

Experiences of Bothy Project

A report compiled from a survey of ‘live/work’ artist residency participants

Anna McLauchlan and Morag Iles, September 2020

Overview

This report compiles responses to an online survey of participants in Bothy Project ‘live/work’ artist residencies at two main sites in Scotland: Inshriach Bothy, in Inshriach Estate in the Cairngorms National Park (operational since October 2012), and Sweeney’s Bothy on the Isle of Eigg (up and running from February 2014). In November 2019 a link to the survey was emailed to 165 people listed as doing these residencies (with a reminder in December). Forty-five full responses were received.

Survey questions were largely open-ended and people were free to define ‘what they do’ – that is, their work, job or practice – and also their gender, age and ethnicity. The 45 respondents were active across a broad range of artforms including visual arts, various kinds of writing, and music. Thirty-two identified as female, 10 as male and two as non-binary. All were aged between 25 and 67 years old, with three-quarters in their 30s or 40s. Thirty-four identified their ethnicity as white, one as black and the 10 others with one or more country of origin.

Bothy Project suggest that residencies in their “simple off-grid shelters [can promote] a slower pace of life, providing more time for contemplation resulting in increased exposure to nature and the local community.” Many participants were responding to the specific sites, drawing inspiration from the environment in which they were placed. Residents undertook a breadth of artistic activities – more than half were writing and lots of people were ‘researching’ and walking.

The majority of respondents (40 of 45) noted a direct beneficial impact on their work or practice from their Bothy Project residency. Undertaking a residency often resulted in tangible artworks and influenced the ‘feel’ of what was made. Some people changed existing, or adopted new, working practices during their residency. A small group stated that the residency had directly inspired new ways of thinking. Two (of 45) people wrestled with the conditions, making it difficult for them to complete pre-existing projects. Overall, the experiences narrated in this survey support further research into approaches that enable people to make the most of any given residency experience.

Keywords: live/work artist residencies, Bothy Project, contemporary art, creative industries, creative economies, Scotland

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1. Introduction

This report compiles ‘Experiences of Bothy Project’ drawn from a survey. A link to the survey was emailed to 165 residency participants in November and December 2019 and 45 responses were received. A pilot survey was conducted to help shape the questions (as explained in further detail in Section 2 and Appendix 1). As the final survey (Appendix 2) was very similar to the initial pilot the results from both are largely combined. Firstly, information about Bothy Project is provided (1.a) followed by the research context (1.b).

1.a Bothy Project

Bothy Project – initiated by artist Bobby Niven and architect Iain MacLeod – supports the development, creation and maintenance of off-grid residency spaces in Scotland.¹ There are three main sites: Inshriach Bothy, on Inshriach estate in Cairngorms National Park (operational since October 2012); Sweeney’s Bothy on the Isle of Eigg (active since February 2014), and Pig Rock Bothy, initially in the grounds of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh (from July 2014 to February 2020) but now in the process of being adapted prior to being moved to Assynt.²

In 2012-13 Bothy Project also made ‘The Walled Garden’ in a vacant space by the Forth and Clyde Canal near Spiers Wharf in Glasgow; a wildflower garden and alternative outdoor performance and events space housing a residency in a shipping container bothy during summer 2013. Bobby Niven also makes bothy-like residency spaces as part of his broader artistic work, such as ‘The Palm House’ for 2017’s Edinburgh Arts Festival or the Scriptorium for Arbroath 2020 (put on hold due to the COVID19 pandemic).

Bothy Project first became a limited company on 21 February 2011 and then was registered as a charity on 31 January 2018. “Under the new governance structure the organisation is looking to broaden the scope of events and activities in the locale of each Bothy Project bothy.”³ Consequently, it is useful for Bothy Project to gain an overview of engagement with the residency programme so far, activities undertaken by those resident and whether or in what way the residency impacted on participants’ work or practice.

This research concentrates on Inshriach and Sweeney’s because they allow for ‘live/work’ residencies where the studio or workspace is built into the accommodation. This is in contrast to Pig Rock Bothy in the Grounds of Modern One which was used as a place for engagement and activity – hosting artists’ workshops, events and exhibitions – people did not live in Pig Rock Bothy and the residency aspect was primarily associated with schools or art students.⁴ In Assynt Pig Rock Bothy will be fitted out to accommodate residential residences.

¹ Details can be found at Bothy Project website: Bothy Project. 2020. About. <http://www.thebothyproject.org/about/>

² Pig Rock Bothy was commissioned as part of GENERATION: 25 Years of Contemporary Art in Scotland. Pig Rock was intended to be at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art for the length of the exhibition – a media source indicates that this was from July 31 to the end of October 2014 (Anonymous. 2014. Arts News. The Herald (Glasgow) July 30 Wednesday, 1st Edition.). In the end it stayed for six years.

³ Bothy Project. 2020. About. <http://www.thebothyproject.org/about/>

⁴ Largely through Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh College and the Glasgow School of Art Sculpture and Environmental Art programmes.

Residencies at Inshriach or Sweeney's are organised and funded through three loose programmes: a 'partnership programme' where larger cultural organisations send artists of their choice on a residency (including the Royal Scottish Academy, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and Outset Scotland); a 'funded programme' where Bothy Project fundraises to programme residencies (so far supported by the William Grant Foundation and Hope Scott Trust); and a subsidised 'self-directed' programme for which artists can apply and then self-fund their residency (potentially then seeking support from other sources).⁵

Bothy Project owns all three of its bothies, but not the associated land on which the bothies are sited. Bothy Project has an historical arrangement with both Inshriach Estate and Lucy Conway (Eigg Time) on whose croft Sweeney's Bothy sits; each landowner has sole use of the bothies for six months of the year, letting them to the public and retaining the profits from this operation. Visitors' books and anecdotal conversations suggest that these private lets often involve artistic activities.

1.b Research context

The starting point of this research was different for each author. Morag Iles is doing a PhD analysing artist residencies in collaboration with Bothy Project, Cove Park and The Work Room. That PhD is funded by the Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities (SGSAH) through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). At the point of writing this report, Morag is yet to visit Inshriach Bothy and Sweeney's Bothy.

In March 2019 Anna McLauchlan stayed at Inshriach then travelled on to Sweeney's Bothy during a William Grant Foundation funded residency (with support for travel from the Scottish Society for Art History); this informed an editorial role for Bothy Project's New Writing Project and motivated Anna's desire to further study the organisation. When made aware of each other's work the authors chose to collaborate. Anna's responses to the pilot survey (see Appendix 1) have been integrated into this report.

This compilation of survey responses is part of a larger piece of research that brings together then draws from:

- an outline of who was resident at Inshriach and Sweeney's and when (referred to as the 'record of residencies');
- blogs written by participants as a condition of their residencies;
- visitors' books;
- related journalism and academic texts.

Blogs, visitors' books, related journalism and academic texts all document experiences of these residencies. Blogs are publicly accessible from the Bothy Project website and related journalism and academic texts can be found using online search engines. However, visitors' books remain at bothy sites and can only be accessed as a visitor or with permission from Bothy Project. There is likely to be a gap between when someone does a residency and their blog post, whereas contributions to the visitors' books are made when people are staying

⁵ In the early days of each bothy people helping to construct the buildings were given residencies in return for that work.

either at Inshriach or Sweeney's. A survey adds to this already existing information by soliciting direct reflection about participants' residency experiences that in some cases came several years after the visit (as discussed in Section 4.c in relation to the 'length and timing' of the residencies).

Textual survey responses are more straightforward to report on than the blogs and visitors' books which regularly bring together words and images and in some instances film. Therefore, this initial report combines details from the record of residencies with responses to the survey. Of the 45 people that responded to the survey 38 said they would be willing to be interviewed about their residency experience (Appendix 2, Q.16); thus, the content of this report may inform interviews.

This report details the characteristics of survey respondents (Section 3) and the circumstances surrounding the residencies (Section 4). It then moves onto more substantive findings including: activities undertaken during the residencies (Section 5); the impact of a residency on participants' work or practice (Section 6); and responses to the question 'Do you have anything else you would like to say?' (Section 7). This report concludes with some suggestions for what could happen next (Section 8). It begins by setting out the approach taken to researching experiences of Bothy Project.

