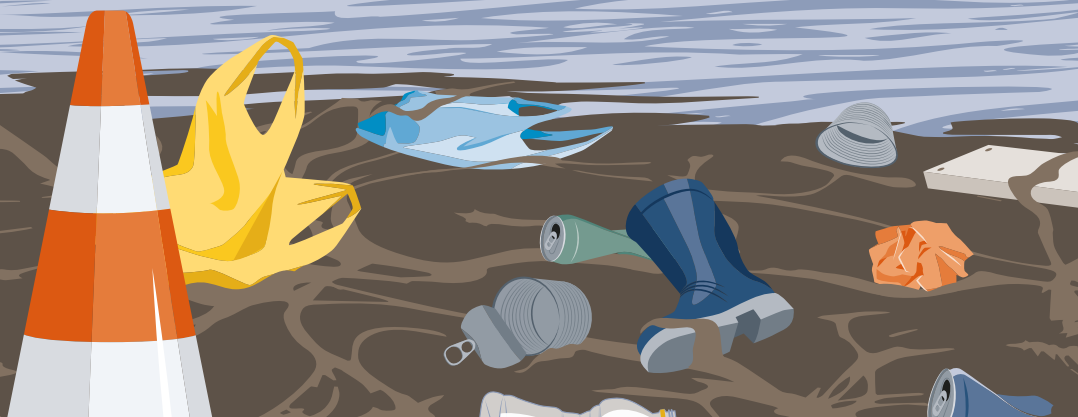




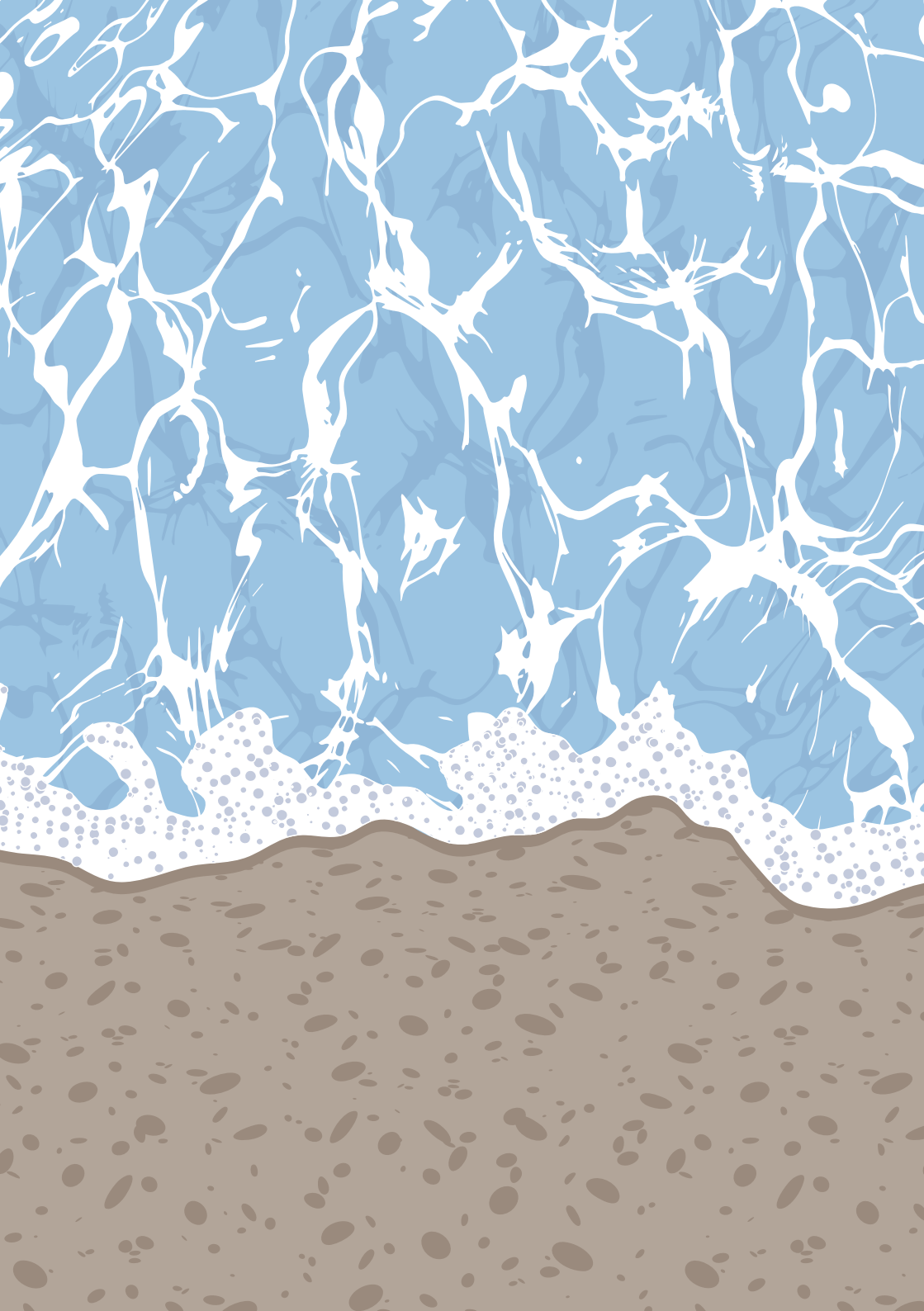
University
of Glasgow

ARROCHAR AND THE WASTE OF THE WORLD



