

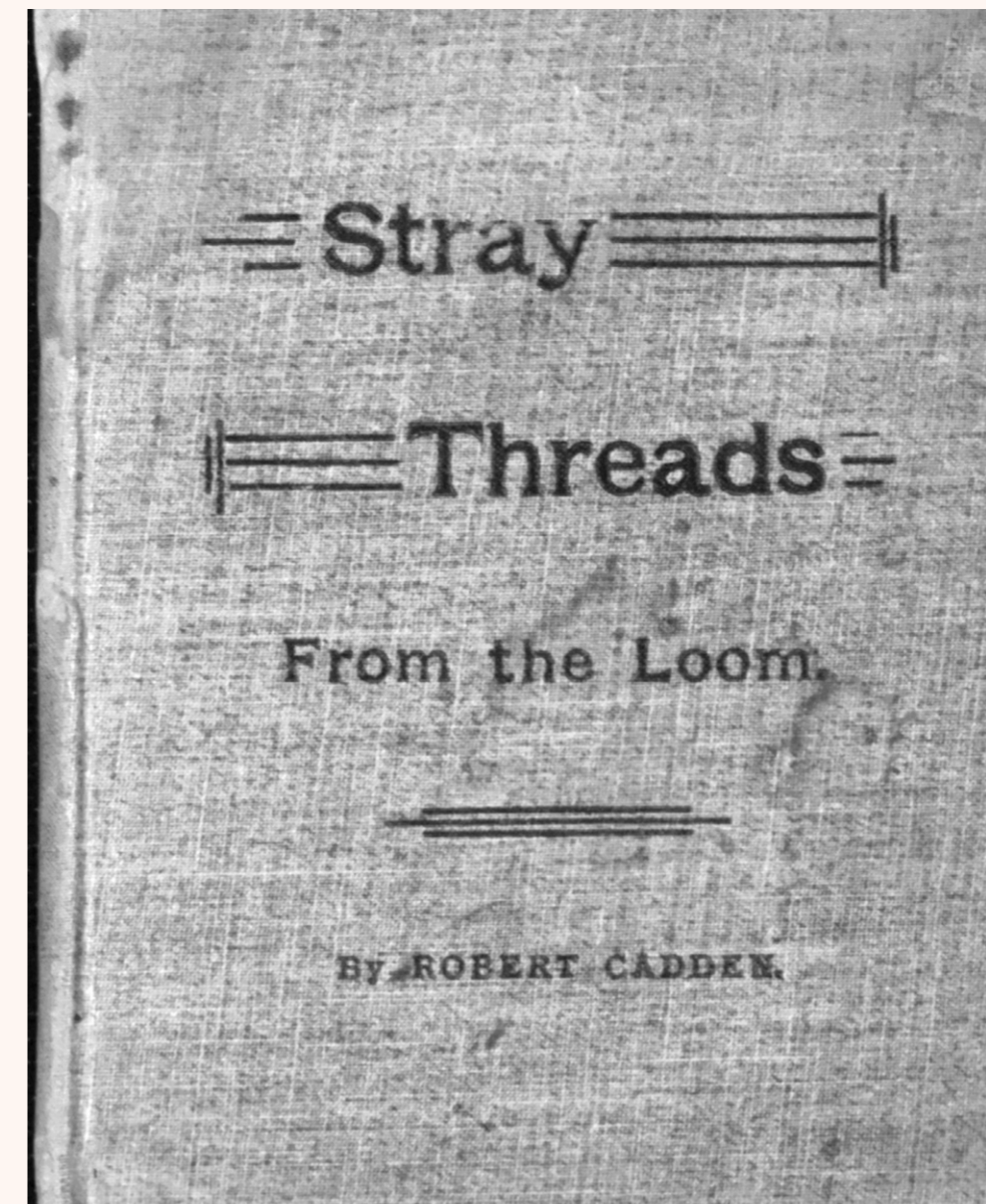


weavers of ayrshire.