2. Researching experiences of Bothy Project

People who had done Bothy Project residencies had to be identified then contacted for this research. The first author put together a 'record of residencies', that is, a spreadsheet containing an overview of who undertook each residency, its location, the start and end date together with details about whether, or in what way, each residency was funded (see Appendix 1). This record listed 316 residencies, with 169 at Inshriach and 147 at Sweeney's from their opening until December 2019. Assessing the total number of *residents* is more complex; often one person was listed as resident, sometimes two, whereas it was evident from visitors' books and blog posts that people often brought friends or partners with them.

To take account of privacy and GDPR, representatives of Bothy Project sent out the pilot (11 November 2019) and final survey (active from 23 November through December 2019). The survey was likely received by a total of 165 people, from which 45 responses were returned: six from a pilot and 39 from the final survey (full information is available in Appendix 1). Survey questions were designed to find out about residents' experiences of Bothy Project and the potential impact of the residencies on their work or practice.

The survey formed part of a broader research plan (see Section 1 above) given ethical approval from the College of the Arts at the University of Glasgow: the ethics committee reviewed the questions (Appendix 2), a draft of the contact email (Appendix 3) and other elements of the research (including the potential for follow-up interviews). Survey responses will inform different kinds of writing, including this report, academic journal articles and Morag Iles' PhD thesis.

What the survey reveals rests on what responses were received – which depends on why people ‘self-select’ to participate and what subsequently shapes the content of their response. Firstly, there are at least three forms of self-selection that determine whether or not someone takes part in the survey:

- people often self-select to do the residency in the first place. That is, because they want the experience it offers of “a slower pace of life” and “increased exposure to nature and the local community”⁶;
- people with strong feelings – ‘lovers’ or ‘loathers’ – are more likely to participate in the survey, and;
- people that feel they have something relevant to say are more likely to complete the survey. For example, one person did not finish the pilot because they were not currently a practicing artist and were uncertain about how to respond to a related question (see Appendix 2, Q.9).

Self-selection shapes the content of responses and so does the overall framing of the research. A link to the survey was sent via an email from Bothy Project (Appendix 3) which also included information about a collection of online texts [Take Yourself Out of Your Usual Structure](#), edited by this report’s first author. This was included to communicate this researcher’s first-hand understanding of Bothy Project. This, and other circumstances, could influence what a respondent said. For example, after completing the pilot someone texted the first author: “I’d had a strong coffee and was free associating a bit when I filled it in – it might be a bit intense or something! Hope it can be useful anyway.”

Surveys are normally filled out in haste and responses are not normally revised, leading to repetition and slight lapses in grammar. Where applicable, quotes were edited to allow the text to flow while maintaining the sentiment of the response. Within the text of this report the numbers (in brackets) indicate how many people gave a particular response. For example, “one-third (16) of the participants” means 16 of the 45 participants.

3. Characteristics of survey respondents

A number of survey questions were targeted at giving an overview of the participants’ characteristics. Rather than supply a set of prescriptive responses, people were given freedom to define ‘what they do’ (3.a) together with what are known as the administrative categories of gender, age and ethnicity (3.b). Alongside this, information was sought about where people were living at the time of undertaking the residencies (3.c).

3.a What they do – work, job or practice

The participants’ description of what they do – that is, their job or practice that informed the reasoning behind them doing a Bothy Project residency – spanned art and design, with some involved in writing and literature (scriptwriting, playwriting and/or poetry) and music. No person directly defined themselves as working with dance or movement, although it was evident from responses to other questions (for example someone had done a dance

⁶ Bothy Project. 2020. Residencies. <http://www.thebothyproject.org/residencies/>

residency – see section 3.d) that this was a component of some people’s practice. The responses cluster into a rich mosaic – a short summary follows with a full overview in Appendix 5.

Of the 45 people who participated in the survey; 29 people identified themselves with one activity, 13 people listed two and three people noted three activities as describing their job and/or practice. In total 21 people directly cited the term ‘artist’ as at least one of their activities, with a further 21 listing activities associated with artistic practice and/or work in the arts. These associated practices cover a broad spectrum of artistic forms and activities, including, but not limited to: music, writing, curation and arts administration. This is coherent with Bothy Project’s ambition to offer “opportunities for artists and other creatives to conduct residencies in unique and inspirational environments.”⁷ Another 13 people cited activities relating to academia or research-orientated work as at least one of their ‘roles’/reasons for taking part in a residency.

3.b Gender, age and ethnicity

Gender

All 45 people responded to the question ‘What gender do you identify as?’ (Appendix 2, Q.17) with 32 identifying as female (one of whom wrote ‘woman’ and one other said that they would be seen as female but did not really identify as such) and 10 as male. Two people stated ‘non-binary’.

Age

All 45 participants answered ‘What is your age?’ (Appendix 2, Q.19) with a number. At the point of taking part in the survey (November/December 2019) ages were in the range of 25 to 67 years old. Results were tabulated into decades – with three people in their 20s (that is between 20 and 29), seventeen in their 30s, sixteen in their 40s, six in their 50s, and three in their 60s. So, three-quarters of the people who responded were aged between 30 and 49 when taking part in the survey.⁸

Ethnicity

Of the 44 people (of 45) who responded to the question ‘What ethnicity do you identify as?’ (Appendix 2, Q.18) one identified as black and 34 as white.⁹ Eight people chose to identify with one or more countries of origin: three were Scottish and the others stated that they were British, Danish, Irish, Guyanese British and Swedish. One identified with the regional designation ‘Western European’.

⁷ Bothy Project. 2020. Residencies. <http://www.thebothyproject.org/residencies/>

⁸ One participant specified a difference between their age now and when they did the residency (they are now a year older). This surfaces an issue – that people who had done residencies in 2013 were potentially seven years younger than they reported in the responses to the survey.

⁹ Thirteen of the 34 just identified as ‘white’, nine as ‘White Scottish’, five ‘White British’, one ‘White Irish’, one ‘White British-Irish-European’ and one ‘White European’. Three identified as ‘Caucasian’ which is widely held to mean ‘White Western-European’ and another as a Pakeha, or white New Zealander.

3.c Where they were living

All 45 participants responded to the question 'Where were you living at the time you undertook the/each residency? (city, country)' (Appendix 2, Q.12):

- Thirty were living in Scotland: Glasgow (10), Edinburgh (7), Huntly (2), Perth (1) and Kilmacolm (1). Others listed regional areas rather than distinct places: Galloway, Midlothian and 'near Inverness';
- Nine respondents were living in England: London (7), Cambridge (1) and Brighton (1);
- Six were living outside of the UK, with three from Scandinavian countries; Sweden (2) and Denmark (1) and three from North America.

3.d Engagement with other residencies

Of the 45 participants, 35 had taken part in another residency programme (Appendix 2, Q.13 and Q.14); this might condition their experience of a residency with Bothy Project. A follow-up question (Appendix 2, Q.14) asked people to list the residency or residencies they had taken part in. Of the 83 *distinctly different* residencies mentioned¹⁰, 36 were in the UK and 47 were in countries outside the UK. Of the 35 that had taken part in other residency programmes, 25 had done between one and three other residencies, 10 people had done four distinctly different residencies or more. Only some participants listed when the residency opportunities took place. Appendix 6 provides an expanded overview of the following summary, including the names of residency sites or (where applicable) programmes:

UK residencies

- The 35 residencies were in Scotland (23), England (10), Northern Ireland (1) and Wales (1).
- Several Scottish residencies were listed a number of times: Hospitalfield (11), Cove Park (9), Hawthornden (3), Scottish Sculpture Workshop (3), and different residencies managed by WASPS (2). See Appendix 6 for further details.