The GRAB Trust
GROUP FOR RECYCLING IN ARGYLL & BUTE

LEVERHULME
TRUST _____

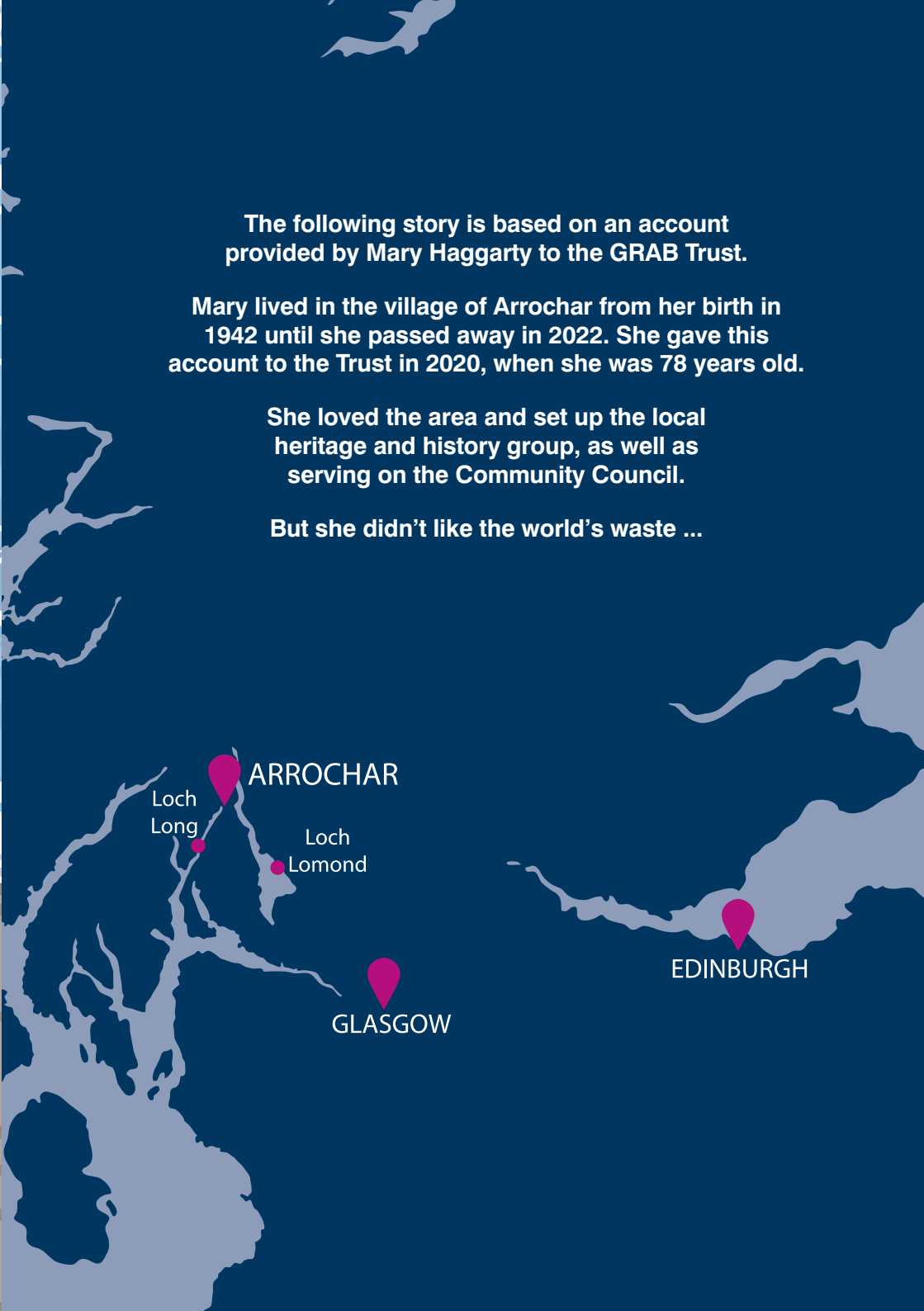


