

The image is a composite. In the foreground, on the right side, is a close-up of a man's face. He has dark hair, a mustache, and is wearing a patterned jacket over a dark tie. His expression is serious. The background is a dark, atmospheric night scene. On the left, there is a church with a prominent, illuminated dome. In the center, a tall, dark lighthouse stands on a rocky outcrop. The sky is dark with some light clouds, and the overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, greys, and the warm yellow of the church's light.

Hear Us O Lord

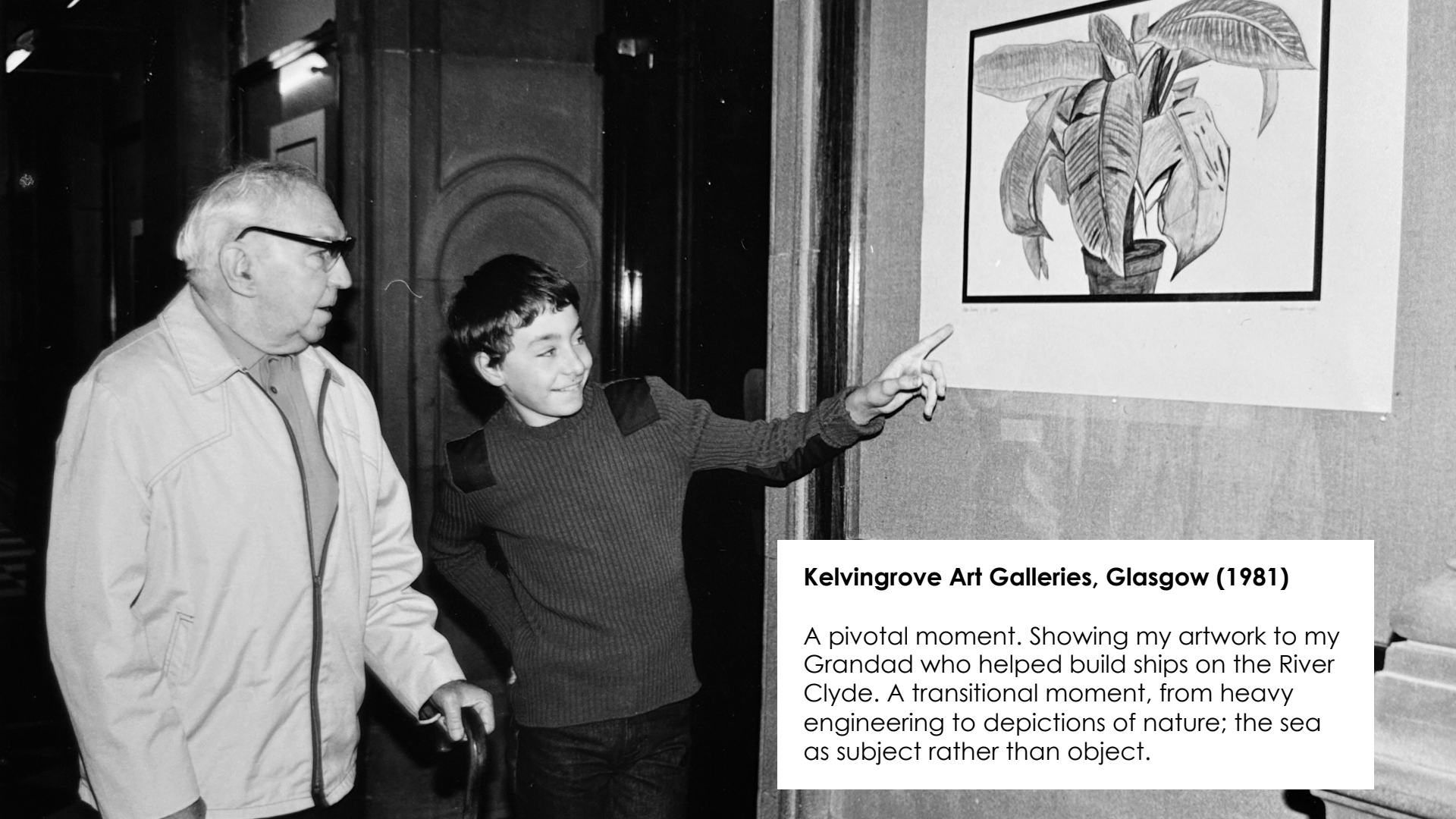


George Wylie

Born in east end of Glasgow 1921, died 2012.

