

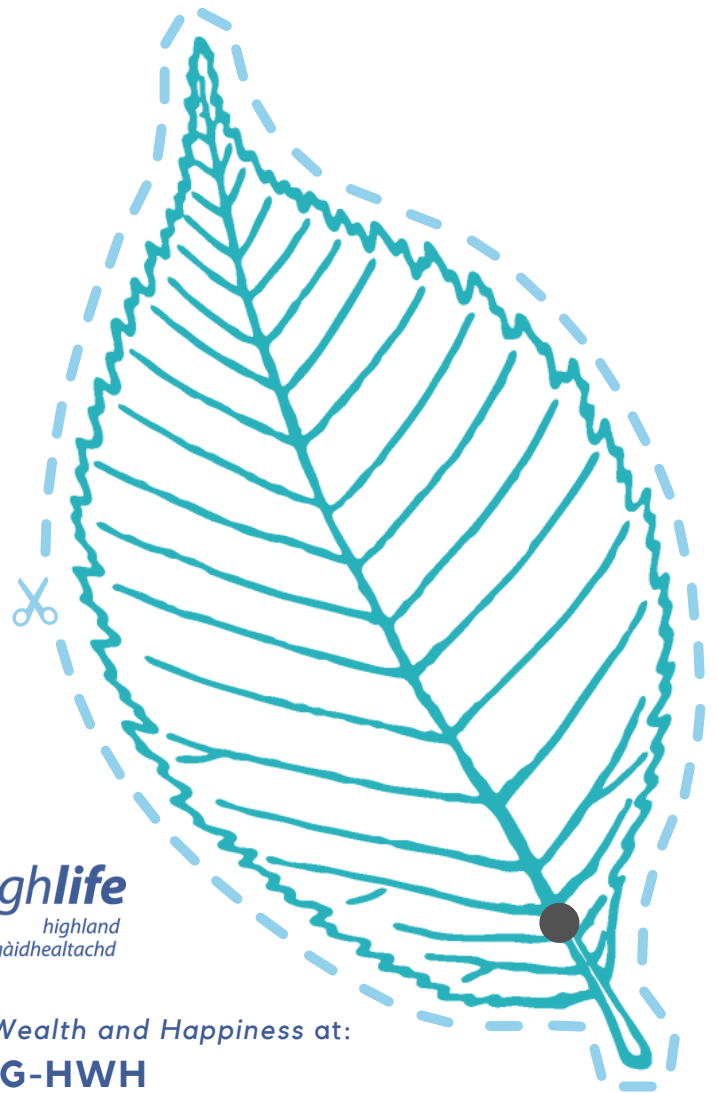
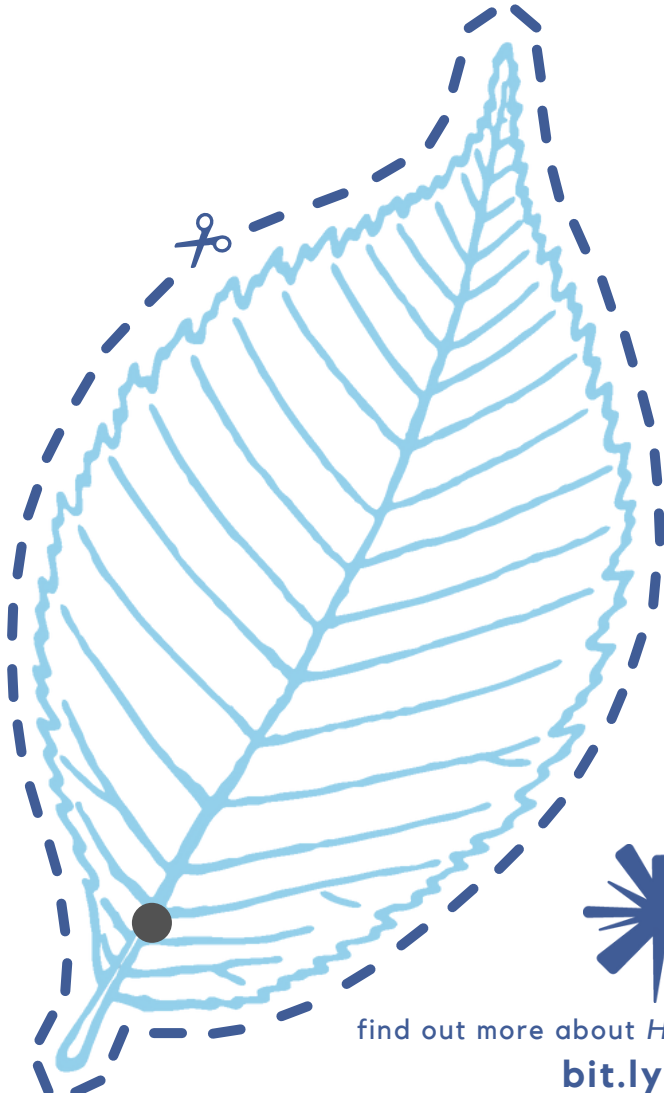
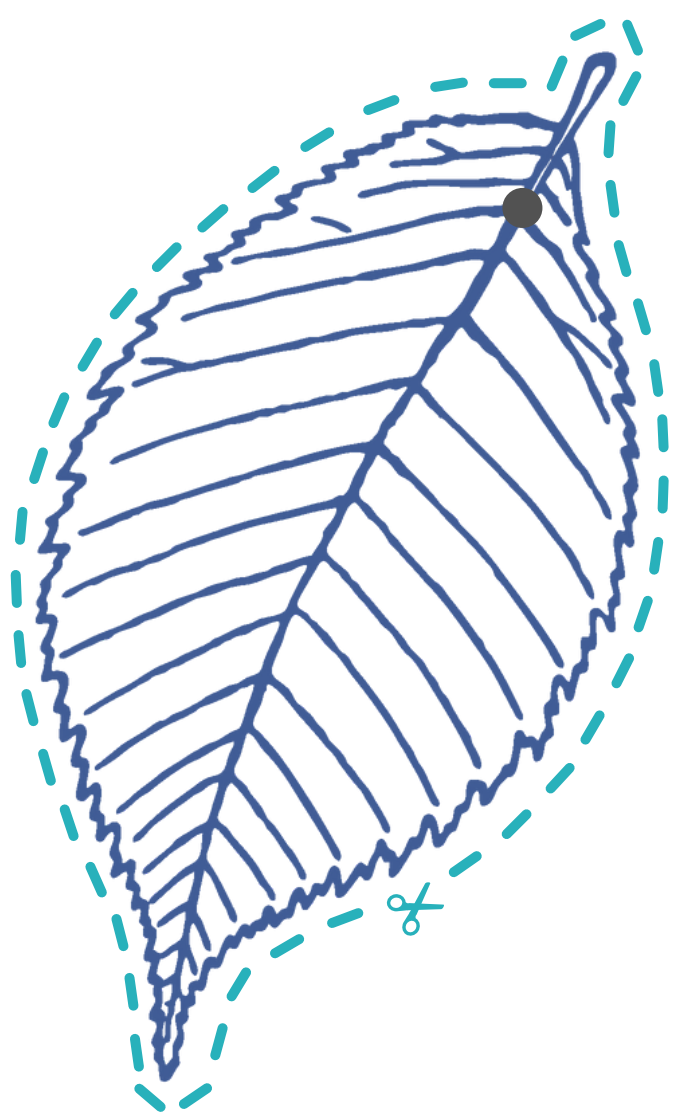
WELL WISHES

