political map that it was referred to as 'the Polish corridor'.

Sandwiched between Russia and Germany, Poland learned to punch above its weight. Unsurprisingly, it has contributed much to civilisation with such names as Zbigniew Herbert, Czeslaw Milosz, Marie Curie, Chopin, Pope John-Paul II and Lech Walesa, leader of Solidarity.

I can't help thinking that, although it would be hard-pressed to measure up to Poland's luminaries, south-west Scotland is suffering from a similar situation to the one that Poland once coped with. Through neglect and under-funding, the beautiful Dumfries & Galloway Region, situated close to the Scottish Borders, north-west England and the Irish Sea, is sliced in half by a ropy trunk road (the A75), an unfit conduit for freight, travelling to and from Northern Ireland.

You might hope that our PM, in spite of his hot air and grandiosity, would come to Galloway's rescue. Not quite. He's sent instead, Sir Peter Hendy, chairman of Network Rail, to report on how this region's roads (and others in the UK) may be improved so that Britain's four nations can be better connected.

In 2013 while he was London mayor, he spent £ 43 millions of public cash, including a £ 418,000 gala dinner, on plans for a £366 million foot-bridge over the Thames. The idea was dropped four years later.

Johnson also wants Hendy to investigate the feasibility of a 'fixed link' across the Irish Sea. To you and me, that means a bridge but Alister Jack, D & G's MP and Secretary of State for Scotland,

along with others, advise against it. Apart from a WW2 munitions dump on the seabed near Beaufort's Dyke, the Irish Sea is notorious for bad weather and it's probable that a bridge would be closed for at least 100 days in the year.

The other idea, a headline-grabbing stunt (and remembering his high-wire act in 2012, Johnson's good at that) is a tunnel. Costing £ 20 billion, it's a fig leaf or a distraction from Brexit and an attempt to keep Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party sweet amid the kerfuffle over the N.I. Protocol. It's clear that Johnson is very worried.

Without the latter's support he, like Theresa May before him, could be set adrift. But DUP Sammy Wilson is enthusiastic, indicating that a bridge or tunnel would show that the UK Government is prepared to spend money to make sure that people in Northern Ireland were physically connected. But the more pragmatic believes that all that's needed is to improve the ferry services.

Whatever else, this UK Government report, led by Hendy has stirred up anger. Emma Harper, SNP South Scotland MSP, asserts that the review was set up without consulting the Governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

With or without a bridge or tunnel, roads like the Carlisle-Stranraer A75 and Stranraer-Ayr A77 must be improved and there's £ 20 million in the kitty for this purpose. It's ironic that although Hendy is head of the railways, there's little in his report on rail links in the region. But the re-laying of the tracks of the Carlisle-Dumfries-Stranraer line, axed by Dr Beeching in the mid-sixties is a

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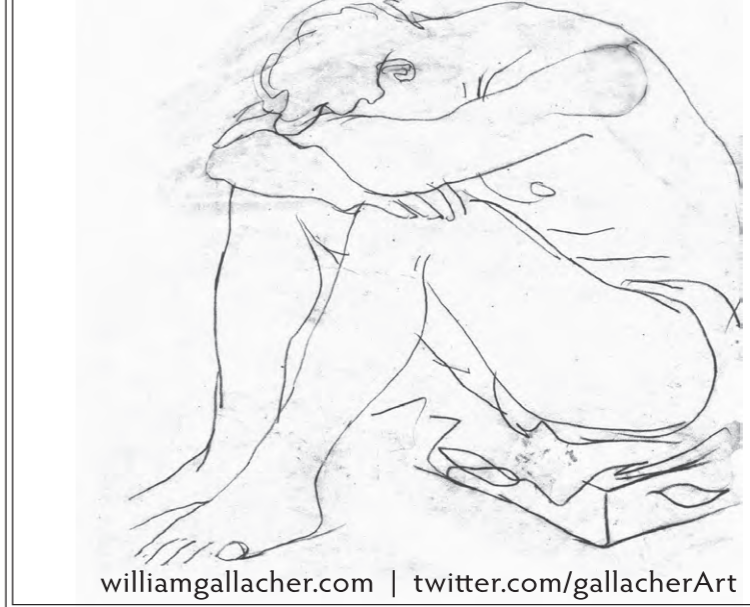


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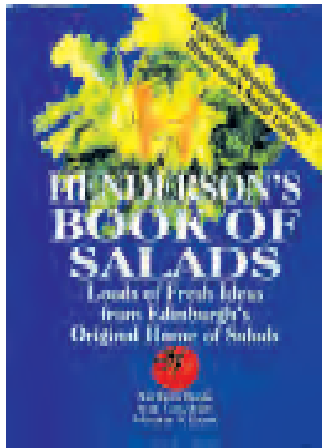
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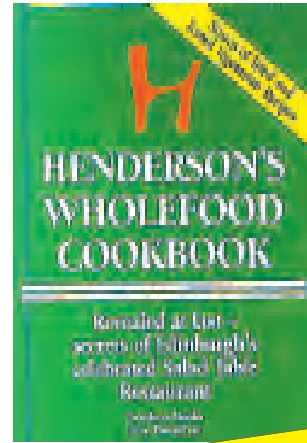
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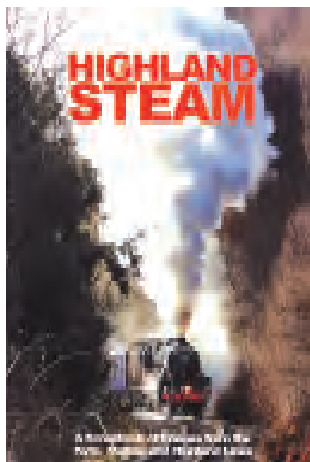


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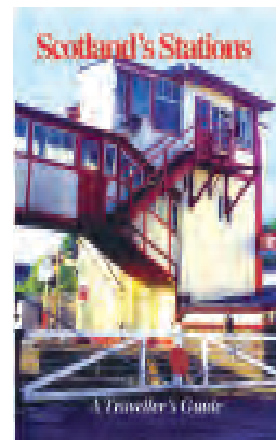
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