“the first important development in the mechanisation of the British textile industry was the invention of machines powered by steam engines or water wheels which spun raw cotton into thread. the thread still had to be woven into cloth on manually-operated hand looms. in scotland, agents for the thread mill owners in glasgow and paisley delivered the thread to hand-loom weavers working in their own cottages, and later collected the finished cloth, paid the weavers, and took the cloth to the mill owners to be marketed.

for most of the first half of the nineteenth century, hand-loom weaving was the most important industry in the town of girvan. however, the invention of powered weaving machines meant that by around 1850 hand-loom weaving was in rapid decline.”

- Tom Barclay, Ayr library.



the book ‘stray threads’ is a collection of poems by the weavers of ayrshire and more specifically the weavers of girvan and its surrounding area. the book was found by my mother when someone in town was clearing their house, then i became fascinated in the history and heritage so took it into my possession as there was a story to be told.

the book is incredible as a piece of history, a part of culture and a look back at the lives of people so long ago. what was fascinating is that the poems did not revolve around their occupation as weavers, not talking about their work and how it occupied their life. rather they talk about the ones they loved, people they fancied . poems about nature and their love for the hills, rivers and valleys deep. real passions. such human wants and needs, their love for life. stories like these are so important to keep alive, like a time capsule.



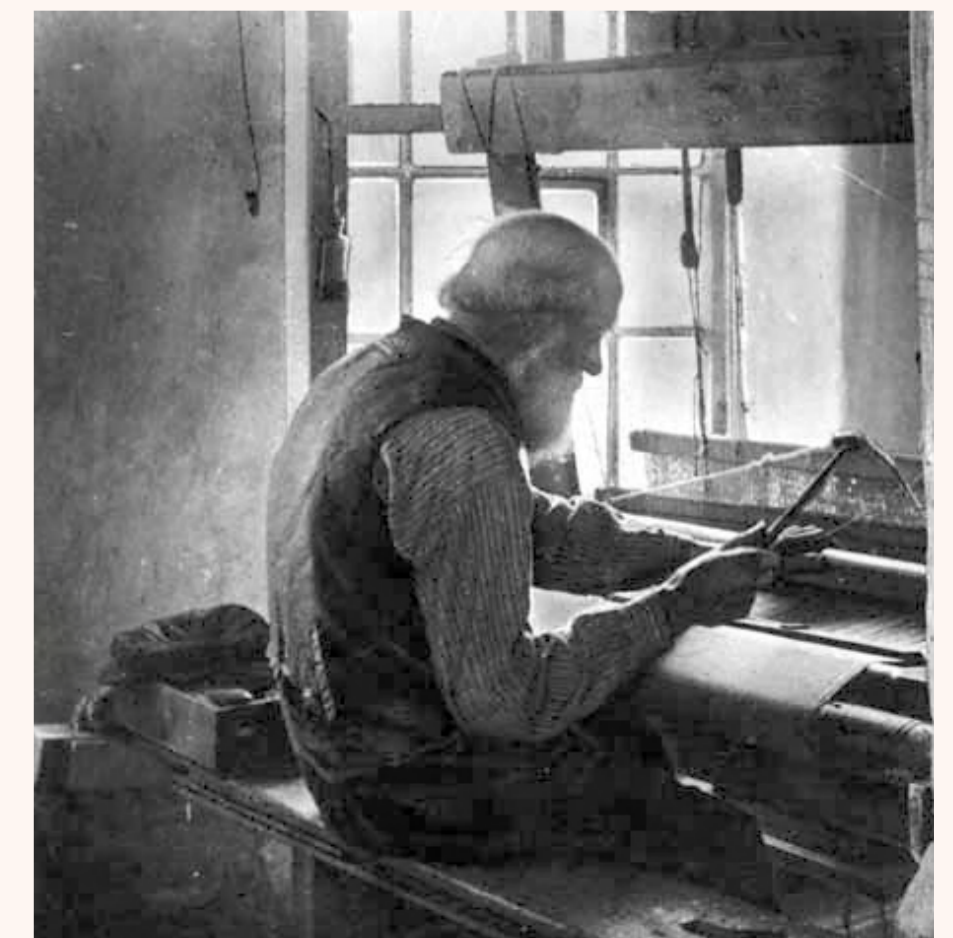
girvan,
south ayrshire.