'Well Wishes' is a mindful craft activity based on the tradition of healing cloutie wells.

Through our postal project, your 'Well Wish' will join others from across the Highlands for the *Health, Wealth and Happiness* exhibition at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery.

We will then compost the wishes - this reflects the tying of cloths at healing wells, where the decay of the fabric represents the fulfilment of the wish.

The compost created will support new plant life in the Highlands.



find out more about *Health, Wealth and Happiness* at:
bit.ly/IMAG-HWH

WELL WISHES

INSTRUCTIONS

Take part in a Highland tradition by adding a wish to Inverness Museum and Art Gallery's very own clootie well.

To make your wish, cut out and decorate a leaf, and create a fabric braid.

You can follow our simple how-to guide on YouTube at bit.ly/IMAG_youtube.



HOW TO MAKE A BRAID

Take three strands. Hold all three together and tie a knot at one end.

It can help to tape the end to a table.

Call your strands 'health, wealth and happiness'.

Take the left strand and lay it over the middle one - it is now the middle strand.

Take the right strand and lay it over the middle one - it is now the middle strand.

Repeat these two steps - left to middle, right to middle.

Continue these steps till you have around 10cm left. Tie a knot in the end.

As you get the hang of it: think of the name of each strand as you lift and lay them, and the intention of your wish.

This braid will be used to attach your wish to a tree in the museum's *Health, Wealth and Happiness* exhibition.



WELL WISHES

CLOOTIE WELLS

Clootie wells are linked to ancient Celtic healing traditions. They are found in Scotland, Cornwall and Ireland.

Two of the best-known clootie wells are located in the Highlands, at Munlochy on the Black Isle, and at Culloden near Inverness (pictured).

A 'cloot' or cloth is taken to a well, dipped in its water, and tied to a tree nearby.

This was done with a wish for oneself or another in mind, often related to health.

It was hoped the ailment would disappear as the fabric disintegrated.

Clootie wells are still popular today, but many of the fabrics now used at these sites contain plastics.

This means that they take a long time to biodegrade - often longer than the lifespan of the trees to which they have been tied.

Natural fibres like cotton and wool are best for the environment.



photo credit: J. Valentine & Sons

WELL WISHES

HAZEL LEAVES

The leaf design used in 'Well Wishes' is inspired by the hazel, known in Gaelic as *calltainn*.

Hazels enjoy moist soils. This makes them a common sight throughout the Highlands, especially in the West.

They are also known to grow near healing wells, including the Loch Sheanta spring on Skye and St. Maol Rubha's well on Isle Maree.

One Gaelic word for hazelnut is *cnò an eòlais*, which means 'nut of knowledge'. This connection to learning is ancient, with Celtic myth featuring nine hazels which grew around a well of wisdom.

This may have inspired the origin story of the Beatons, a medieval family of doctors who lived and worked in the Highlands for generations.

The legend says that Farquhar, the first of the Beatons, was asked by a stranger to catch a snake from under a hazel tree in Strathnaver.

The stranger then made a potion from this snake - but Farquhar drank it first. To his surprise, it gave him a knowledge of illness and the power to treat the sick.