Residencies outside the UK

- Forty-three residencies were listed in countries outside the UK
- Twenty-two were within the European Union: Austria (3), Estonia (1), France (2), Germany (2), Greece (1), Ireland (2), Italy (3), Portugal (2), Spain (1), Sweden (4) and The Netherlands (1).
- A further three were in countries that either are within the European Economic Area (Norway (2)) or have access to the EU single market (Switzerland (1)).
- A further 17 residencies were also referred to in Australia (5), Canada (3), India (1), New Zealand (1), Russia (1) and the USA (6).
- One of the residencies listed Kadist Art Foundation but did not specify whether this was undertaken in Paris, San Francisco or in both locations in which the foundation operates.

¹⁰ Some listed the title of the programme that they were being funded for, whilst others only stated the name of the venue which was hosting the residency. One participant noted what they were working on when they undertook the residency and then where this work was exhibited. Not all participants identified when the residency opportunities took place.

4. Circumstances surrounding the residencies

Circumstances surrounding participants' residency experience can condition the impact of the residencies on their work or practice. Such circumstances include: the number of Bothy Project residencies survey respondents had done (4.a); how they 'happened upon' the residency (4.b); funding and support received (4.c); the length and timing of their stay (4.d); and whether the residencies were undertaken alone or in company (4.d).

4.a Number of Bothy Project residencies survey respondents had done

Of the 45 people who responded, 40 had done one Bothy Project residency only (as determined by responses to Appendix 2, Q.4 and Q.5). Four out of the five people who had done more than one residency (or been resident in both Inshriach and Sweeney's) were part of the six-person pilot. One participant had undertaken a residency as part of 'The Walled Garden' and two Sweeney's residencies.¹¹

One respondent, who had done one residency split across the two sites, beginning with Inshriach, said one experience fed into the next. Similarly, another person stated, "I always knew I wanted to do both residencies - Eigg and Inshriach - and the former helped me prepare for the latter in terms of expectations!"

Another participant had been on four Bothy Project residencies over a four-year period; twice in Inshriach, once in Eigg and then again in Inshriach. What kept them returning was "the lack of requirement for an 'outcome' and being left alone/privacy". The residencies were "important times" and they said, "having done it once, I knew how beneficial it would be to go back."

4.b How participation happened

Participants were asked 'How did you happen to do the residency/residencies? (e.g. did you apply to a particular opportunity or were you invited? If so by whom?)' (Appendix 2, Q.6).

Of the 40 participants that had taken part in one residency:

- Twenty-three explicitly stated that they 'applied' for the opportunity, with six of those individuals referencing the platform where they saw the opportunity advertised¹² and one person identifying that they 'responded' to an open call.
- Seven participants directly stated they had been 'invited' to take part. Invitations were listed as coming from people associated with or working for Bothy Project - the staff team including Bobby Niven and Luke Collins; collaborating artists such as Alec Finlay (artist collaborator on Sweeney's Bothy), Katy West (Independent Curator, Pioneers Project) - or partner organisations such as 'Lifeoffthegrid.net'. One participant had been invited to do a project with Deveron Arts, which led to the residency.

¹¹ Another person did say they had done more than one Bothy Project residency. However, the first took place in Italy and seems to be an associated opportunity rather than a Bothy Project residency in itself.

¹² Platforms referenced included Bothy Project newsletter, 'an article', Instagram, Creative Scotland and friend/colleague.

- Six participants did not state whether they were invited or applied, instead they documented how they ‘found’ the residency i.e. via ‘internet search’ or on the ResArtis website.¹³
- One person already knew Eigg from previous visits and said they wanted to change their relationship to how they spent time on the island to ‘focus’ on their practice.
- One participant said they were ‘awarded’ a residency. However, it is unknown if this was an award via application.
- Two participants named other partners in response: ‘TOAST’ and ‘Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop (ESW)’.¹⁴

Of the five people who had done two or more Bothy Project residencies there was a mixture of responses: one had applied, one had been invited and two had supported the development, design and/or building of Sweeney’s and had then undertaken a self-directed residency in Inshriach. The person who had done four residencies emailed Bothy Project directly, making the most of available slots and/or cancellations.

4.c Funding and support received

The introduction (Section 1.a) outlined that the residencies at Inshriach and Sweeney’s are organised and funded through three programmes: a ‘partnership’ residency sponsored by a cultural institution; a ‘funded’ residency, which an individual is invited to take part in or applies to via open call; or a ‘self-directed’ residency, that is offered at a subsidised rate in response to an open call, applications then go through a selection process. The record of residencies contains details about funding. However, it is not clear whether this list is comprehensive. Thus, participants were asked ‘How or in what way was your residency/residencies supported? (e.g. funding through Bothy Project via a specific funder, self-funded by a payment to Bothy Project)’ (Appendix 2, Q.7).

Of the 40 participants that had undertaken one residency, 19 identified themselves as being directly funded in some way, with details including that:

- Six were funded by Bothy Project through an award from the William Grant Foundation (through two different awards) and two by the RSA (Royal Scottish Academy) Residencies for Scotland programme.
- Five took part in residencies sponsored by partner organisations: Deveron Arts, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, Lifeoffthegrid.net, TOAST and Winsor and Newton.
- Two other people listed Bothy Project as their funder with one specifying it was through ‘Pioneers’ – a Bothy Project commission for Bothy Stores¹⁵ – and another as “time and space”.
- Three appeared to be part-funded in some way through Bothy Project: the cost of accommodation was covered; it was noted as “subsidised”, or; the residency was undertaken in collaboration with their university, an employer – the participant recalled “that the two were inter-related.”

¹³ ResArtis is a worldwide network of over 700 artist residencies, in 85 countries, supporting and advocating for the residency field. Please see ResArtis. 2020. Website. <http://www.resartis.org/en/>

¹⁴ The TOAST residency was advertised as a funded residency in collaboration with Bothy Project. The residency in partnership with Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop was open to ESW members only.

¹⁵ Bothy Project. 2020. Pioneers. <https://www.bothystores.com/products/pioneers/>

- One had gained a grant from the Danish Arts Council although this was to support a self-directed residency.
- Two people provided no further details.

Twenty-one participants listed that they were self-funded with three people referencing how they were supported to make that payment: “friends clubbing together”, “Creative Scotland’s artist bursary” and “got support from Sweden”. One person listed an unsuccessful application to Arts Council England. Another individual referenced paying £300, which “they felt was quite a lot”.

Those who had taken part in more than one residency had been funded through multiple channels including: the William Grant Foundation; Creative Scotland; self-funding and by Bothy Project itself, and; through related projects including Sweeney’s Bothy Library. The person that had undertaken four residencies seemed to be largely self-funding: “Each time, I have emailed Bothy Project asking if there are any available slots/cancellations coming up, then booked it that way.” This was not part of the normal open call or invitation process but rather a pragmatic response by Bothy Project to unexpected availability at one of the sites.

4.d Length and timing of stays

Participants were asked ‘How long was your/each residency?’ (Appendix 2, Q.11). Of the 40 participants who had done one residency, 34 residencies were one week in length¹⁶ and four were two-week long residencies. In addition, one residency lasted 10 days and another five days. Of the six people who had done more than one residency, five specified one week in length with one residency being two weeks with one week at each site.

Only 16 people responded to the second part of the question, ‘When did these take place?’ (Appendix 2, Q.11), by giving the month of their participation, with 12 of those including the year. To enable a broader discussion, survey results were matched with data from the record of residencies. Survey participants mostly took part in residencies in: November (9), January (8), or March (5), with smaller numbers in other months, particularly through the Scottish summer. This is to be expected because the bothies are often let out privately during holiday times and in summer. Residencies had taken place from 2013 to 2019, with the highest number in 2019 (11), followed by 2016 (8), 2014 (7) and 2018 (6).

The record of residencies indicated that there was a year or more between the visits for four of the five people who had done more than one residency. That includes the person who had done four residencies, in that case they had one every year between 2016 and 2019.

4.e Residencies undertaken alone or in company

The record of residencies spreadsheet often records that one individual has done a residency. Whereas, blog posts and visitors’ books suggest that many people are accompanied by a friend or partner. Thus, the survey included the question ‘Did you do the residency/residencies on your own or with someone? (This might have been pre-arranged

¹⁶ Of those 34, one person said “It was supposed to be a week but I only stayed one night.”

or informal, for example a friend or partner may have come with you). Please tell us a little bit about the circumstances, including how this may have conditioned your experience.’ (Appendix 2, Q. 10).

