



## Merlindale Meadow Artist in Residence Opportunity

### BACKGROUND

Connecting Threads is the cultural strand of the landscape-scale project Destination Tweed. Led by Tweed Forum and supported by the Southern Uplands Partnership, Destination Tweed will celebrate and enhance the River Tweed, one of the UK's most highly designated river corridors. The aim is to create a unique and world class visitor destination, building a clear identity whilst conserving, connecting and promoting multiple attractions and communities. The aspiration is for the Tweed to become known as one of the great long-distance trails in the UK.

### CONNECTING THREADS

Connecting Threads explores the culture of the River Tweed, from beyond the source to the sea. Taking an approach guided by the hydrological structure of the Tweed catchment, the project aims to create a cultural ecosystem along and around the river.

Working in partnership with local communities and cultural, environmental and educational organisations, the Connecting Threads team will develop and, funding permitting, deliver a 5-year cultural project shaped by the river's habitats and heritage.

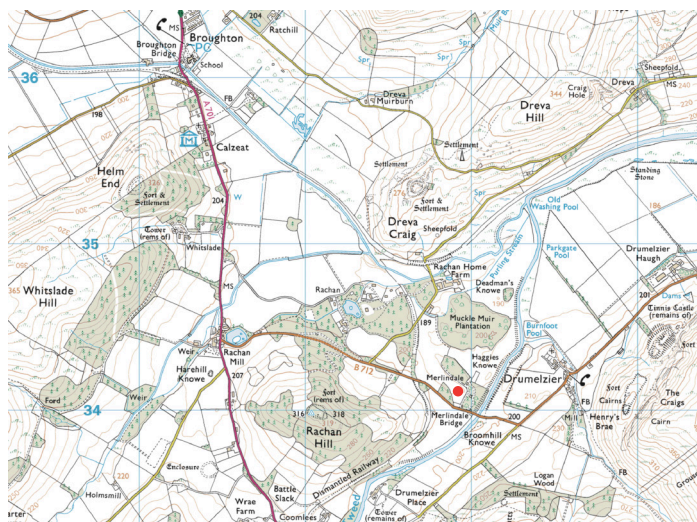
Through activities, events, performances and artworks situated in, on and alongside the river, the project will invite communities and visitors to make deeper connections to the Tweed. Bringing diverse fields of knowledge together, Connecting Threads will make visible the intangible culture that shapes and is shaped by the river and its landscape.

Connecting Threads is currently in a 12-month development phase (November 2020 - October 2021). Over the course of the year we are engaging with the communities and organisations based around the river to identify and explore the cultural heritage of the Tweed and the value it holds for the people closest to it. We aim to build a broad picture of contemporary

river culture to help shape the proposed 5-year cultural project and biennial River Festival.

A pilot programme of activity is allowing us to test out ideas, bringing together deep local knowledge and creative practices in innovative and experiential ways. By inviting people to create and take part in workshops and events, Connecting Threads aims to grow a community around the project to support a culture of stewardship, collaboration and shared learning.

### THE PROJECT



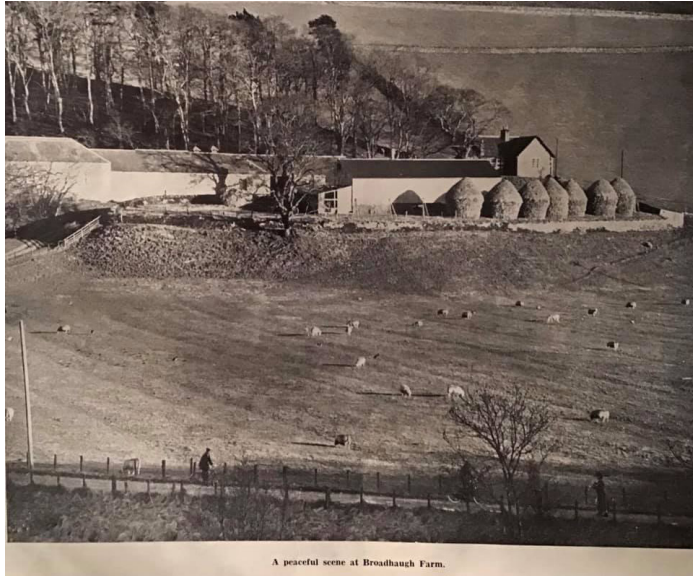
Location of new meadow - red dot. (Ordnance Survey)

This year a new species-rich meadow and wildlife hedgerow has been established in upper Tweeddale. Totalling 2 hectares, the meadow will sit on the banks of the river Tweed. Funded by NatureScot, Scotland's nature agency, ([www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot)) the project aims to enhance biodiversity, re-establishing one of the traditionally managed meadows that would have existed here 80 years ago.

In the UK, 97% of meadows have been lost since the 1930s. Of those remaining, species-rich upland

hay meadows (National Vegetation Classification community MG3) are one of the rarest. The new MG3 meadow in upper Tweeddale will increase biodiversity in the area, providing shelter and food for important pollinating insects and invertebrates, vital parts of a healthy ecosystem.