rediscovering the stories of ayrshire

the project uses the book “stay threads, from the loom” by robert cadden as a narrative framing device for the project. using the context of ayrshire’s rich yet forgotten weaving industry pre industrial revolution, the book is a collection of poems from the working people of the coastal town of girvan, the poems chosen speak about their lives and passions for their home and the people they knew; the silvery thread of the river girvan leading into the clyde.

stray threads use this context to transport users to the past but also highlight the stories of today, the stray threads of experience and tales brought together in the three vessels. it is important that we celebrate the small communities of scotland and memorialise them, not to be forgotten. love and passion, the most human emotions are the heart of any community, the heart of this project’s past and future.



collecting the stories of past and present

live link to poems:
<https://youtu.be/93NaLB5HaKY>



stories of the past

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live link to interviews:
<https://youtu.be/hV2FEuv4aeA>

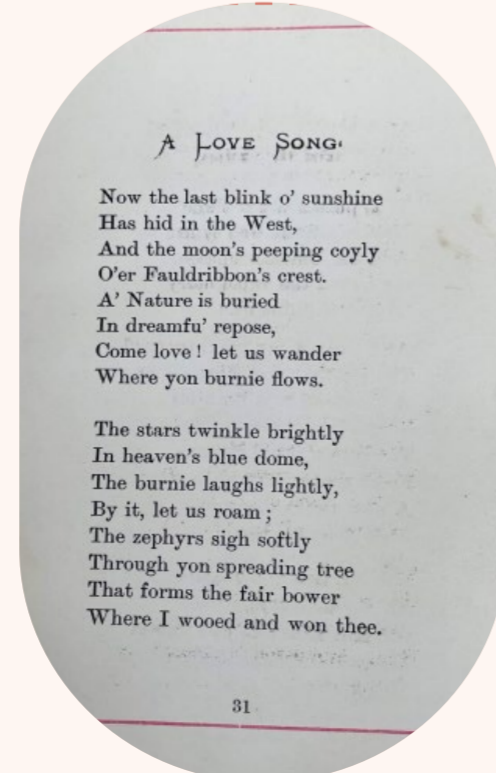
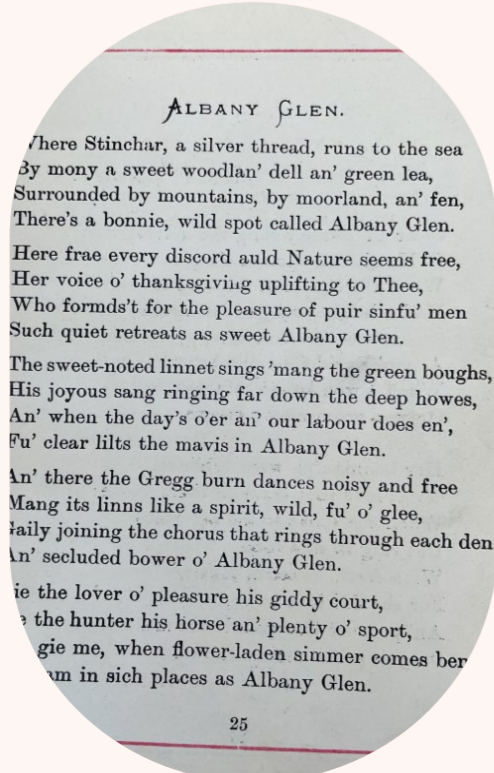
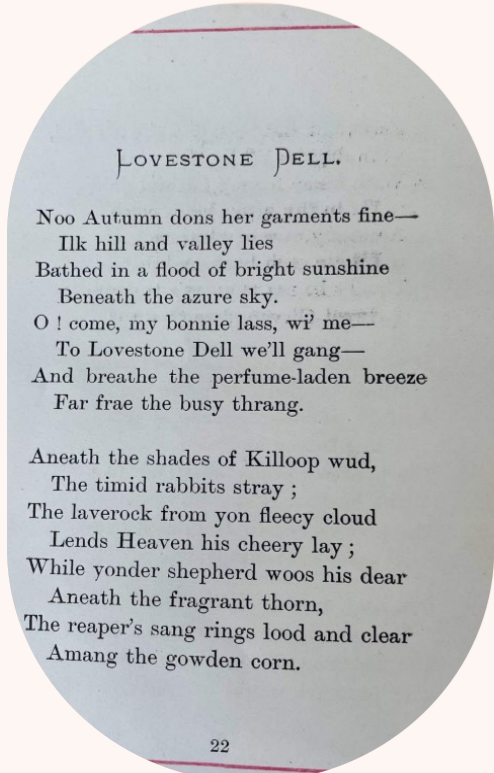