Out of the 40 people who had done one residency, 28 had done it on their own or gone ‘alone’. Six stated they had a companion (either partner, collaborator, associate or friend) with them for the whole residency period, with one person indicating they were part of a collaborative duo that also took their partners (four people sharing Inshriach bothy). A further six said that there was a mix between then being on their own and with a companion.

On being ‘alone’

Of the 28 that identified as on their own or ‘alone’, eight stated it directly. Whereas the remaining 20 qualified it in some way, revealing an ambiguity in what ‘on my own’ or ‘alone’ can mean. For example, one participant said they were on their own, but a friend joined them for their last night. Two people identified as being alone but had partners with them for a period. Three were ‘alone’ but had local social engagements, such as inviting residents for breakfast, entertaining visitors or working collaboratively with someone in the vicinity.

Seven clearly referred to the benefits of being on their own or alone: it was restful, fostered peace and quiet, was restorative and enabled them “to sink down into the untapped layers of my psyche”. Three people expressed a mix of emotions about being alone, understanding its benefits but missing family; initial anxiousness then spurring “a renewed passion for writing” or allowing them “to properly pay attention to the natural habitat”. Another person indicated they were “terrible being on their own but a bit of alone time was good for me.”

One individual recognised the benefits of sharing the experience and being alone:

“The opportunity to have a shared experience on a residency is something I look back on with fondness - but it was also important to me to have completely solitary times as well.”

One person stated: “I didn’t have a car. I didn’t realise how isolated it would be.”

Others who had been with a companion, discussed regret “I was literally too chicken to be there by myself ... Being alone would allow for different reflection. It’s probably quite a different experience.”

People that had done more than one residency had a different set of arrangements for each one. Three people shared that they had a mixture of experiences. A resident, who had been doing the clay firing, had “various visitors who were interested in the techniques”. The person who had visited both sites as part of one residency discussed how not having mobile reception on Eigg influenced their trip:

“In Inshriach I was using my mobile a lot to message people and also to navigate when on walks. On Eigg I only used my phone for talking pictures – being ‘cut off’ made me more sociable and also changed how I got around ... being on Eigg ‘off season’ means that people are more likely to talk to you and wonder who you are – you are no longer just a regular tourist.”

5. Activities undertaken during the residencies

The responses to the question ‘What activities did you undertake during the time of the residency/residencies?’ (Appendix 2, Q.8) are split by those doing one Bothy Project residency (5.a) and those that undertook more than one residency (5.b).

5.a One Bothy Project residency

Of the 40 participants who had done *one* Bothy Project residency, four stated they were doing one activity (i.e. writing, sound recording, making drawings) with another five stating that they were making one specific piece of work (although this might entail a number of different activities) including working “on a design for a cabin” or on “the creation of a new theatre production.”

Responses from 21 people took the form of varying lengths of lists (some with short explanations), and 14 were longer essay-type responses, some containing a list. The following is an example of a longer essay-type response that, uniquely, also categorised the activities:

“I guess activities were split into 3 really:

The practical: chopping wood, warming water, maintaining the fire, cooking food.

The leisurely: walking, wandering, taking photos, listening to the radio, sketching, trying to play the fiddle, attempting some calligraphy, reading.

The formal: making a film, recording music, planning future work, writing”

Importantly, this shows that listed actions can be interpreted in a number of ways: walking, taking photos, sketching and reading are classed as ‘leisure’ but could also be categorised as artistic practice. Likewise, the ‘practical’ indicates the opportunity the bothy provides for a different engagement with day-to-day activities. ‘Warming water’ and ‘cooking food’ become active, rather than passive, parts of day-to-day life.

More than half, 22, said that they were writing (with one expressing this as ‘Working on a text’) and another 20 said reading – one stating that “I could drop very deeply into my writing and my reading because of the quiet, the fire (when I finally got it going!) and the quality of the silence around me”. Eight indicated that they were explicitly involved in research and, as is expected, this was related to the earlier question regarding what they do (that is, their work, job or practice).

The other participants, not including the categorising response above, listed a breadth of artistic activities including: photography (5), taking photos (4), drawing (9), painting (3), sound recording (3), making films, filming or recording video (4), sketching (2) and sculpture (2). Others referred to: watercolour, animation, weaving, knotting and creating, linocut printmaking in the Bothy, and editing of writing.

Some talked more broadly about making, “visual art and making visual notes” recording visually, and focussing on their own artistic practice. Strategic activities that go into the

production of work were also referred to such as planning, mapping (including “non-normative bodies and non-dominant modes of being in edge places”), thinking and reflecting. Some of this fed into specific work, including storyboarding a film and coming up with the design for a new piece of work or working on design for a cabin (as noted above).

A large number of responses (17) referred to walking – normally this was just stated, but at times this was qualified or associated with an understanding of exploring the surroundings: “I spent quite a bit of time walking. It was Autumn and the trees were gorgeous...”. ‘Walking’ likely goes beyond the day-to-day practicality of getting about, as suggested by comments such as “I did a lot of walking” or “long daily walks into the surrounding pine forest and mountain environment”.

There were a few references to social activities, mostly related to residencies at Sweeney’s on Eigg. These included workshops with the community, hosting a small film screening and discussion, or talking. There was also one reference to ‘drinking’ and another of ‘dancing’ – they may be, but are not necessarily, social. Some referred to activities associated with the practicalities of being there including sleeping or cooking. Others were about exploring, including cycling around exploring the island; one ‘explorer’ also ‘watched films’. One participant was doing historical research into the work of a specific woman photographer on Eigg. Residents of Inshriach did refer to mapping the surrounding area, dancing at a Ceilidh and cooking.

5.b More than one Bothy Project residency

Those undertaking more than one Bothy Project residency reported a number of different activities – the person that had done the residency split across the two sites said they “didn’t have any real plan” but had picked up and read guide books and other texts about the sites and got involved in lots of social activities. Others were using materials from the sites such as “searching Eigg for clay” to do “pit firings and temporary kilns”. One person was doing “research relating to natural environment” another was preparing for or writing poetry. Another participant took the approach of listing a number of activities: “Walking, thinking, reading, some writing, swimming, some filming”.

6. Impact of a residency on participants’ work or practice

Participants were asked to describe how doing the residency/residencies had impacted on their work or practice (Appendix 2, Q.9). Of the 45 respondents, 40 indicated that the experience had been beneficial for them in some way, for example by citing it as: “a valuable period of development”; “fantastic experience” offering time to concentrate; “a very useful reflective week”; “My week at Sweeney’s Bothy was both productive and deeply rejuvenating”. Another three used neutral language, with two describing the practicalities of what they did – one used the residency at Inshriach as a base to get into the Cairngorms and another said Sweeney’s was one of three case studies. Another comment stated “bothy project is a major influence on my work”.

One person said that they were not sure how it had impacted on their work but they did learn about themselves, making them “reconsider my own understanding of how I relate to solitude”. Interestingly, the two that said there was not much impact included comments that could suggest otherwise; one said “a week of solitude to think about ideas was quite a luxury not often afforded in day to day life.”; the other describing tangible changes in how they work, in that they now try to “make residency like conditions in my ordinary practice without having to go into the wilderness.”

The 40 responses that expressed that the residency was of direct benefit are now studied in detail. Firstly, those that are involved with participants’ experience *during* the residency and the working conditions that the residency made possible (6.a). Then responses that discuss tangible work made either during or as a result of the residency and the influence on the ‘feel’ of that work (6.b). Responses that talk about how it influenced participants’ working practices are then covered (6.c) and finally those that discuss the residencies’ role in inspiring new ways of working and thinking (6.d). Importantly, some responses inform more than one of these categories.