Spent his life working as customs officer before becoming a sculptor in his 60s. He asked us to question everything. Works include *Paper Boat* (1990) that referenced the decline in Glasgow shipbuilding and is quoted as saying:

"It should be obvious that an adventurous voyage is most unlikely in the shallow waters of a bathtub, but the illusion of that possibility persists and is exemplified by art that never sails beyond the gallery"



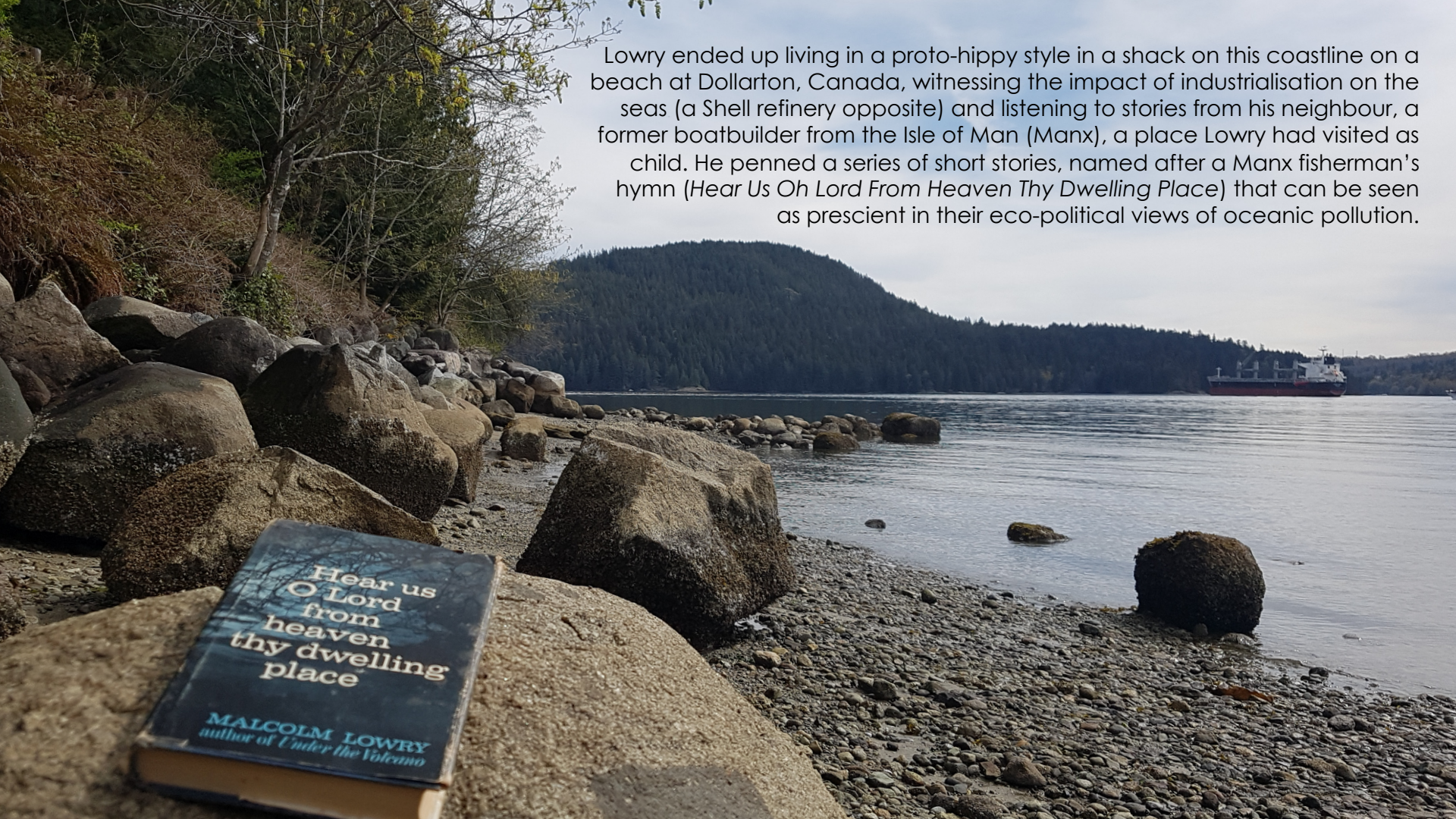
Kelvingrove Art Galleries, Glasgow (1981)

A pivotal moment. Showing my artwork to my Grandad who helped build ships on the River Clyde. A transitional moment, from heavy engineering to depictions of nature; the sea as subject rather than object.