a key focus for this project is to gather stories, preserving them just like Robert Cadder did in 'stray threads'.

when it came to choosing the people i interviewed, i got people i knew or family knew so it was easier to contact and explain the project was. all of the people used have lived in girvan for all or most of their lives as it was important they had a strong connection to the local area. since i go them to do also do the poem recordings i kept them behind to tell a story from the past so that with this project the stories stay alive.



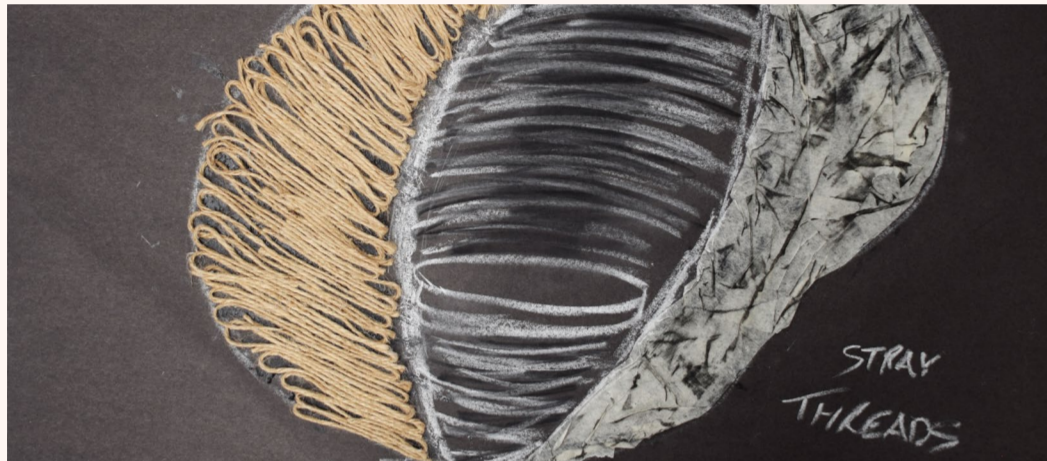
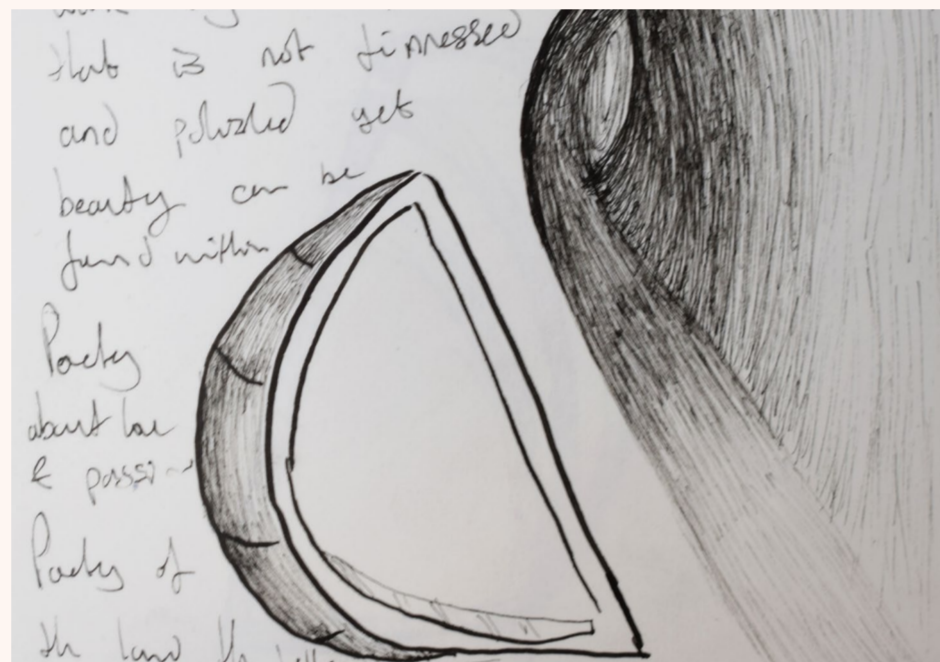
stories of the present