6.a Beneficial working conditions enabled by the residency

Some of the responses described working conditions made possible through the residency and associated them with broader benefits. Most of these revolved around having time (that equates to a form of freedom or space) in some way: “High quality time alone”; time to read and research at greater length than normal “consolidated some ideas in my work”. Others directly compared this with their usual working conditions: “It was hugely helpful to be away from home life and be able to immerse myself in my work”; “It allowed me to slow down, be in isolation away from the usual constraints of work and other daily commitments”.

Two responses contain similar sentiments but in greater detail:

“Being in a defined space for a defined amount of time with no distractions was very important to me and enabled me to really focus on my script. Being in nature [was] useful to get me into a creative space. In addition, the sense and presence of [creativity from previous residencies] was an inspiration.”

“What was really striking was how solitary I could be there – in a way that other residencies have not been. I love it, and it pushed my boundaries (being alone in the woods at night). It was a very intense week, and I think about the experience a lot.”

Other responses also suggested that the conditions provided an opportunity for reflection, partly as a result of being in a different context – for example the countryside rather than the city. Another person was familiar with Eigg but being there on residency “with a different hat on” enabled a renewed understanding of the landscape in relation to their history.

People often made work during the residency, or have subsequently made work that is inspired by being there. However, the person who had done a number of residencies valued that no specific outcome was needed:

“What I value personally about the Bothy Project residency is that I don’t have to be ‘front facing’ and say what I’m doing on the residency. Because often I’m not really doing anything, or anything that can easily be quantified, described or represented publicly. In fact, it can be quite abject somehow, feel quite animal. Particularly at Inshriach. But having this time is an investment in my work in the longer term because without periods of isolation away from certain pressures I couldn’t make work. So, it’s not about ‘producing’ so much as just being, and then being able to return to the city, emails, people.”

This participant did go on to make a film as a result of their residency. However, they did say that:

“if I had written an application to the residency saying I was going to make a film while I was there and what the film was, it wouldn’t have happened! So, the freedom and privacy I have described above is important to me and ultimately quite fruitful.”

6.b Resulting in tangible work and influencing its ‘feel’

Many people stated that the residency had resulted in tangible work – people had exhibited drawings made during the residency or had exhibitions showcasing their observations, it was noted that “It has provided great exposure for my creative practice”. The residency had inspired part of a collection of poetry and other collaborative work, photographs that had been taken during the residency had gone on to be sold – this had acted to further support that person’s practice. Another stated that the residency had “formed the basis of future projects”. Some residents were directly researching the location and for them it was a “very valuable period of development. Fed directly into other projects”.

Others directly indicated that ‘the feel’, that is the tone, character or mood of what was made was influenced by time spent at the bothy:

“Sweeney’s Bothy is constructed to create a feeling of seclusion when you are inside. When you go outside it feels entirely different, you see how close you are to other buildings, roads, people. The constructed nature of the experience in some way fed into my thought process and clarified my project.”

Someone who had exhibited said that:

“I enjoyed the stillness and the pace of things. A lot of the work I made was intuitive and the works function as diary-like visual notes of the days spent in the bothy and of the expeditions I made in the landscape in Cairngorms National Park.”

Sometimes the overall effect could be more subtle “Atmosphere and sense of the moment reinvigorated through looking at sketchbooks – feel it feeds unconsciously into the work”.

6.c Motivating changes in working practices

Changes in the feel of work could also prompt a broader change in working practices:

“My writing practice felt very embodied ... the weather, chopping the kindling to keep the fire going, watching the fire, watching the sun track along the top of the hills, measuring the day. I felt as though the rhythms of my day infused the rhythms in my poetry. I think this sense of embodiment in my writing practice is something I have carried with me from my time in the bothy.”

Two responses indicated that the residency fostered greater experimentation: “It was good fun and injected an experimental element into my work”; “first experiment with artistic mediums that are now a core part of practice five years on”. It is clear from the latter that doing the residency prompted a change in working practices also reported by others:

“I continue to make visual notes with a video camera, and my experience at the Bothy really shaped how I do that, what for, and how it can inspire other ideas and approaches to making work.”

“It led me to make connections between things in different ways. Without the internet to look things up on demand I had to figure things out in a different way and that led me to some things I wouldn’t have otherwise come across.”

“The act of going to and responding to particular places, working as a resident artist, has subsequently become a key part of my practice.”

6.d Inspiring new ways of thinking

Others more directly said the residency had made fundamental changes to their working practices or understanding of what it is they are doing. For example: “It has taken my work in a totally new direction ... There is no way I would have come up with this [new] process outside of my experience on the residency.”; or that it “Made me think about the core objectives of my artistic practice.”

In some cases, the changed understanding overlapped with a broader rethinking of people’s day to day lives:

“The residency has completely changed the way I think about nature and my relationship with the natural habitat around me. I see nature as much more of an active character in both my everyday life and my writing.”

“It’s been making me think about how I might like to live and what I do/do not want to do more generally with my life.”

This might be accompanied by a change in thematic thinking:

“Doing the residency has inspired new ways of thinking, researching and ‘being’ in general. My work is usually concerned with global, very wide-reaching topics, but spending a week working on a very granular level has brought the importance of the hyper-local to the fore. It has inspired new areas of research for a potential book, such as voluntary simplicity, hyper-local and ‘lessness’.”

7. Do you have anything else you would like to say?

Of the total of 45 people, 27 responded to the question ‘Do you have anything else you would like to say?’. Some of these comments had a similar feel to what had been communicated in relation to the impact of the residency (Section 6). An overview of these responses is organised into those concerning expression of gratitude to Bothy Project for their experience (7.a), facilities and residency structure (7.b), and the joys and challenges of bothy living (7.c).

7.a Expression of gratitude to Bothy Project for the experience

Many (19 of 27) responses to the question ‘Do you have anything else you would like to say’ (Appendix 2, Q.15) foregrounded, or were exclusively, expressions of gratitude for the residency – echoing the sentiments in Section 6. Two of those directly thank Lucy (and one Eddie) on Eigg. One stated that “The Bothy Project is very important in its support of creative practice” and two that they either already do, or would, recommend Bothy Project residencies to others.

Six of those 19 indicated that the respondent would like to do another Bothy Project residency: “I am very keen to pursue further residencies and collaboration with the programme”; “I would love the opportunity to do it or something like it again”; “I hope to return to continue my observations”, or; “I had a wonderful experience and would relish the opportunity to undertake another off-grid residency”. In two cases these were from people who had been resident in Inshriach that were interested in visiting Eigg: “I really enjoyed and appreciated my time at Inshriach and would like to visit the Bothy on Eigg too” and “I hope to do a residency in the bothy on Eigg!”

As with section 6 (particularly b, c and d) seven survey participants indicated that it had influenced their ongoing practice:

“has definitely made long lasting positive changes to me as a person and to my writing.”

“The bothy project and residency opportunity were a perfect match for my practice and contributed to major developments in my thinking and craft.”

“My time at the bothy impacted the direction of my book’s development.”

“I think it will inform my practice for many years to come.”

“the Bothy Project gave me an amazing opportunity to explore themes and give me space to create my own work at a very formative time in my creative practice.”

“I am hugely grateful for the opportunity to stay in a bothy in the Cairngorms. The experience still resonates in my life and my writing.”

“along with the work we did for the residency we spent hours dreaming up new future projects.”

At times overlapping with these responses were other comments about the facilities, the residency structure or the ‘rituals’ they brought into being.

7.b Facilities and residency structure

Two responses overlapping with ‘expressions of gratitude’ contain a discussion of the facilities and residency structure:

“Sweeney’s Bothy provided everything I needed to live comfortably. It’s secluded, yet accessible, location has to be one of the best in Scotland”.

“Not only the simplicity and remoteness are refreshing, but the bothy is also extremely well designed and set in an area of breathtaking natural beauty.”

There were some responses that are practical suggestions or ‘feedback’ on the facilities indicating changes that could be made:

“The bothy in Inshriach needed latches on the window, and a suitable way to keep your food cool/badger proof, a metal box stored outside would be a solution during cooler months.”

Another response stated that the residency was “enjoyable and interesting” but the participant felt a week was “too short” for them to get to grips with the work they were making.