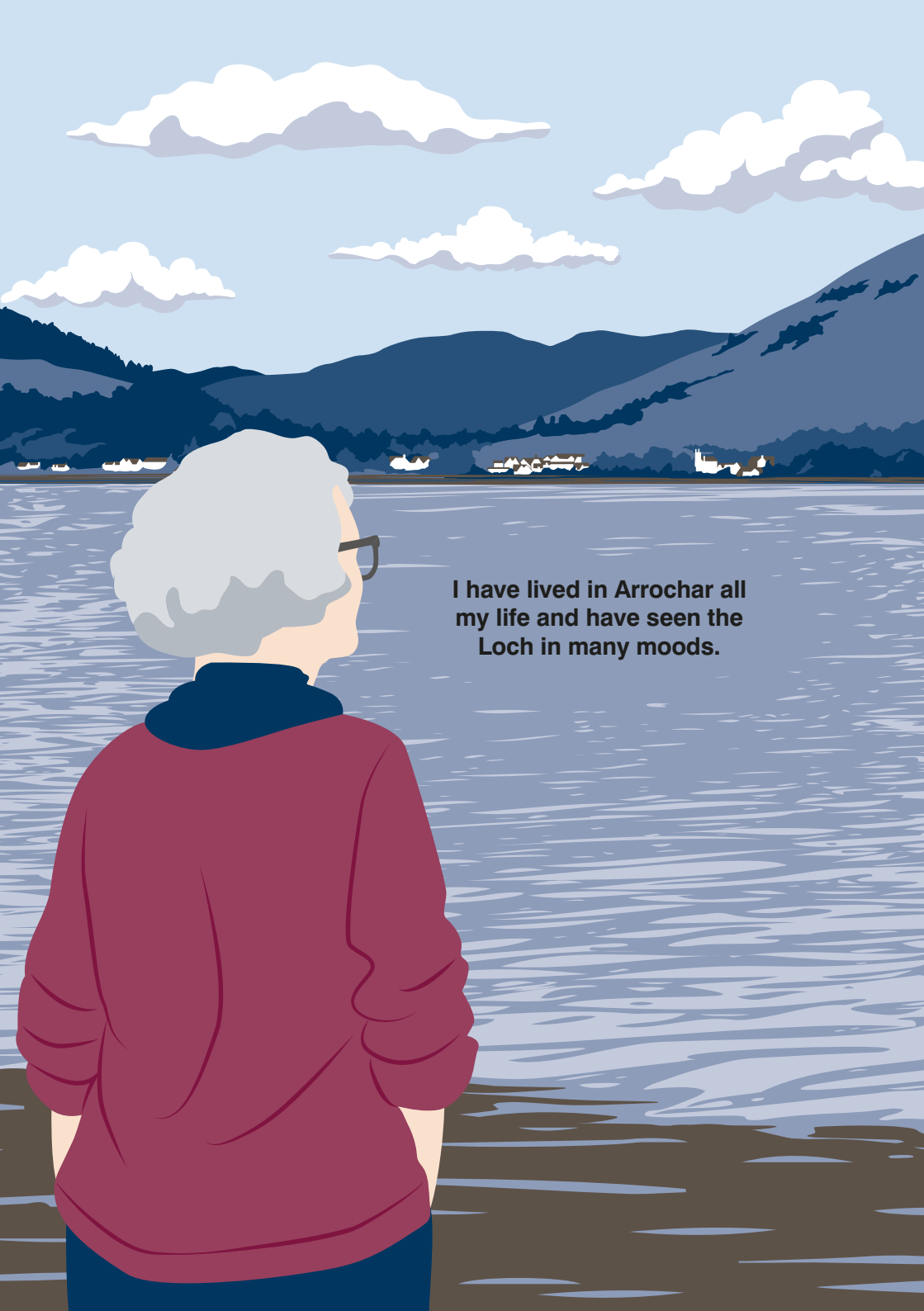
The following story is based on an account provided by Mary Haggarty to the GRAB Trust.