Malcolm Lowry (1909-57)

Writer born on Wirral, set sail around world at age of 17, known for *Under the Volcano* (1947) written while living in Mexico. I became interested in his relationship with the sea – as a tormentor, as a place of play but also writers block, a place of incredible technical detail but also metaphor (for being lost?) – struggled with alcoholism.



A photograph of a coastal scene. In the foreground, a dark blue book titled "Hear us O Lord from heaven thy dwelling place" by MALCOLM LOWRY is lying on a large, light-colored rock. The book cover also mentions "author of Under the Volcano". The background shows a rocky beach leading to a calm body of water. A large, dark, forested hill rises in the distance. A red and white ship is visible on the water. The sky is overcast.

Lowry ended up living in a proto-hippy style in a shack on this coastline on a beach at Dollarton, Canada, witnessing the impact of industrialisation on the seas (a Shell refinery opposite) and listening to stories from his neighbour, a former boatbuilder from the Isle of Man (Manx), a place Lowry had visited as child. He penned a series of short stories, named after a Manx fisherman's hymn (*Hear Us Oh Lord From Heaven Thy Dwelling Place*) that can be seen as prescient in their eco-political views of oceanic pollution.

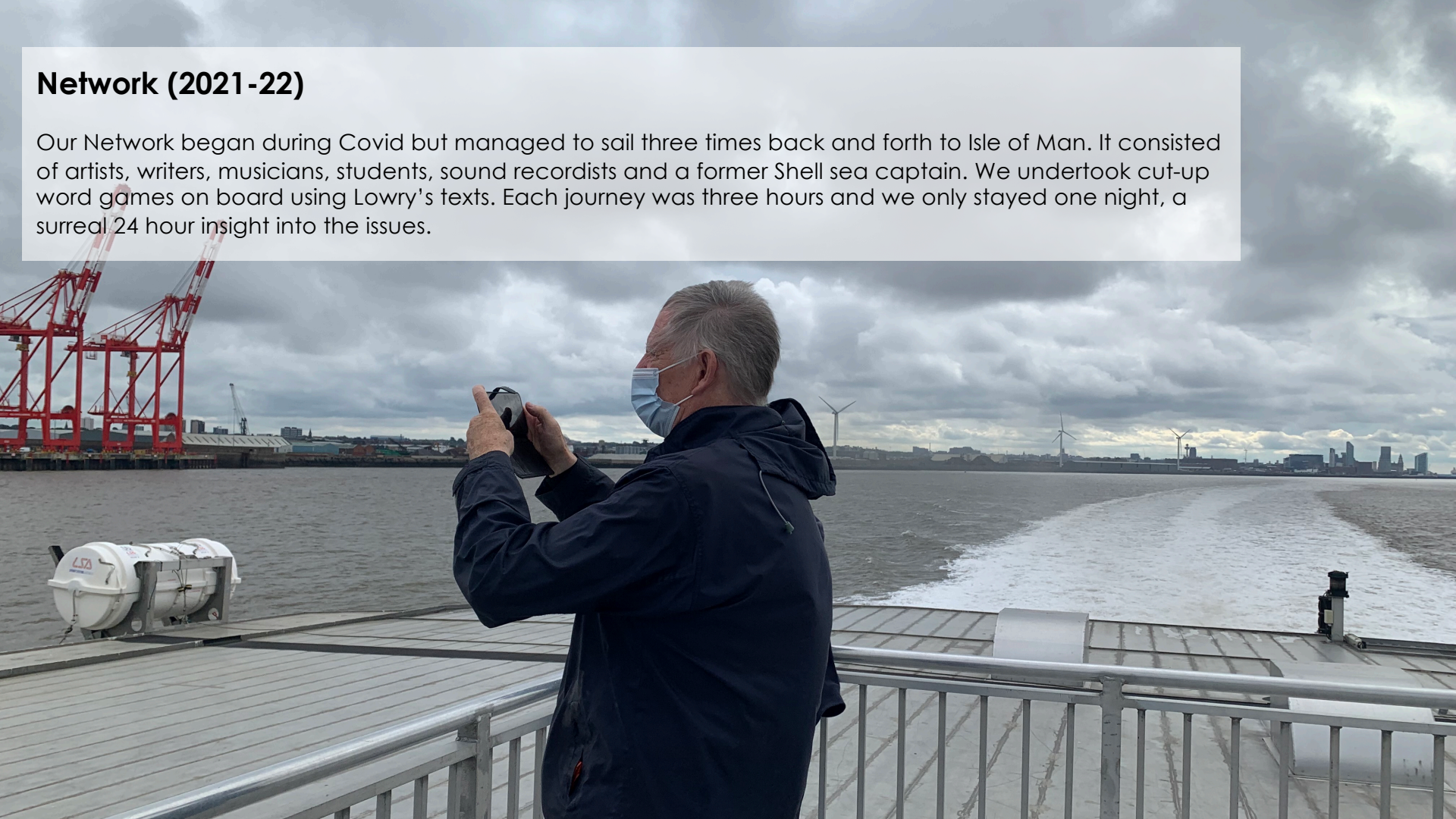


Isle of Man

The Isle of Man is a self-governing nation state with a population of around 83,000. We had the idea of setting up a new network that would meet at sea between Liverpool and Isle of Man to meet the public, write and record sounds for a series of podcasts – to develop a new sonic language for thinking about pollution of our oceans, using Lowry's short stories as a catalyst.

Network (2021-22)

Our Network began during Covid but managed to sail three times back and forth to Isle of Man. It consisted of artists, writers, musicians, students, sound recordists and a former Shell sea captain. We undertook cut-up word games on board using Lowry's texts. Each journey was three hours and we only stayed one night, a surreal 24 hour insight into the issues.



New

At the age of 17, Lowry is taken in the family limo to the Mersey docks to sail the sea for experience before studying at Cambridge. We feel the butterflies in our stomachs. Newspaper cutting from 1927: "Lowry has taken a ukelele with him."

RICH BOY AS DECK HAND. Prefers 50s. a Month to the "Silk-Cushion Life."

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

LIVERPOOL, Saturday.

A Liverpool cotton broker and his wife from the quayside at Birkenhead to-day waved good-bye to their public schoolboy son, who is sailing as a deck hand in the Holt cargo steamer Pyrrhus, for a wage of 50s. a month.

