

A woman with grey hair, wearing a pink long-sleeved top and a teal skirt, is bending over in a field of tall grass and numerous small white flowers. The scene is bright and natural.

AILSAPRESS

**an independent press
from the Isle of Islay Scotland**

**publishers of art-led gift books
for children and creative adults**

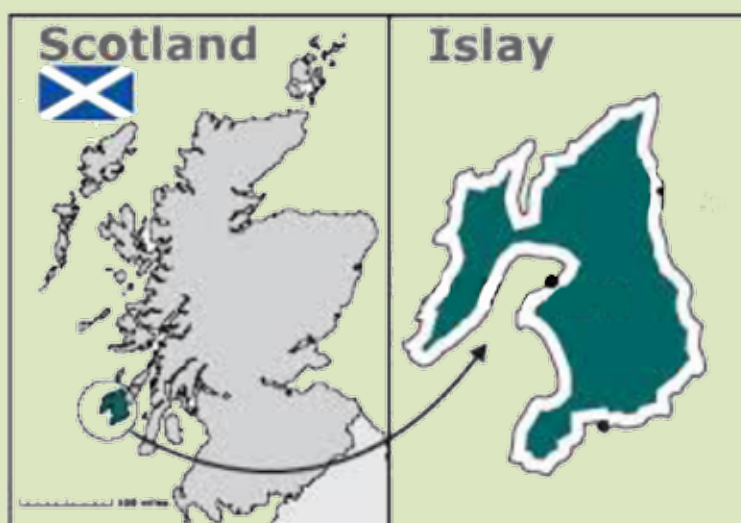


AILSAPRESS

“Small publishers are the truffles below the oaks of any culture – hidden, valuable and the carriers of specialist delight.”

Established in 2007, AILSAPRESS is a small independent publisher based on the Isle of Islay. Our aim is to produce art-led books for the gift and children’s market that will reflect indigenous island life and offer a memento to visitors who come to the island. Like the whisky, also a product of the island, the books have a spirit that easily reaches beyond the boundaries of time and place. We are pleased to be represented by Blackbird Literary Agency for the sale of rights worldwide

The Isle of Islay lies off the west coast of Scotland and is part of the group of islands known as the Inner Hebrides. The unspoiled natural beauty of the island attracts a wide variety of visitors to its shores, bird enthusiasts, whisky connoisseurs, walkers, divers and archaeologists to name but a few.



www.ailsapress.com



For foreign rights contact Blackbird Literary Agency: www.b-l-agency.com

The Tail of Ailsa

the unusual story of a cat who lost her tail

by Ruth MacLean & Catherine Wilson



Ailsa was a cat who belonged to Canadian artist Ruth MacLean. One dark night her tail got tangled so badly that the vet pronounced it was either her tail or her life. Without a tail, Ailsa remained the same intrepid explorer. The book is a delight to the ear and eye. With scissors and paper Ruth has created wonderful collage images that capture Ailsa's curiosity and magic. Her story is told in light-hearted verse by Catherine Wilson. First published in 2007, the book sold at the National Galleries of Scotland and the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh as well as at the Fitzwilliam Museum and Kettles Yard in Cambridge. The book is now out-of-print but we are looking to reprint and produce a new edition.

Extent: 112 pages, size 15.2 x 18.2 x 1 cm

Illustrations full colour with text, binding sewn. RRP £9.99

ISBN 978-0-9555656-0-1

The elegantly sparse layouts and strong, yet subtle colours of the paper cut-outs make for a real page turner. It is a sunny book - a little ray of sunshine - a feel-good book that purrs and bounces along just like Tabitha, Marmalade, Rhubarb and of course Ailsa. Those of you who have cats will understand. Those of you who don't, should buy one for someone who does.

Carl Reavey in the Iteach

Poems about cats will always evoke thoughts of T S Eliot's Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats, but while the Tail of Ailsa is rather different in essence, Ailsa's mischief and character mean she could easily slot in alongside Macavity and Mr Mistoffelees in the parade of enchanting puss poetry.

Victoria Murchie in the Press and Journal



"I wonder what will happen if I spike my fur and wear a ring?
Will my Mum be in a miff or will she think I'm just the thing?"

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Ruth Maclean's grandfather emigrated from the Isle of Islay to Canada at the age of 12. As a young woman Ruth returned to Islay to explore her origins. Whilst there she stayed on a farm and learned about sheep, how to spin their wool and use natural dyes. She also met fellow artist and writer Cathy Wilson, the founder of Ailsapress. This was their first book and led to development of a publishing venture.

