

Observers' Walks  
Catherine Payton  
*Time Capsule*

# COLLECTIVE

Made in collaboration with pupils from  
Leith Walk and Abbeyhill Primary Schools  
18 minutes

The year is 2168, Edinburgh is flooded and all that remains are a series of islands formed of the city's seven hills. A small band of survivors have inhabited Calton Hill Island, adapting their ways of life to this new environment.

*Time Capsule* follows a group of children as they describe a day in their lives on Calton Hill Island. Now 20 years since the flooding occurred, the children describe what they eat, how they gather resources and what they learn at school. Magic has become an important means of protection against both disease and the threat of invasion by rival islanders, and we hear the practicing of spells, incantations and charms throughout the recording. They hint at the extinction and evolution of different species, at how illness threatens their community, and talk to us about the wisdom, generosity and teachings of Jeff, an elusive figure whose nature is unclear (man, rock, god?) but who clearly exerts great influence on the lives and education of the small society.

Take a walk around the Island and follow the children as they play, searching for the entrance to Faerie, exploring echoing caves and brewing up a potion that will make them fly. Look out for the former monuments of the hill, which have all been altered to be more useful. For instance, the Nelson Monument is now a lighthouse with a dual purpose and the single remaining column of the National Monument is a sundial, the islanders' only timepiece.

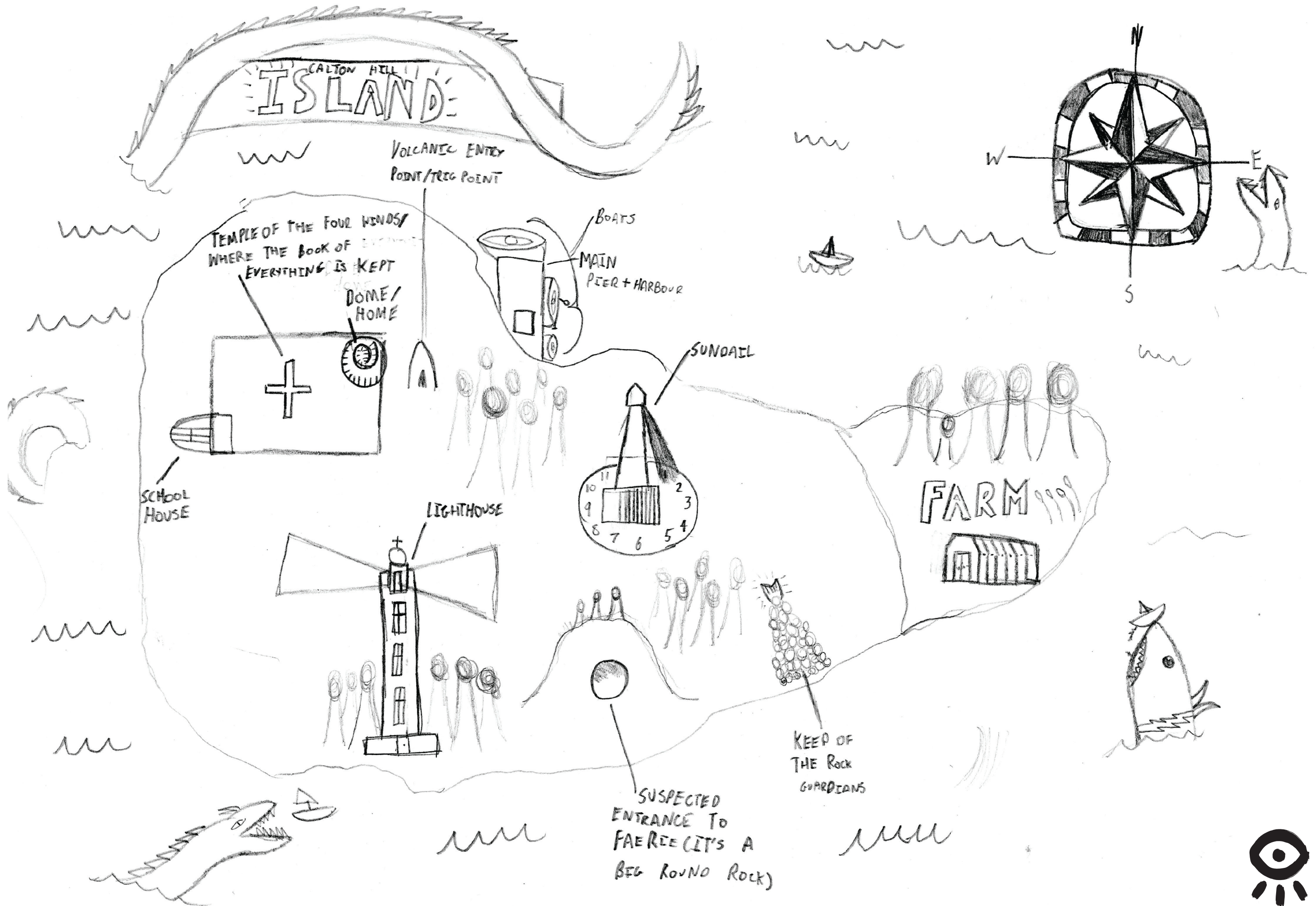
Catherine Payton is an artist based in Edinburgh. She has exhibited at Supercollider, Blackpool, Generator Projects, Dundee and Collective, through New Work Scotland Programme. Catherine was a founding member of Rhubaba Gallery and Studios and the Rhubaba Choir.

Catherine has been working with the pupils from Abbeyhill and Leith Walk Primary Schools over the past year in a series of workshops both on Calton Hill and in the classroom. For their first workshop, Catherine and the children time travelled 150 years into the future to find their city flooded.

Catherine began by showing the classes what natural resources were available to them on the hill, considering how they might find food, build shelters, and make tools. As well as practical uses for the flora, they discussed the myth and lore related to some of the plants.

The classes also explored the various monuments of Calton Hill and other features such as the trig point – a possible entry point to the caverns beneath the hill, inside the volcano. Through listening, storytelling and discussion, each class built a vision of what this inhabited island might be like and what roles they could fulfil within the community. The final Observers' Walk was developed with both P7 classes at the schools.





Sound recorded by:  
Jack Coghill and Canongate Youth

Music:  
Christina Rossetti, *The Goblin Market*  
Carl Orff, *Music for Children*

Catherine would like to thank:  
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**Collective** is a contemporary visual arts organisation that brings people together around the production and presentation of new work.

Established in 1984, Collective has been fundamental to the cultural vitality of Scotland by supporting new work by artists who are at a pivotal stage in their development. We provide artists with the opportunity to make new work and audiences the chance to see it here first.

Our programme of exhibitions, walks, events and off-site projects presents contemporary art in all its diversity. We create opportunities for participation, mutual learning and dialogue by opening out processes of art production, connecting with other fields and encouraging new developments.

Collective is currently redeveloping the City Observatory complex on Calton Hill, Edinburgh. Working closely with artists and engaging with our locality, through the acts of looking, thinking and producing, we are developing a new kind of City Observatory.

**Observers' Walks** are a series of downloadable audio guides commissioned by Collective and created by artists specifically to be listened to on Calton Hill.