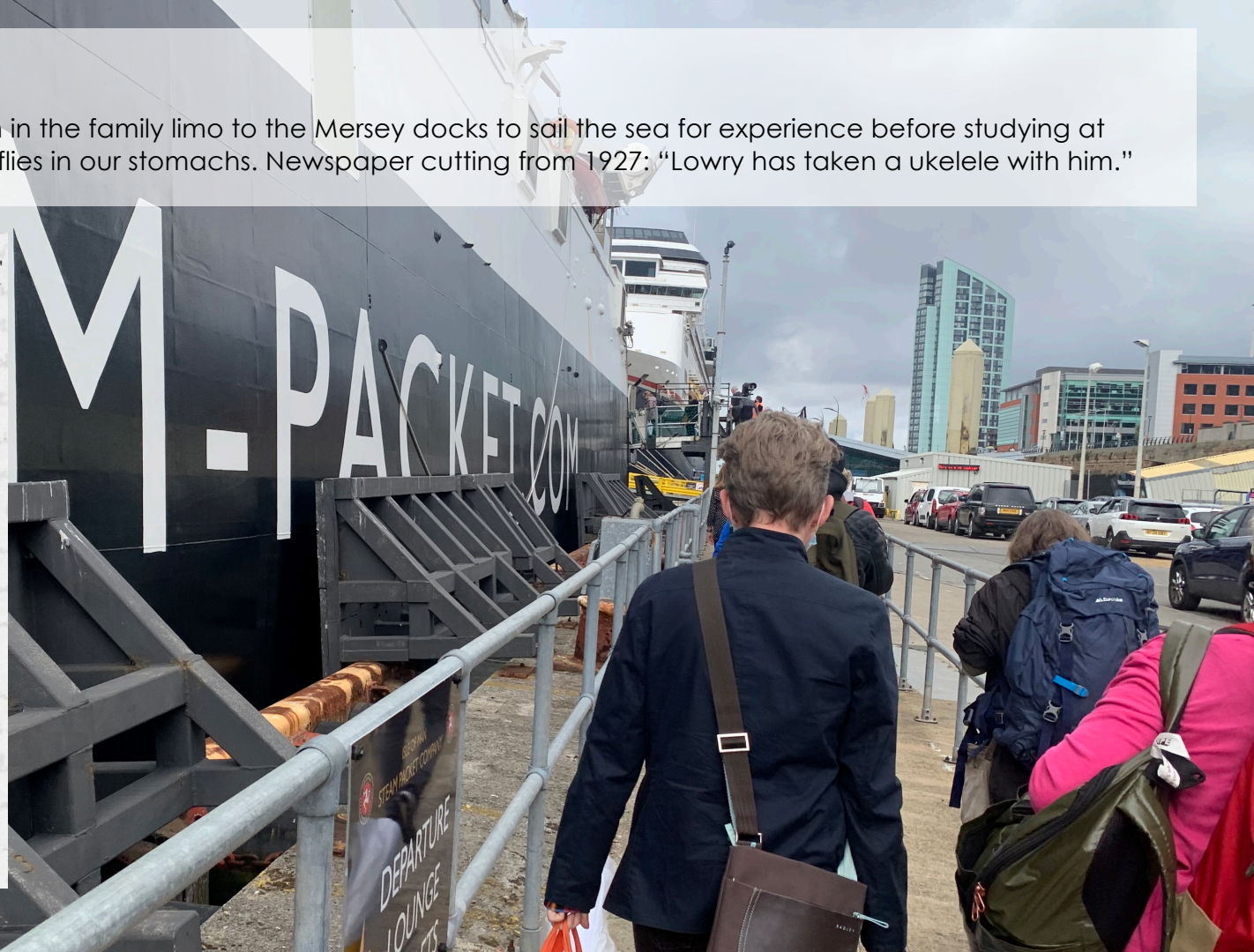
Malcolm Lowry, a curly-headed lad of 17, is forsaking the comforts of home at Inglewood, Caldy, overlooking the River Dee, for a rigorous life at sea.

"No silk-cushion youth for me," he said. "I want to see the world, and rub shoulders with its oddities, and get some experience of life before I go back to Cambridge University."