Mary lived in the village of Arrochar from her birth in 1942 until she passed away in 2022. She gave this account to the Trust in 2020, when she was 78 years old.

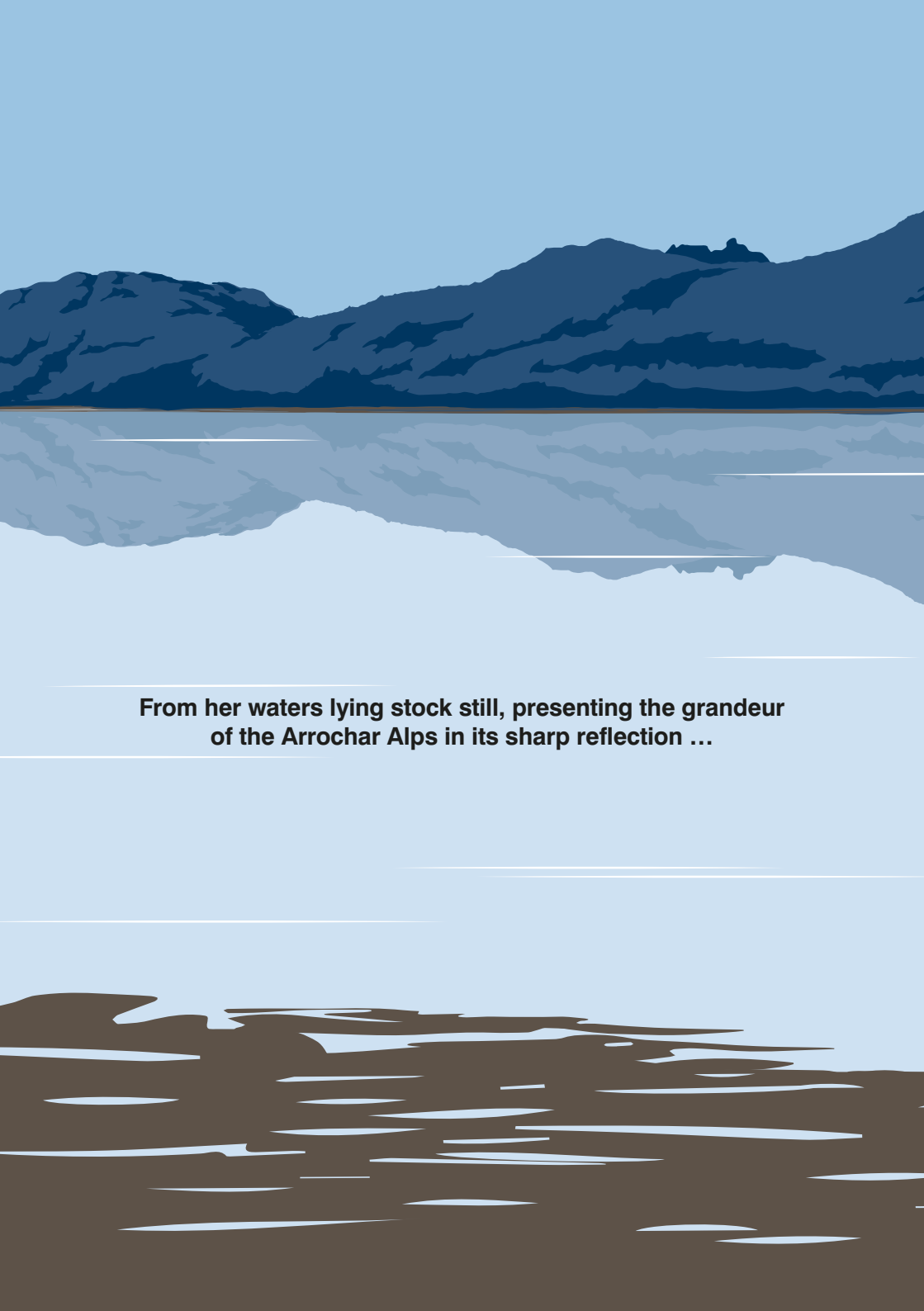
She loved the area and set up the local heritage and history group, as well as serving on the Community Council.