THE ADVENTURES OF BRAMBLE AND COULTOON

the two fire-making ponies from Islay by Ruth MacLean & Catherine Wilson



First published in 2009, *Their Hebridean Adventure* has proved a popular story especially for those with an urge to explore the Hebridean coast of Scotland. The ponies set out to find out what lies on the other side of Jura, the neighbouring island to Islay. But curiosity leads them further and further abroad. They reach South Uist and set up camp. There they meet Bonnie Prince Charlie taking refuge in a cave. He offers to return them home if they help him sail his ship. The ponies willingly oblige.



Next in the series is *Their Sky Dragon Adventure*. Once again curiosity gets the better of the ponies. They wander well past their home base, beyond the Stone at the Edge of Nowhere. They then discover a Sky Dragon sorely in need of help. Her fire has run out and she will not be able to return to her home in the sky unless it is lit again. The ponies come to the rescue with help from friends, an eagle and the men who cut the peat.

In the third book *Their Bolsa Cave Adventure*, a certain Mr McEnvy, jealous of their fire-making skills, is anxious to get rid of the ponies. He persuades them to go to the Bolsa Cave where he hopes they will disappear forever, like the long-lost piper before them. Things turn out quite differently with a fun finale when the piper and the ponies join the Islay Pipe Band. It's a dismal failure for Mr McEnvy!



All books: extent: 32 pages, size 26 x 21 x .3 cm, Illustrations full colour with text, binding sewn. RRP £5.99 ISBN 978-0-955565625, 978-0-99965632, 978-0-955565663

This quirky story is full of amusing detail. For instance, on the ferry they picnic on hay and chocolate and they make a campfire by enterprisingly striking their hooves against stones. The charming illustrations, made entirely from paper collage, are full of character. This would make a great introduction to the Hebrides for a child going on holiday there. More Bramble and Coultoon stories are planned. **Anne Johnstone in *The Herald***

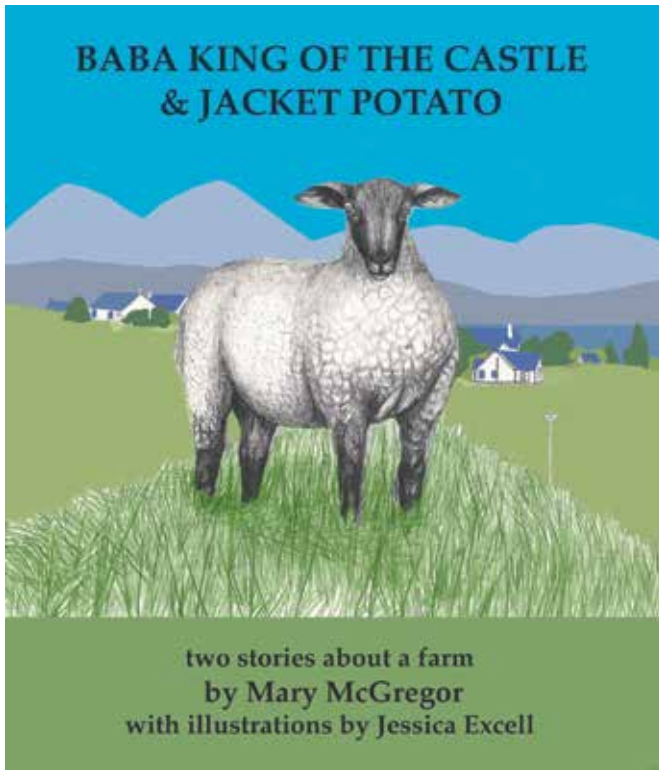
AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

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BABA KING OF THE CASTLE & JACKET POTATO

two stories from a farm

written by Mary McGregor illustrated by Jessica Excell



*A timely delight is a new book from Islay's Ailsapress – Baba King of the Castle and Jacket Potato – two stories about a farm, by Mary McGregor, with illustrations by Jessica Excell – including the gorgeously tactile lamb on the left. An orphan lamb and a premature calf are the two remarkable characters in this volume. We find out how they came into this world and how they coped with difficult times. With descriptions of the customs of the small farmer, the stories are subliminally educational. They also carry a supportive emotional message about survival in times of trouble. Jessica Excell's illustrations add greatly to the charm of this book. For more information about the individualist Ailsapress and their quite beautiful publications, visit their website. **ForArgyll online news***

An island woman from an island farm, Mary McGregor's voice is fresh and hopeful. Her stories will touch young and old, kids, Mums and Dads and everyone with a love for creatures great and small. An orphan lamb and a premature calf are the two remarkable characters in this volume. We find out how they came into the world and how they coped with difficult circumstances. These stories are told with a simple charm yet have an emotional impact and an educational value. Children who may suffer from difficulties themselves may well take courage from the little animals that they hear and read about.