One participant commented on the relationship between the residency site on Eigg and the community in which it was situated:

“I felt that the impact of artists visiting the island was more about the way it supported the community economically than connections between visiting artists and the community. Having a new artist every week, paying for food at the shop and taking the ferry across, paying residency fees obviously has an important impact on the place, but I do feel that this model could be developed to have deeper impact.”

Another, the person who had consecutive residencies in Inshriach then Sweeney’s, made a comparison between the facilities at both sites:

“Going to both sites consecutively (and cycling from Inshriach to Fort William) really changed my understanding of both places. The two locations seemed linked or chained in some way ... Both locations are really well kitted out, the Eigg site (perhaps it’s the running hot water and on-Eigg-grid lighting) seems more luxurious.”

7.c Joys and challenges of bothy living

Some of the responses (in a way that is similar to the working conditions made possible through the residency – section 6.a) discussed the joys of bothy living. Some people loved the rhythms the situation brought into being:

“I loved the daily rituals like chopping wood or making a fire and other things that might seem inconvenient but give a rhythm to the day.”

“Loved my experience at Inshriach Bothy, a uniquely grounding experience, due to time of year, my connection to the rhythm of day, heat, fuel/food and light became ultra-heightened.”

“The nature of the Bothy Project allows you to immerse yourself in nature, live by the coming and going of the natural light and take a step back from the consistency of everyday life. As a result, there is scope to experiment with ideas without pressure.”

Others were more factual about what they actually did “I spent most of the time out alone in the mountain environment.” Another respondent said “It was a great location and helped me to make the intended work. It was very cold though and challenging to be isolated without lights (the lights ran out on day two).” Many respondents found the conditions inspiring but two of 45 found them difficult to deal with, both of whom seemed to have an established practice and work to complete:

“I like the idea but for me, I went in mid-winter on my own. It was too remote - no power – pitch black after sunset, cold, couldn’t cook, or work. Long walk in and out to eat at night in pitch black, no mobile reception and actually felt a little isolated middle of winter. Not sure how I could have got help if something had happened. I needed power for my computer which I had been told would be ok but wasn’t. Had to work in Aviemore library and in the end left a bit early. But it’s a good concept – just not for my practice in midwinter. They kindly gave me a refund so it was ok in the end.”

“I left because I was ill with a stomach upset and it obviously wasn’t a great environment to be alone in then. I was in and out all through the night trekking to the toilet. The conditions were hard: I found it impossible to get the stove hot enough to cook on. I didn’t have a car so I couldn’t go elsewhere to eat/go to the chemist/go to the shop. I was trying to write on a laptop using a battery pack. I quickly realised that not enough had been thought about the needs of someone

like myself who needs electricity to work. I was trying to finish a piece of work – for which I had deadline – but realised I would spend a fair amount of time chopping wood rather than actually working. I think the bothy would be great for contemplation of nature/work with materials, but I was just trying to use it as a space away from normal life in which to complete a piece of work: there was a sense of urgency to what I was doing. And I didn't want to spend energy worrying about the fire and my health. I made the decision to go home, but didn't tell anyone apart from my partner and I switched off the internet and worked as if I was away. We call it "The Bothy" of the mind! I think I was one of the first people there and that my feedback maybe changed things slightly since then."

8. What happens next?

The number of responses to the survey, 45, is relatively small in comparison to the number of residencies, 316. As stated earlier, our survey findings are subject to at least three forms of self-selection: people are attracted to the residency because they think they may benefit from the conditions; people with stronger reactions to the residency (potentially those that are favourable) are more likely to respond; people with something to say will tend to complete the survey. The following proposals for what can happen next, informed by the findings from this study, must be understood in this context.

The record of residencies underestimates the number of people experiencing a Bothy Project residency because often the primary resident, or residents, were listed rather than everyone who was there. This was evident when reviewing blog posts and visitors' books which were often co-authored for individual residencies. Experiences of people who had *not* formally been selected or applied for the programme could be drawn together and included in further analysis – participants could be identified from blogs and visitors' books or using a snowballing technique where one participant is asked to recommend others (perhaps based on the initial response to the survey). In addition, these experiences could be reviewed alongside those who have taken part in private lets for artistic activities.

Potentially any of the circumstances surrounding the residency (Section 4) could be researched in greater detail. One important consideration, that links to the observations about who is actually resident, is the topic of being alone and how this might condition what people do and think. This could take the form of comparisons between responses – for example, the information about whether residencies were undertaken by individuals or with someone (Section 4e) could be compared in relation to the impact of the residency (Section 6). This could help with understanding the intense or 'deep' quality of the bothy experience.

Roughly three-quarters of participants self-identified as female and most were aged between 30 and 49 when taking part. The majority self-identified as white. Firm conclusions cannot be drawn from the 45 responses received. Therefore, in support of Bothy Project's

status as a limited company and charity¹⁷, research could usefully build on this report to consider who has access to these residencies. Bothy Project is currently collaborating with Transmission (supported by Creative Scotland's Create:Inclusion Fund) to increase ethnic diversity in artist residencies.

Two thirds of the people participating in the survey were living in Scotland when they undertook the residency – often those people were participating in other Scottish residency programmes too. Research could usefully investigate where people live in relation to the residencies they do/have done. The activities people undertook, particularly those related to walking and exploring, are arguably a response to the rurality of the residency sites. Further research could study whether such activities are also part of a practice of 'doing residencies' and 'getting to know a place' and how this is conditioned by the form of the residency, for example: 'live-in', solitary, collaborative, based in a city or the countryside.

Within this report responses for Inshriach and Sweeney's were often merged because there appeared to be a great deal of commonality between the Bothy Project residencies. However, splitting the list of activities described by respondents and analysing them separately for Inshriach and Sweeney's may reveal differences in the impact from each site. A key aspect that came up but has not been analysed is the impact of being genuinely 'off-grid' – at Inshriach there is a mobile signal but at Sweeney's (at least in the vicinity of the Bothy) there is none.

Representatives of Bothy Project, and people doing residencies, sometimes connect with communities that live near the bothies. Those communities also sometimes engage with Bothy Project through representatives and residents just being around or through residents organising events, talks and screenings. One survey respondent thought Sweeney's Bothy brought economic support to Eigg but might not have much "deeper impact" (Section 7.b). Whereas another respondent noted "being on Eigg 'off season' means that people are more likely to talk to you and wonder who you are – you are no longer just a regular tourist" (Section 4.e). How such interactions work in practice deserves greater attention.

Many people defined 'what they do' in relation to more than one activity. Roughly half of the participants in some way identified themselves as 'artist' but exactly what this means is not clear. This prompts questions: what is 'an artist' in this context? How does this designation relate to 'work' in terms of a 'job or practice'? How does this practically tally with a livelihood? Investigating these questions and comparing them with funding details, could reveal more about the role residencies play in wider artistic infrastructures.

The two of 45 people that wrestled with the conditions during their residencies (as evident in the quotes in 7.c) had difficulty completing already existing projects. The person who had been on four Bothy Project residencies valued no outcome being required: "it's not about 'producing' so much as just being, and then being able to return to the city, emails, people." This raises hugely important questions about the benefits a residency can bring to an artistic practice as opposed to an artistic project, how structural or personal expectations influence

¹⁷ Bothy Project was first incorporated on 21 February 2011 and then was registered as a charity on 31 January 2018.

what happens, together with how such expectations can be shaped or suspended. This supports further research into how people can be enabled to make the most of any given residency experience.

Further insights are likely to arise from the larger piece of research of which this compilation of survey responses is part. That research will continue to draw from the record of residencies together with: blogs written by participants as a condition of their residencies; visitors' books; related journalism and academic texts. Survey responses could also be compared with blog posts and visitor book entries to determine how a resident's experience is understood and renegotiated over time. Bringing these materials together with existing discourses is expected to make a rich contribution to understandings of the impact of artist residencies.