But she didn't like the world's waste ...





I have lived in Arrochar all my life and have seen the Loch in many moods.



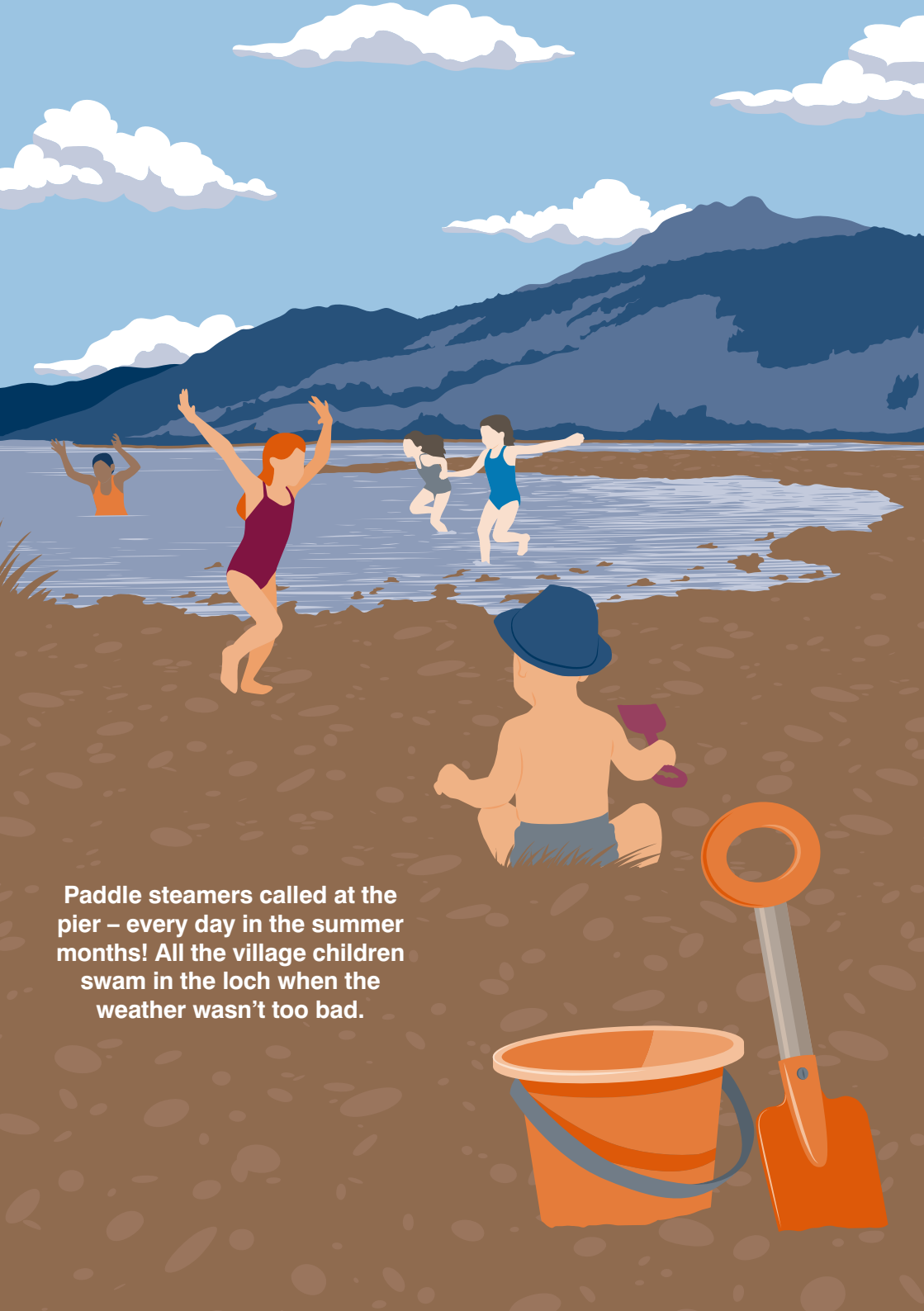
From her waters lying stock still, presenting the grandeur of the Arrochar Alps in its sharp reflection ...