Soon after boarding the ship last night, young Lowry took a bucket and mop and swabbed the decks.

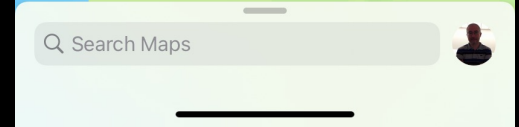
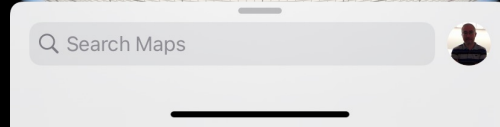
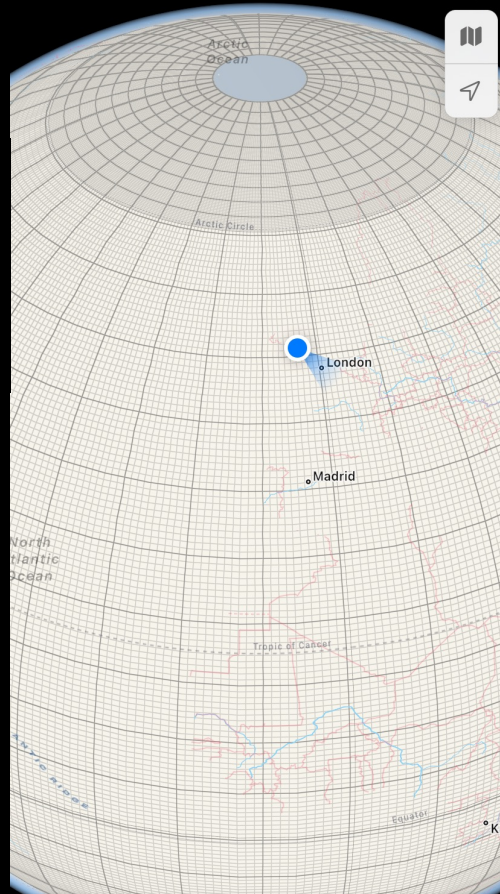
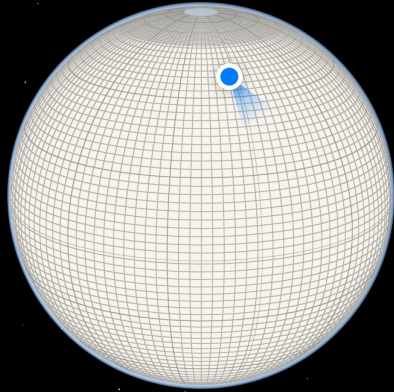
The ship goes to Port Said, Shanghai and Yokohama, and will probably be away ten months. Lowry has taken a ukulele with him, and hopes to compose new Charlestons during the voyage.