Acknowledgements

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The survey – population, distribution and pilot

Population and the record of residencies

The potential population from which survey responses could be drawn would be everyone that had undertaken a Bothy Project residency. The Bothy Project Programme Co-ordinator at the inception of the survey was Amy Porteous. Amy Porteous gave the first author a spreadsheet with the names of everyone that had undertaken residencies (with details from 31 Dec 2016 to 31 Aug 2019 – with a gap of Jan-Mar 2019) together with over seven years of outlook diaries where names had been entered; these sources included some details about funding. The first author combined that information into a single spreadsheet referred to as the ‘record of residencies’.

Survey distribution

Bothy Project had access to contact details for 180 people who had participated in one or more of the 316 residencies listed in the record of residencies. Lesley Young took over Amy Porteous’s role in October 2019 and co-ordinated sending out the pilot and final survey. The survey was emailed to those 180 people – with 10 being sent a link to a pilot on 11 November 2019 (please see below) and 170 the final survey active from 23 November through December 2019. Of 180, 15 emails were returned, and it is assumed that those email accounts are now inactive – that means a total of 165 people likely received the link to the survey. Appendix 3 provides the email text.

Emails were not addressed to individuals but sent in small batches – sending messages in bulk risks emails being directed to a ‘spam’ folder then being inadvertently ignored. A reminder to fill out the survey was sent Tuesday 3 December 2019. The survey was kept open for longer than the stated two weeks.

Specifics of the pilot survey

One of us (Anna) was a participant in the residency programme and first tested the pilot. Slight adjustments were made to the questions as a result of Anna’s responses. The pilot was then sent out to a select group of 10 people. Six of these were selected as people that had a continuing involvement with Bothy Project and had done a number of residencies, or were people known to have a professional knowledge of research processes and methods. Ten people were then selected at random from the spreadsheet (using a random number generator) although this was felt to be too much for a pilot and four were then identified from this group. The choices made attempted to produce a gender balance and also an even split across the residency locations (Inshriach and Sweeney’s).

The pilot was sent out on Monday 11 November, with an original deadline of Friday 15 extended to Saturday 16 November 2019. The pilot was sent to a member of Bothy project board, Laura Simpson, for comments. The pilot generated six in-depth responses and it appeared the 15 minutes time to respond was realistic (as substantiated by Appendix 4). Very minor changes were made to the wording and therefore the pilot results have been used as part of the overall analysis.

Appendix 2: Text of the survey

Your experience of Bothy Project

Thanks for linking to this survey put together by Anna McLauchlan and Morag Iles. It seeks information about your experience of doing one or more Bothy Project residencies.

You will be asked to answer some questions. A report of the survey will be made publicly available and we will use your answers to inform published texts.

Please complete the survey by Friday 6 December 2019, 4pm.

- * The survey should take 15 minutes, although it depends on how much you would like to say.
- * We ask for your name so that your response can be matched with other information. Only the researchers, Anna and Morag, will be aware of who you are. If you can be identified from what you write we will check whether or not you are happy for that information to be included.
- * Your information will be stored securely on an appropriately encrypted and protected drive with hard copies kept in a locked drawer.
- * Completing the questions means you agree for the information you supply to be pseudo anonymised (given a pseudonym) then combined with other responses and made publicly available. This will inform different kinds of writing, including a report and academic journal articles. Details are likely to be shared at public events.
- * The 'lawful basis' for the processing of personal data (name and email) for this project is that it constitutes a 'task in the public interest' under the EU General Data Protection Regulations. This means you will have no automatic right to have your data deleted. However, you do retain rights to access and can object at any time.

This research is part of the public outcome from Anna's residency in Inshriach and Sweeney's in March 2019 funded by the William Grant Foundation with support for travel from the Scottish Society for Art History. Morag's PhD research is funded by the Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities (SGSAH) through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Morag is based at Glasgow University, working with Glasgow School of Art.

Feel free to contact Anna at anna.mclauchlan@strath.ac.uk and Morag at 2359378I@student.gla.ac.uk if you have further questions.

The first question in the survey asks you to confirm consent.

1. By ticking below, I opt into data collection and analysis
I confirm that I am over 18 and that my data can be used for the reasons stated above.
2. Please give your name and email address
(Please note: No one but Anna and Morag will be aware of who you are. If what you write inadvertently identifies you, we will check whether or not you are happy for that information to be included).
3. Please describe what you do (that is, your work, job or practice that informed the reasoning behind you doing a Bothy Project residency).

4. Have you undertaken more than one Bothy Project residency?

Yes/No

5. Please give further details i.e. How/or in what way did your first residency experience inform those that followed?

6. How did you happen to do the residency/residencies?

(e.g. did you apply to a particular opportunity or were you invited? If so by whom?)

7. How or in what way was your residency/residencies supported?

(e.g. funding through Bothy Project via a specific funder, self-funded by a payment to Bothy Project).

8. What activities did you undertake during the time of the residency/residencies?

9. Please describe how doing the residency/residencies has impacted on your work or practice.

10. Did you do the residency/residencies on your own or with someone? (This might have been pre-arranged or informal, for example a friend or partner may have come with you). Please tell us a little bit about the circumstances, including how this may have conditioned your experience.

11. How long was your/each residency? When did these take place? (month/year)

12. Where were you living at the time you undertook the/each residency? (city, country)

13. Have you ever taken part in other residency programmes?

Yes/No

14. Please list the residency or residencies.

15. Do you have anything else you would like to say?

16. Are you willing to be interviewed about your residency experience?

Yes/No

About you

These questions are optional

17. What gender do you identify as?

18. What ethnicity do you identify as?

19. What is your age?

20. Thank you for taking part!

Sometimes answering questions spark further thoughts. If you wish to add anything to or amend your response please feel free to get in touch with Anna at anna.mclauchlan@strath.ac.uk and Morag at 23593781@student.gla.ac.uk

You will be sent a copy of the finished report from this research.

If you have any further comments please use the box below.

Appendix 3: Email(s) sent to participants

Title: Seeking your experience of Bothy Project

Dear friend,

I hope this finds you well. I am writing to you because in the past you have undertaken a Bothy Project residency or worked with us in another capacity. Two researchers, Anna McLauchlan and Morag Iles, are now doing an independent study of Bothy Project. (You may have noticed Bothy connected writing in MAP Magazine edited by Anna <https://mapmagazine.co.uk/locating-this-collection> and Morag is a PhD researcher with SGS AH https://www.sgsah.ac.uk/research/ces17-18/headline_569887_en.html). Together they aim to find out more about the experiences of people who have undertaken Bothy Project residencies, information that is also useful to Bothy Project.

Survey of your experience

We would love to find out about your experience and how the residency has informed your practice. Please complete this short survey:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KVxybjp2UE-B8i4ITwEzyDOVDpsZJ9pPqPDZHx0iIE9UNVc5SIZTR1Y3NzVPS0hIVFlaR1pLNORSUy4u>

The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes, although this depends on how much you would like to say.

An overview of what happens to the information you give is available from the link – but feel free to contact Anna (anna.mclauchlan@strath.ac.uk) and Morag (m.iles.1@research.gla.ac.uk) if you would like to find out more in advance.

The survey will close 4pm Friday 6 December 2019.

Thank you and best wishes,

Lesley

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Appendix 4: Time taken to complete the survey and further comments

The survey was estimated to take 15 minutes, although it was noted that this would depend on how much the participant would like to say. Twenty-three participants took fewer than 15 minutes and of those, 15 took fewer than 10 minutes. Eight were between 15 minutes and 20 minutes, and 11 took longer than 20 minutes but less than 40. There were three extremes, one appeared to have taken 4 seconds, another submitted a full day after they had originally opened the survey link, and one participant finished the survey 9 days after they had begun.

Four participants responded with further comments (as stated above in Section 8, 27 responded to the earlier open question 'Do you have anything else you would like to say?'). Three reiterated that they are happy to be contacted further with regards to the study, two of these expressing their thanks and gratitude to Bothy Project. In relation to this research one was 'Very curious about the outcome!', presumably of this research.

Appendix 5: What participants do - work, job or practice in detail

Of the 45 people who participated, 29 people identified themselves with one activity. Of those 29, 14 were 'artists', either directly (4), visual artists (5), one stated art practice (1), another freelance artist (1). The term 'artist' can capture a hugely diverse range of activities and within the term artist, three gave fuller responses: "artist, photography and education" (1); "artist, that does research and writing" (1) and "interdisciplinary artist - maker, curator, dramaturg, writer" (1).