The new meadow will also form part of the B-line along the river Tweed. B-lines are an initiative of Buglife, the invertebrate conservation charity, which aims to create habitat corridors for pollinating insects to travel along. The river Tweed B-line will run along the length of the river, from its source to the sea.



A peaceful scene at Broadhaugh Farm.

Haystacks at Broadhaugh Farm, nr. Hawick (Lost Scottish Borders)

A human-made habitat, hay meadows are dependant on management by people. They are cultural landscapes and each meadow has its own management history influenced by its aspect, altitude and its location in relation to the farm.

We are now at a pivotal moment; in the midst of a biodiversity emergency and on the brink of losing living memory of the meadows and traditional land management practices which have formed a key part of the culture and ecosystems of the Scottish Borders.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Recognising this moment, Connecting Threads is inviting proposals from visual artists for the role of Artist in Residence at Merlindale Meadow. The residency will take place for three months whilst the meadow is establishing, starting in summer 2021.

This is not a traditional residency in that the artist will not be based in the meadow full-time, but should use the meadow as a place for fieldwork and research, for hosting events, for collecting source material and as a place which can be returned to for reflection.

There are a number of themes which could be explored through the residency, including biodiversity, land management, pollinators, soils, tools and seasonality. It is important that the artist seeks to engage the wider communities of place or purpose (Drumelzier, Broughton, Tweedsmuir, farming community etc.) with the project and issues around biodiversity. We would also like the artist to document or record their work in a way which could be shared with a wider audience as part of the Connecting Threads programme, for example through exhibition.

## ELIGIBILITY

The residency is open to visual artists who live in the Scottish Borders. We are seeking proposals from artists that work in any or multiple mediums and we welcome applications from artists at any stage of their career.

## DETAILS

The residency will run for a period of three months from the agreed start date (see next page). The contract will be for 30 days and it is anticipated that the artist will structure their working pattern in conversation with the Connecting Threads team to make best use of resources, time and weather.

The artist fee is £300/day (total fee £9,000). There is a materials budget of £1000 and travel expenses for the duration of the residency will be reimbursed up to a value of £900.

Curatorial and project management support will be provided by the Connecting Threads team. In addition, the landowner who is leading the creation of the new meadow will be available for an introduction to the site. A smaller meadow has already been established within the landowner's garden, (see image below) and this can also be made available for research activity.

The artist will have access to Drumelzier village hall (10-15 minutes walk) for working, hosting events and storage of belongings. The hall has a kitchen and toilet and space for car parking, but does not have Wi-Fi.



Meadow at Merlindale House (David Lintott)



## HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please provide a response to each of the following three questions. There is no word limit for each question, however your total responses should not exceed 2 sides of A4.

### 1. Who are you and what is your practice?

Please tell us a little bit about yourself and your work. You might like to include here themes or questions which shape your work, any connection you have to Tweeddale and any experience you have that is relevant to this opportunity.

### 2. What would you like to use the residency to explore and how might you do this?

We anticipate the residency being an evolving process and would encourage artists to respond to ideas and opportunities as they arise. Bearing this in mind, we would like to understand any initial ideas you have and how you would approach the first few weeks of the residency.

### 3. How might you engage the local community with your work and with issues around biodiversity?

We are looking for proposals which integrate community engagement and use this to further dialogue around the project. We are able to support the selected artist in approaching communities.

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In addition to the written response, please provide a CV (not exceeding 2 sides of A4) and up to 8 images of your work (not exceeding 15mb). You can submit up to 3 sound or video works instead of images. To do this please provide links to where these can be found online (for example on Vimeo or in a shared Google Drive).

**Applications should be sent to [rachel@sup.org.uk](mailto:rachel@sup.org.uk) by 5pm on Sunday 23rd May.**

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If you would like an informal chat about the opportunity prior to submitting a response, or have any questions about the application process, including how this opportunity could be made more accessible to you please email Emily.

[emily@sup.org.uk](mailto:emily@sup.org.uk)

## KEY DATES

**Call out for applications released**  
Monday 26th April

**Deadline for applications**  
Sunday 23rd May

**Shortlisting of applications**  
Monday 24th May

**Informal discussions with shortlisted artists**  
Monday 7th June (in person / via Zoom, tbc)

**Decision communicated**  
Wednesday 9th June

**Start of residency**  
We would like the selected artist to begin the residency by the end of June, however there is some room for negotiation.

**End of residency**  
September / October  
(the residency is for a period of three months)

## OTHER USEFUL INFO

Connecting Threads will support the artist to work in line with any national guidelines in place around COVID-19. Whilst we anticipate some face-to-face activities will be possible by high summer, particularly outside, your application should show some consideration of the need to be flexible and adaptable.

For updates on the Connecting Threads project, follow us on Facebook @TweedRiverCulture

Information about the Southern Uplands Partnership can be found on their website: [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk)

Information about Destination Tweed can be found on the Tweed Forum website: [www.tweedforum.org](http://www.tweedforum.org)

Information about B-lines can be found on the Buglife website: [www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines](http://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines)

This residency is kindly supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Fallago Environment Fund.