"He is bent on a literary career, and his short-story writing is all to him," said Mrs. Lowry, when the ship had left. "Of course, he has taken his ukulele with him, and he hopes to compose some more Charlestons during the voyage."



As with the tunnel, there is a moment during the sea crossing with no mobile phone signals. Our sea captain reminds us of other navigation methods, of maps, of alignments in the sky. He shares with us a scanner he uses by the River Mersey to listen in to captain's communications. He reads Lowry and in a sense becomes Lowry for a short while, also having sailed around the world and through the Panama Canal, only a few years after Lowry.

Thinking about last week's comments about measuring and the focus on *the visual*.

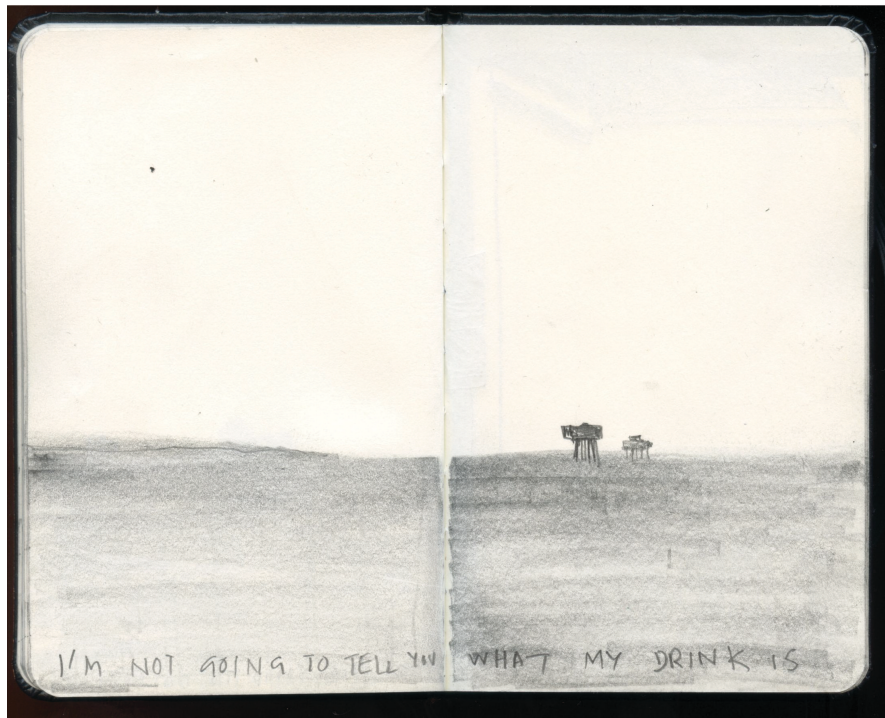
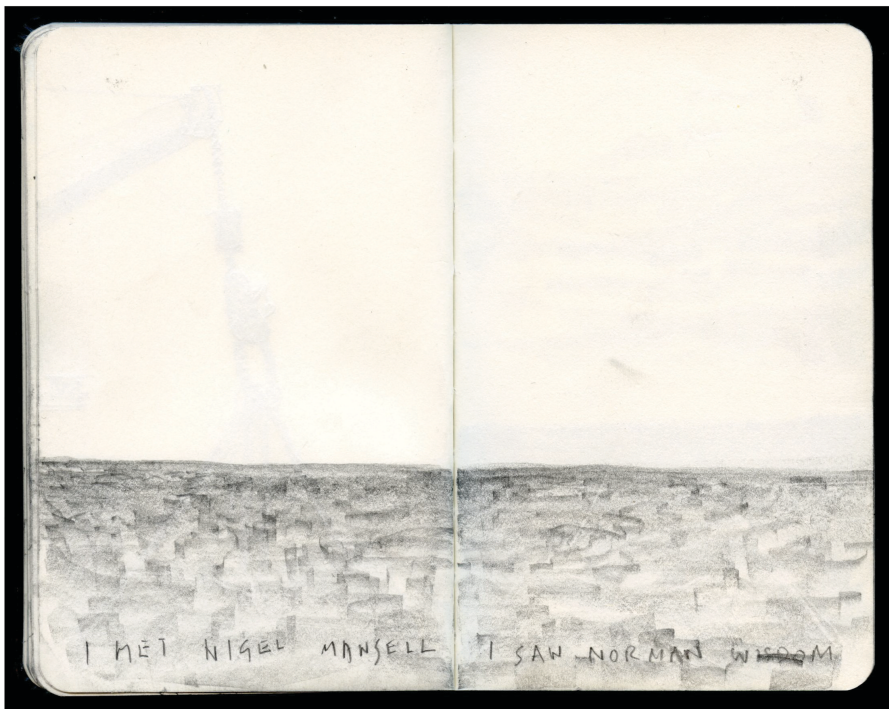