Four of those who identified themselves with one activity directly cited writing in some way: poetry (2), playwright (1) and 'writing creative non-fiction' (1). A further four were academic or research orientated: Research (1), Academic (1) and two described research for specific projects. Of the final six, there was a creative practitioner (1), animator (1), artist technician (1), Composer (1), Glass Artist (1), Sculptor (1) and a Textile Designer (1).

Almost one-third (16) of the participants described what they do (that is, their job or practice that informed the reasoning behind them doing a Bothy Project residency) as two (13) or three (3) things. Seven of the 'two things' group also identified primarily as 'artist', four of those directly – of that group two were academic in some way (Professor; Studying for a Masters) but there was also an arts administrator and a hut enthusiast! There were two 'visual artists' – one who made music and the other was a lecturer.

Also in the 'two things' group were two curators, one associated with film programming and another PhD researcher, then four others involved with writing (associated with film directing; being a poet *and* essayist; a playwright *and* writer; and finally an academic). Of the three people that listed three activities one was orientated around music, one animation and the other stated a mix of trend forecasting, authorship and design.

People might primarily frame themselves as artists because Bothy Project is understood as existing within an art realm or world. "Bothy Project is a charitable organisation offering opportunities for artists and other creatives to conduct residencies in unique and

inspirational environments.”¹⁸ Conceivably someone who identifies as an artist and lecturer in relation to Bothy Project might switch their priority to ‘lecturer and artist’ in an academic situation.

Appendix 6: Other residencies

An overview of participants’ engagement with other residencies was provided in Section 3.d. An expansion of that summary is provided in Table 1 below in relation to the UK residencies and Table 2 for those outside of the UK.

Table 1: An overview of all the other UK residencies survey respondents had done with information about the associated location and devolved nation.

UK residency	Location	Devolved nation
Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art	Gateshead	England
Berwick Visual Arts Residency (Film Festival)	Berwick-upon-Tweed	England
Grizedale Arts Writing Residency	Cumbria	England
House of Illustration (Illustrator in Residence)	London	England
Metal [Assume this is ‘Time + Space’ residency]	Either Liverpool, Peterborough or London	England
Poet in Residence at The Polar Museum	Cambridge	England
The Florence Trust	London	England
Whitechapel Gallery	London	England
Wysing Arts	Cambridgeshire	England
Yorkshire Sculpture Park	Wakefield	England
Beyond boundaries	Londonderry	Northern Ireland
CCA Creative Lab	Glasgow	Scotland
Common Ground Residency	Braemar	Scotland
Cove Park (referred to by 9 people – 3 had done the residency once, one twice and one three times. Another 4 referred to specific programmes: Jerwood, self-funded, Visual Arts Residency, and Writing Residency with Playwrights’ Studio Scotland).	Cove	Scotland
Dance Base	Edinburgh	Scotland
Deveron Arts	Huntly	Scotland
Edinburgh College of Art - Glass Dept’	Edinburgh	Scotland
Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop Micro Residency	Edinburgh	Scotland
Ethnograms (mini residency) lifeoffthegrid.net + ASCUS, Dovecot studios	Edinburgh	Scotland
Hawthornden (referred to by 3 people. One listed this as a ‘Fellowship’ and another as ‘International Writers Retreat’).	Lasswade	Scotland
Hospitalfield (referred to by 11 people – 4 just stated Hospitalfield, 1 listed a Research Residency and 6 made reference to the Interdisciplinary Residency)	Arbroath	Scotland

¹⁸ Bothy Project. 2020. Residencies. <http://www.thebothyproject.org/residencies/>

UK residency	Location	Devolved nation
Lemon Tree - Artist in Residence	Aberdeen	Scotland
Mhor Farr	Mellon Udrigal	Scotland
MMIM: Plus One residency	Glasgow	Scotland
Outlandia	Glen Nevis, Lochaber	Scotland
Pier Arts Centre Fellowship	Stornoway	Scotland
Scottish Sculpture Workshop (referred to by 3 people – one listed the residency, another that it was a Royal Scottish Academy Residency and another was on a ceramic residential week).	Lumsden	Scotland
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig - Jon Schueler Scholarship Visual Artist in Residence	Skye	Scotland
Salmon Bothy	Portsoy	Scotland
Testimony of the Rocks - Geodiversity Forum	sailing around the Atlantic Islands of Argyll	Scotland
The Booth (Scalloway, operated by WASPS)	Shetland	Scotland
The Chamberlain Lab (mini residency), Strathclyde University + ASCUS [known as the Chamberlain group micro-residency]	Glasgow	Scotland
The Workroom	Glasgow	Scotland
The Admiral's House (WASPS Residency)	Skye	Scotland
Timespan	Helmsdale	Scotland
Gladstone's Library	Hawarden	Wales

Table 2: An overview of all the other residencies outside the UK survey respondents had done with information about the associated location and country

Residency outside the UK	Location	Country
<i>European Union</i>		
Citizen Artist Incubator Residency	Linz	Austria
Sammlung Lenikus	Vienna	Austria
X Space Vienna	Vienna	Austria
Ptarmigan – Project Exchange Residency	Tallinn	Estonia
Cité International des Arts	Paris	France
Villa Vassilieff	Paris	France
Ateliers Höherweg	Düsseldorf	Germany
Three Sisters at Vrångsholmen, Agora Collective	Berlin	Germany
Snehta Residency	Athens	Greece
Callan Workhouse Union	Callan	Ireland
Tyrone Guthrie Centre Residency (referred to by 2 people)	Annaghmakerrig	Ireland
Decompression Gathering Summer Camp – Radical Intention	Florence	Italy
Filignano	Molise	Italy
Lumen artist residency	Atina	Italy
Lisbon Architecture Triennale	Lisbon	Portugal

Residency outside the UK	Location	Country
PADA Studios Residency	Lisbon	Portugal
CCA Andratx (participant had done this residency twice)	Mallorca	Spain
Art Lab Gnesta - Artist-in-residence (referred to 2 people – one of whom listed ‘Swamp Storytelling’)	Gnesta	Sweden
Lapplands Konstnarskoloni	Gällivare, Lapland	Sweden
Tre systrar på Vrångsholmen	Tanum	Sweden
Trumpeten co Mellanrum	Malmö	Sweden
Van GoghHuis Museum (working with the Van Gogh archive)	Amsterdam	The Netherlands
<i>Other countries within the EEA/European single market</i>		
(w)ORD project, with SSA and BAG Art Camp	Gulen	Norway
Google and Acorn [this is actually the ICORN Centre that is in Stavanger but the residencies are Europe-wide]	Stavanger	Norway
Jan Michalski Foundation	Montricher	Switzerland
<i>Rest of world (not listed above or in Table 1)</i>		
Critical Path	Sydney	Australia
Off the Kerb Gallery	Melbourne	Australia
Punctum [Assume this is ‘seed pod’]	Castlemaine, Victoria	Australia
Sydney College of Arts (Two person)	Sydney	Australia
Vancouver Arts Centre Australia	City of Albany	Australia
Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity (listed by 2 people with one referring to a Creative Scotland residency)	Banff	Canada
CCA/CALQ exchange residency	Montreal	Canada
Grenfell Art Gallery	Corner Brook, Newfoundland	Canada
Swamp Storytelling, Earth CoLab & Art Lab Gnesta - Artist-in-residence	Neil Island	India
Massey University - Visiting Artist	Palmerston North (+ Albany and Wellington)	New Zealand
The Nomadic Show	Shiryaevo	Russia
Arrowmont School of Crafts	Tennessee	USA
Elsewhere Museum	North Carolina	USA
MacDowell Colony	New Hampshire	USA
Peaked Hill Trust	Cape Cod, MA	USA
Penland School of Crafts	North Carolina	USA
Ucross Foundation	Clearmont, WY	USA
Kadist Art Foundation	Unknown	Unknown (operates in many)