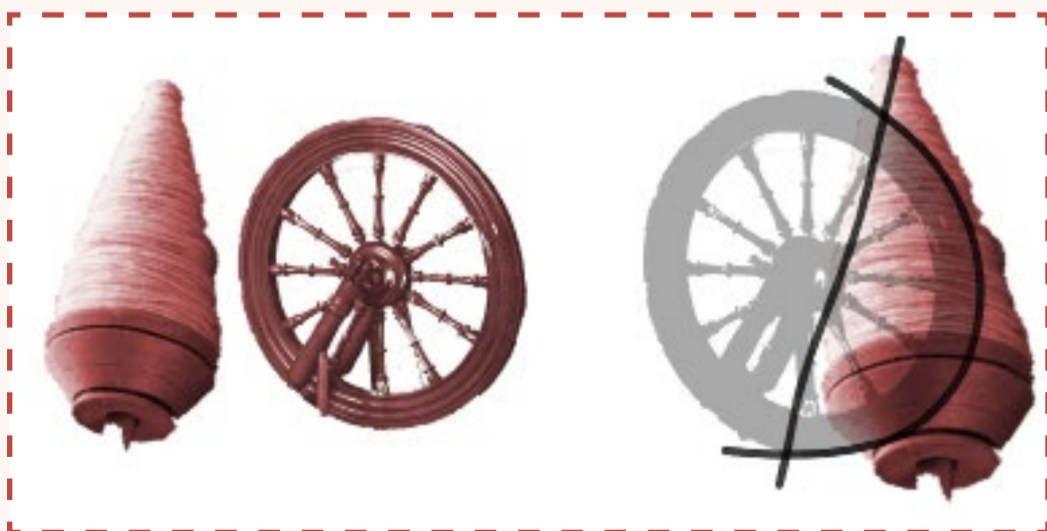
developing the concept

initial sketch drawings

at the start of the project i knew i was going to create a woven structure so i began with these charcoal initial sketches on a1 sheets. this was a creative expression to establish the tone, direction and feel for the project going forward. masking tape and charcoal was used to represent plaster as i thought that i'd be using wattle and dob as a material.



discovering the form



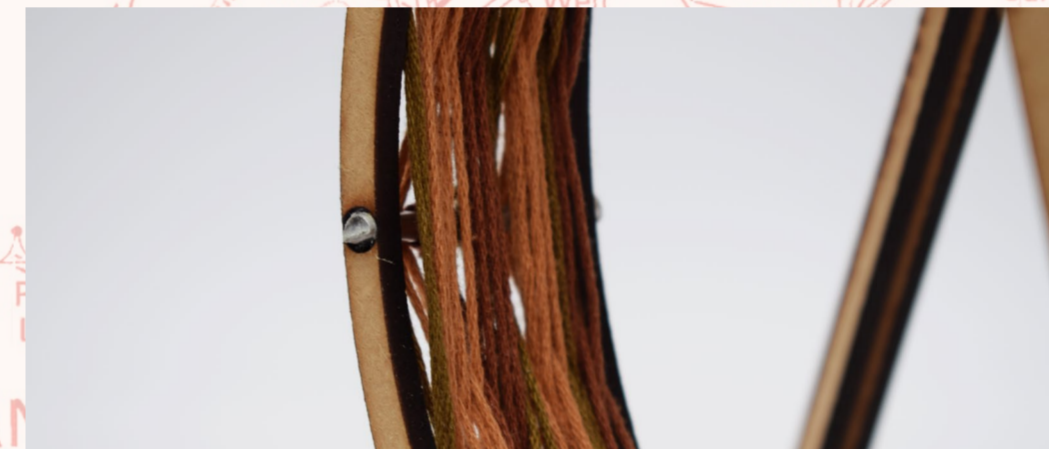
finding the main form to base your future development on can be difficult as it takes experimenting with different shapes. though when placing the spindle and the wheel together creating this negative shape it was clear that this segment shape was the one to take forward with development.