We recognise the obvious objects on the sea as we cross but feel naïve in relation to other installations.

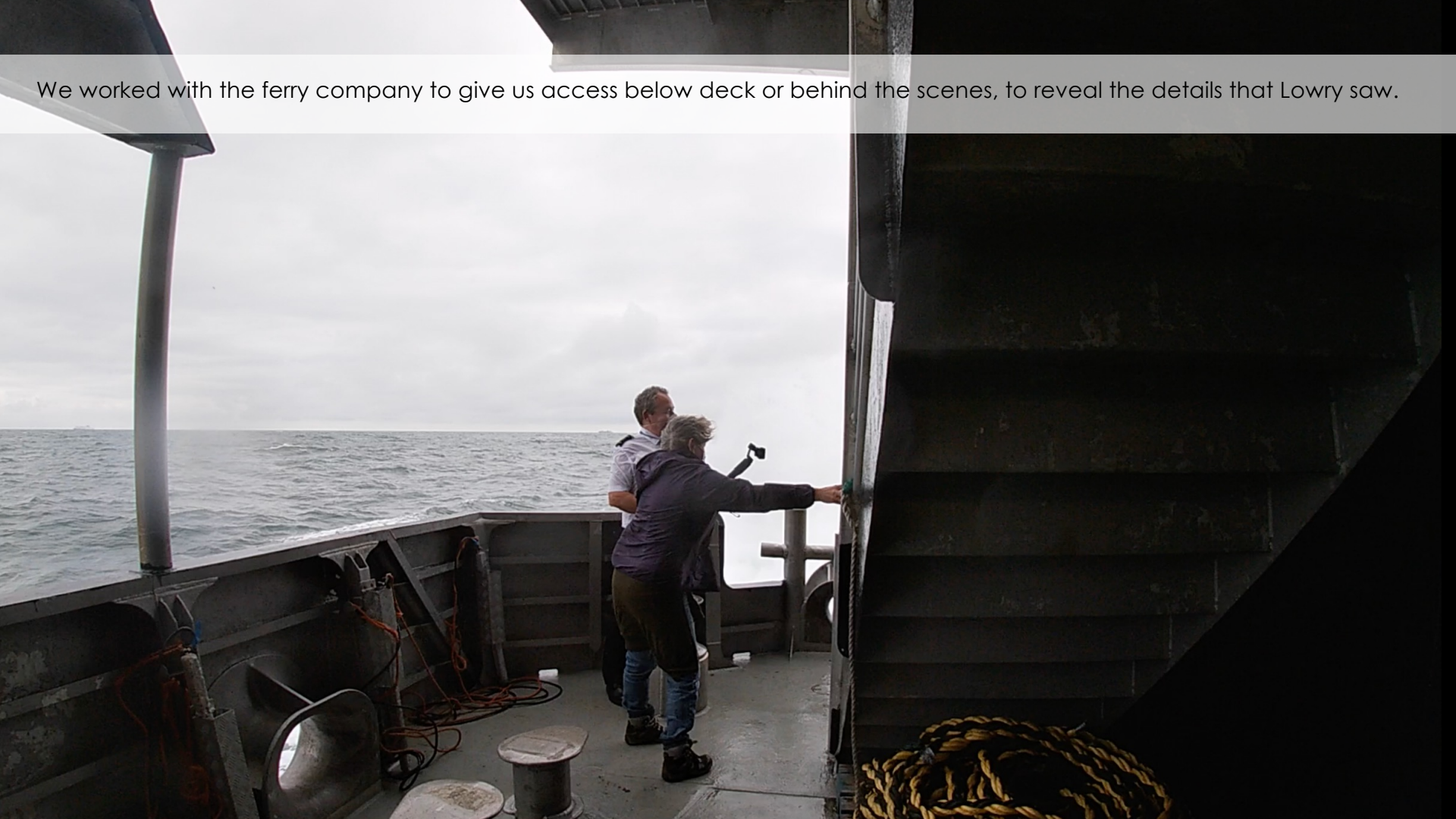


Bryan Biggs from Bluecoat captures these mysterious sightings via drawings. Others interact with the passengers, recording snippets of conversation. How does it feel to travel between a tiny island to the mainland? How much do we need to know?





We worked with the ferry company to give us access below deck or behind the scenes, to reveal the details that Lowry saw.



I took a charm, a poetic token, the only remaining piece of a Lego boat given to me by my Grandfather. At the same time, I played with it with my 5-year-old grandson, chatting about where Lego goes, how it ends up in the sea, looking at @legolostatsea on Twitter. Last week's phrase "somewhere between the real and the imaginary."



On the island we met with beach cleaners – it started as one man's personal activity while walking his dog and grew to 18,000 registered beach cleaners. We started to understand, on a very small island, how rubbish gathers, moves and could be processed.



On the island we met wild swimmers, their perspective of the seas based on tides, temperatures, the challenges of nature, cleanliness. We undertook semaphore actions and met with the local Government.



We learned that 85% of the island is marine, that they were awarded UNESCO Biosphere Status and face environmental challenges – they have a population crisis, there are increased windfarm proposals and aggressive fishing. On a small island, you can meet the Government and some are related to record shop owners and you chat at gigs. Things seem possible.