... to a black raging torrent, stirring up all the litter from its store lying deep within the basin of Loch Long, and depositing it on its shores around the village.



During the 1940s and 1950s, Loch Long was very busy. The torpedo range was fully operational, with recovery boats on the loch all day long. Most people who lived along the ribbon of the village had a boat, and visitors could hire boats to spend a day fishing.



Paddle steamers called at the pier – every day in the summer months! All the village children swam in the loch when the weather wasn't too bad.



By the 1960s and 1970s, it was very clear that rubbish was coming up the loch.

When it reached the basin of the loch, the currents weakened and it dropped to the bottom.



There it lay, on the bed of the loch, until the first storm came and churned it up for the tides to catch and leave on the shore.

It was easy to see it was coming up the loch. When they expanded the Glen Douglas jetty and built the new navy armaments depot at Coulport, way down the loch towards Helensburgh, the winter storms threw up waste from the construction – pallets, welly boots and hard hats! So that's how we knew.



Over the years, we've tried to keep the foreshore clear of litter, but more keeps coming. For a while, the Council helped with the worst of it and covered the cost of it going to landfill. Then they stopped when they couldn't afford it.

Then the Community Council got a grant – that paid for the clean-up, but not the cost of landfill. But we got into trouble for using mechanical diggers on the foreshore ...