initial sketch models



materiality

in the models previously i used thread to represent the woven willow back to the structures. i thought that the texture and pattern to the weave was visually stronger than the wattle and dob idea from a physical standpoint. from a narrative standpoint it tied in better to the looming theme of the project.



final sketch models

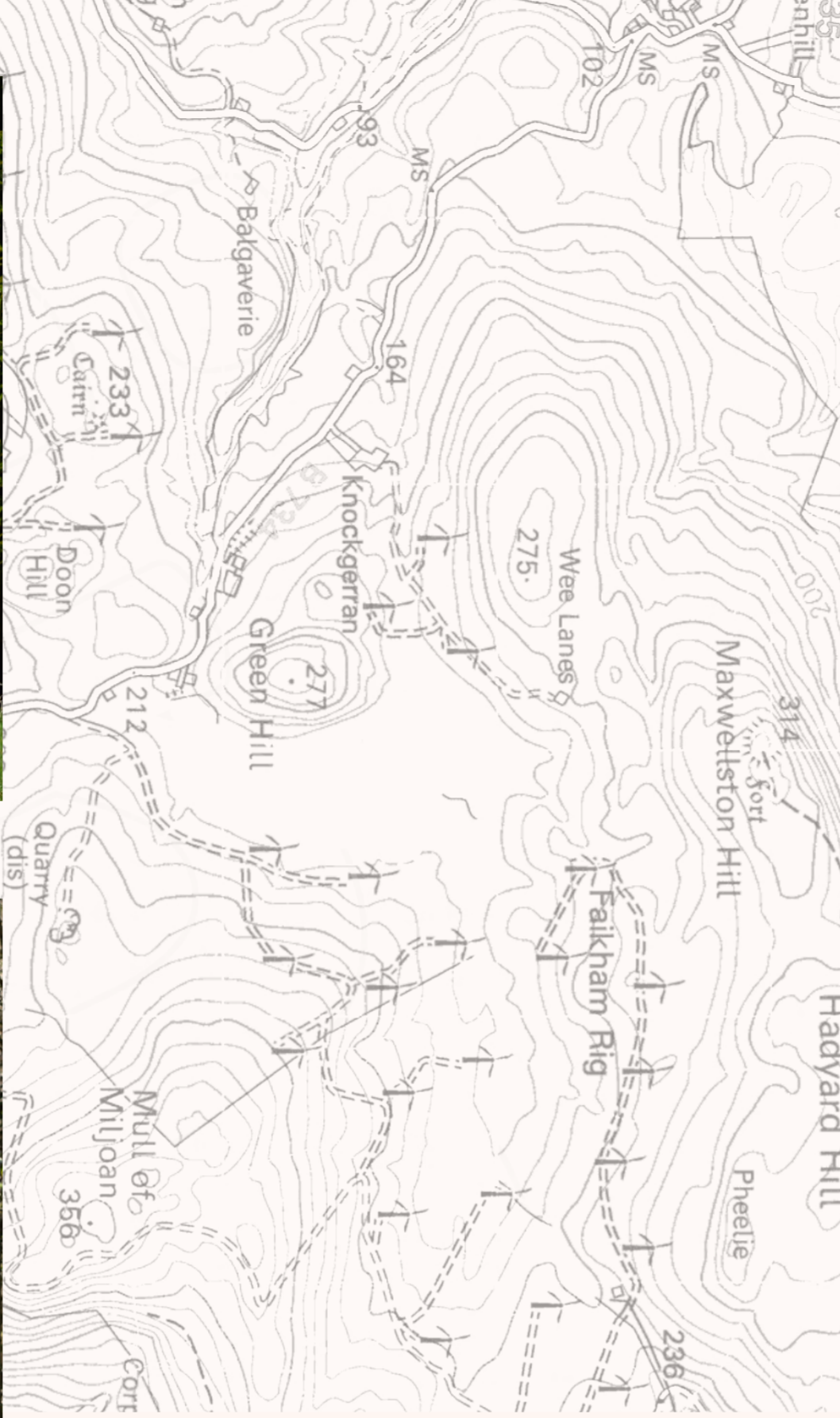


Benan Hill-281

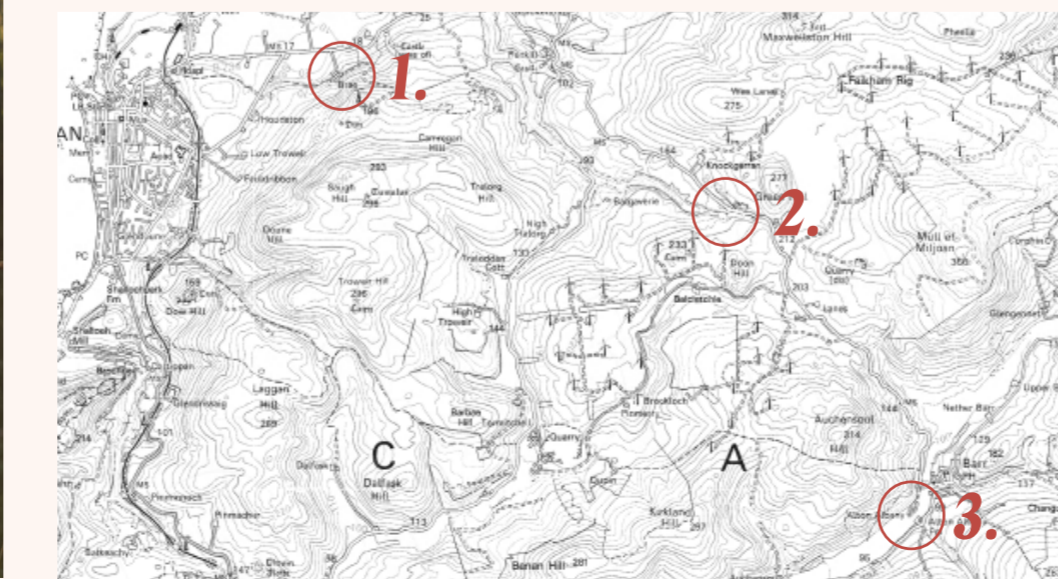
when it came to the choosing of the back material, we knew it had to be still a natural fibre rope to keep in line with the tone set for the project. manila rope was decided upon, for its cost and look. it turned out to be quite a hard rope to work as it wasn't as pliable as needed. instead of tying the rope at the bottom every time, when a cut piece ran out we would attach the next length with a reef knot. initially i was thinking of using chunky yarn as it was the most pliable and easy to use. it also linked more to the project. however the cost to do so could not be justified. it was then decided to use a natural fibre rope made in the uk so as to not look synthetic. the weave was harder and reef knots were used to extend lengths.

constructing the installtion structures





- 1. 'killowen woods'
- 2. 'penwhapple burn'
- 3. 'alban glen'



project in location & gallery installation

holding an event with the sculptures was a key part of the project. as i thought it would be good to do a small pop up in a community space in girvan to allow locals to use and listen to the poems for the first time. it was also to evidence that the pieces are properly functioning gallery pieces that do work in that context. one of the key things was not everyone knew how to sit inside them and often sat half in half out of the sculptures. the girvan folk fest was also on during the weekend of the 30th of april, this allowed for more footfall and it was good to have an art installation in for people to come by and see as it adds to the community spirit of the event. the event was held at the 'wee school art space' which has been taken over by a community arts group in an old victorian school.