One of our network was Chris Watson – recordings of underwater limpets and shrimp – can we use underwater recordings to increase public awareness of the challenges. Blue Carbon project – new funding to return and create listening stations using underwater recordings. Melanie Challenger – politically listening to other species.

Hear Us O Lord From Heaven Thy Dwelling Place

A two-year AHRC-funded network exploring some writings of Wirral-born Malcolm Lowry (1909-1957) in relation to increased care for our oceans through a series of podcasts recorded during sailings between Liverpool and Isle of Man, 2021-22.

This research emerges from work on Lowry co-ordinated by [Bluecoat](#), including [The Lighthouse Invites The Storm](#), and our title comes from Lowry's collection of short stories written from 1941 onwards, published in 1961 and named after a Manx hymn, *Hear Us O Lord From Heaven Thy Dwelling Place*.

Already in this period, Lowry is observing the impact of industrialisation on our seas and as he describes in one of the collection's short stories, *The Forest Path to the Spring*, "civilization, creator of deathscapes, like a dull-witted fire of ugliness and ferocious stupidity had spread all down the opposite bank, blown over the water and crept up upon us from the south along it, murdering the trees and taking down the shacks as it went."

For those wishing to know more about Malcolm Lowry, we include this [timeline](#).



www.malcolmlowry.com

Excerpt from Podcast 9 '(Traa-Dy-Liooar?)'
(Chris Watson shrimp recordings, hydrophone at Douglas Bay) (1'00")