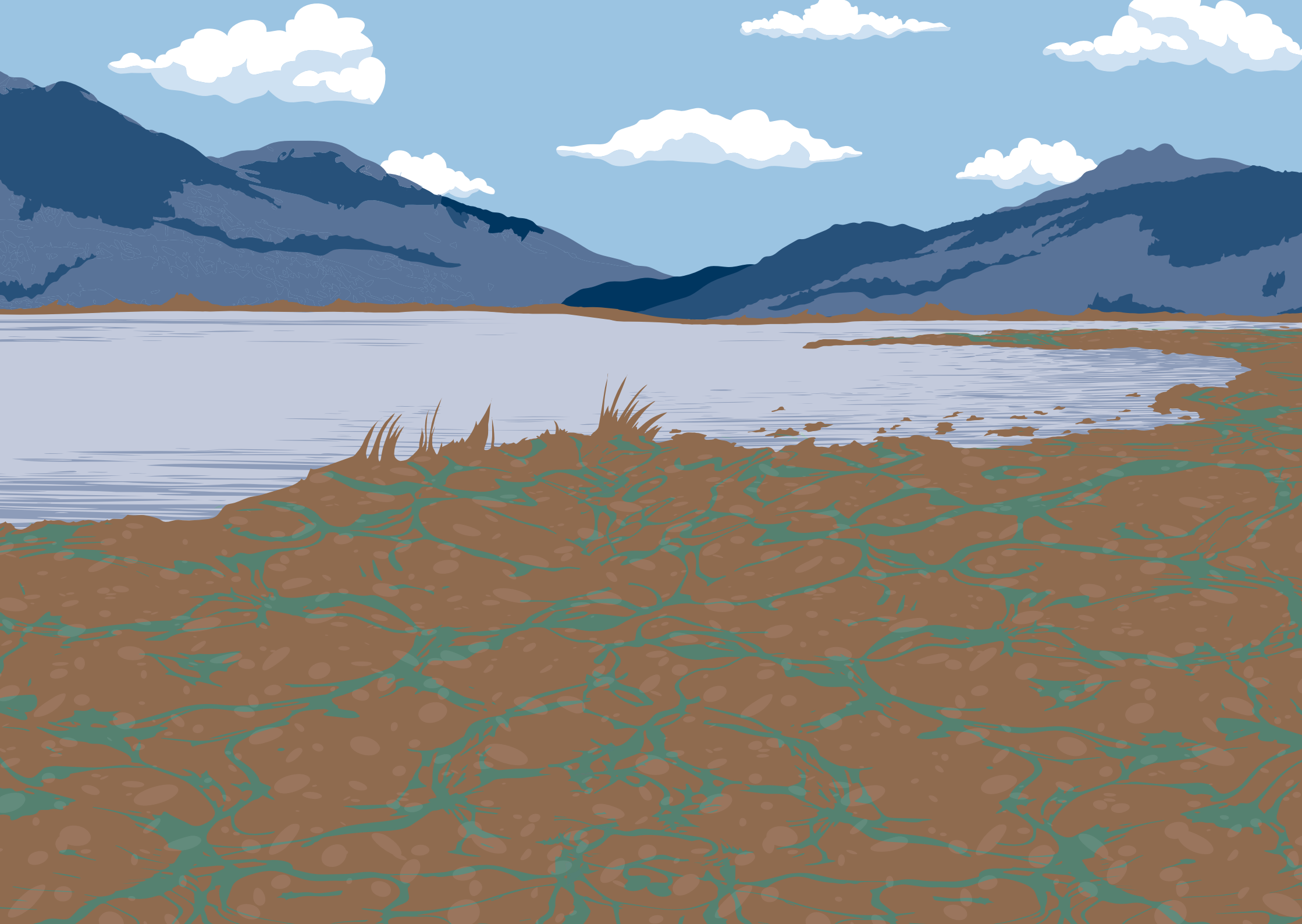


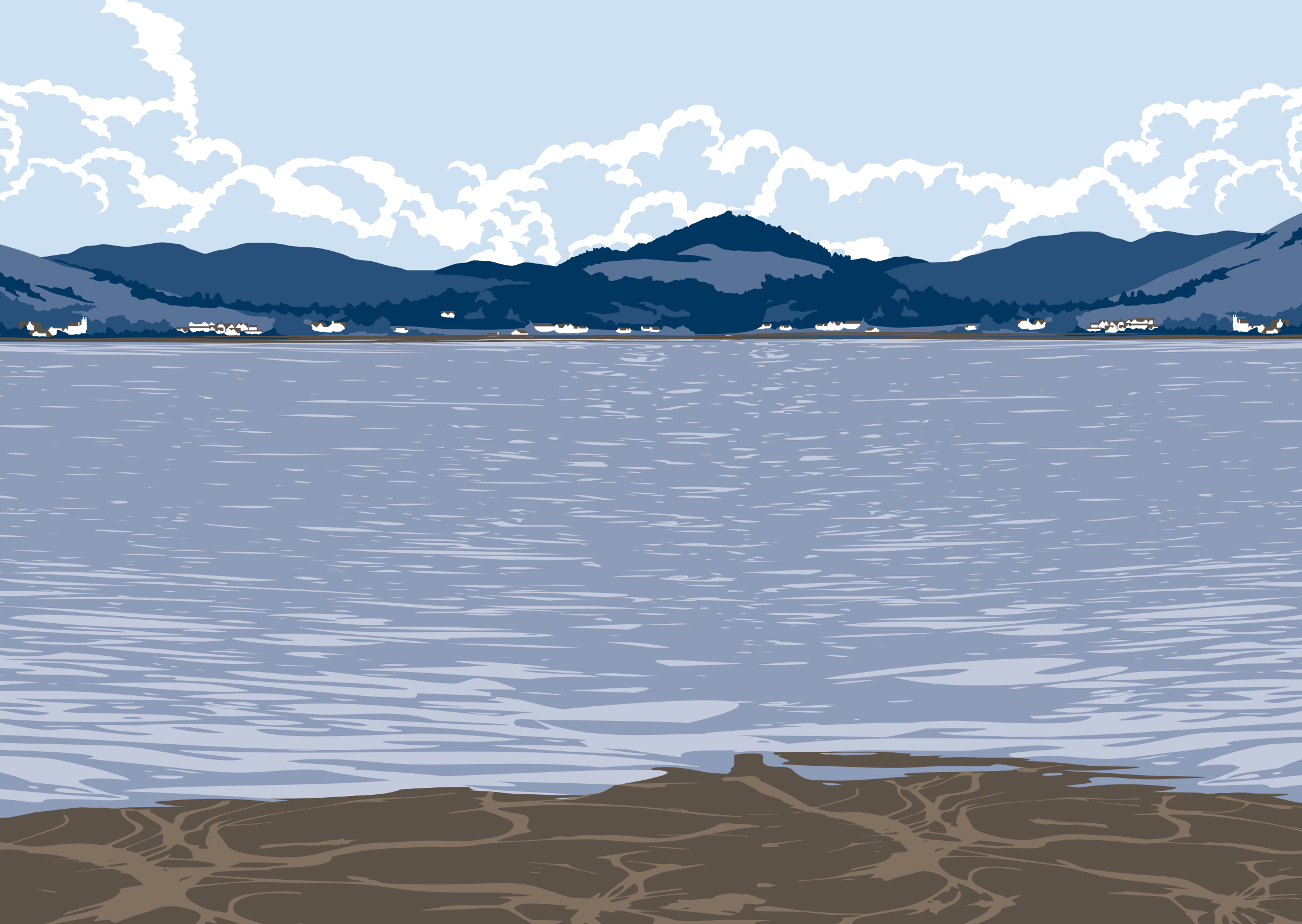
We were at a loss – its just not possible to clean up the mess left by a spring storm by hand.



So we asked for help again. The Government paid for Marine Scotland to look into the problem. Turns out about half the rubbish comes from upriver along the Clyde and the other half comes from downriver and the seas and oceans beyond. By 2018, they estimated we were getting 62000 items washed onto the foreshore every year! They've made us a nice evidence sheet that explains why Arrochar is what they call a litter sink. So at least now visitors don't think it's rubbish left by the villagers. But we're still left wondering what we're supposed to do with the world's waste.







ARROCHAR AND THE WASTE OF THE WORLD WAS CREATED BY WASTE STORIES AND THE GRAB TRUST.

Waste Stories is a project that tries to change our relationship with things we throw away - far too much of which ends up in our rivers and seas. It is based at the University of Glasgow. For more information, visit <https://wastestories.org.uk> or contact Anna Wilson (anna.wilson.2@glasgow.ac.uk).

The GRAB Trust is a charitable social enterprise that provides activities relating to waste and recycling in Argyll and Bute, including running a Beaches and Marine Litter Project. If you look at a map of Argyll and Bute, you'll realise they have a lot of coastline and so a lot of beaches they have to try to keep clean. For more information, visit <https://grab.org.uk> or contact them by email at info@grab.org.uk.

We are grateful to Mary Haggarty for giving her account to the GRAB Trust and to the Leverhulme Trust for their support of Waste Stories.

Membership of The GRAB Trust is free and demonstrates support for our work.

  @GRABBMLP