Jessica Excell's black and white drawings add greatly to the charm of this book.

Extent: 44 pages, size 14 x 16 x .35 cm,
Illustrations black & white with text, binding perfect.
RP £6.99
ISBN 978-0-9555656-5-6

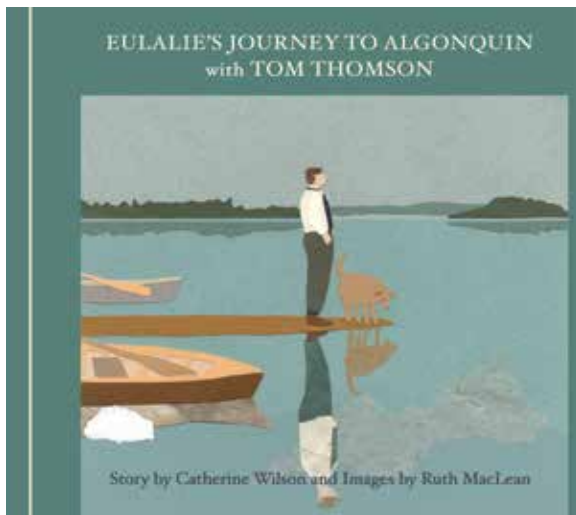
AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

An island woman, Mary McGregor's folk have owned the same farm for three generations. Her work for a leading local whisky distillery brings her into contact with a multitude of visitors from many different countries. The illustrator Jessica Excell lives at the opposite end of Britain in the county of Suffolk. She has recently completed her MA at Camberwell College of Arts in London.

EULALIE'S JOURNEY TO ALGONQUIN

with TOM THOMSON

written by Catherine Wilson illustrated by Ruth MacLean



For the younger generation, celebrated Canadian artist Tom Thomson offers a vivid example of someone who searched for his own identity. As a young man, he did not know what it was he wanted to do. It took him time to discover that his destiny was to be a painter. This book with beautiful collage interpretations of Tom's work by Ruth MacLean offers the young reader a chance to explore his world through the eyes of his dog.

They will see how Tom worked "catching the light" as Eulalie describes it, how the two of them lived as a team in the wilderness of Algonquin Park with Tom canoeing on the lakes and catching fish for their supper, and how Eulalie discovers her cousins the wolves and finds suitable places for Tom to do his "pasting" - her word for his painting. She was devoted to Tom from the very beginning when he exclaimed, "She's a little treasure - she can come painting with me!" Her story will touch the hearts of all who read it.

Extent: 48 pages, size 193 x 4.6 x 203 mm, illustrations full colour, text with line drawings in margins; binding sewn, soft cover with flaps; RRP \$21.95 CA SBN 978-0-9555612-1-2

Distribution: Georgetown Publications, Ontario L7G 4R9 Sales: 905-873-2710 fax 905-873-1740

Launched at the Tom Thomson Gallery in partnership with the Owen Sound and North Grey Union Public Library on April 14 2018, and the weekend following at the McMichael Art Collection in Kleinburg, the book is already attracting major takers in Canada, with the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, the Vancouver and Calgary Art Galleries among the early birds!

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

CATHERINE WILSON lives on the island of Islay in Scotland, where she met Ruth. She first trained as an artist and began to write when she was teaching at Secondary Schools in East Africa. Later she worked for the BBC and became an author of educational texts. She and Ruth have collaborated on several children's books, all published by Ailsapress, which she helped to found in 2007.

RUTH MACLEAN was born and raised in Toronto and trained in Fine Art and Theology. From early childhood she has been familiar with the Tom Thomson territory around Owen Sound and Georgian Bay where her Scottish forebears first settled. Like Tom Thomson before her, she has always drawn inspiration from nature. She honours nature with her earth-spirit dolls and other sacred pieces.



**Other books from Ailsapress:
These Men are Worth Your Tears
Islay and Jura in World War I
by Stuart Graham [2015]
À Table Whisky from Glass to Plate
by Martine Nouet [2016]**

info@ailsapress.co.uk

