



CUAIRT LITIR AN EARRAICH 2025 - SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025

Halò, a chàirdean!

Dùrachdan an earraich dhuibh uile is i teàrnadh gu math faisg a-nise, ged a tha mi sgrìobhadh seo is sneachd air an talamh às ùr! Mar a chì sibh, cha robh sinn nar cadal a' geamhrachadh is mòran againn ri innse dhuibh, a thabhann dhuibh is ur fiadhachadh thuige!

Our friend Alasdair Satchel in Mull has a wonderful podcast called 'What We Do In The Winter' which was originally a response to folk who wondered what on earth there was to do in the dark days of Highland and island Scotland. His answer of course – just like ours – was plenty. So here we go!



BRAND NEW TV SERIES FROM WATERCOLOUR STUDIOS – 'RÙRACHD'

BBC iPlayer from 1st March 2025 & BBC ALBA Thursdays 2145 from 20th March

Nick and Mary Ann spent the whole of 2024 working on a very special new series, our first independent TV production for the BBC, and to say we are excited is a bit of an understatement!

'Rùrachd' is a 6-part series on BBC iPlayer and BBC ALBA dedicated to the joys of wild food foraging and seeking out the very best of nature's bounty throughout Scotland. It's the first ever UK TV series devoted to foraging, and it's led by the best! Mary Ann is joined by her good friend and one of the rising stars of the foraging firmament Lucy Cooke (www.thewildcooke.com), exploring behind 'the green veil' sharing the huge variety of plants, seaweeds and fungi that are '*math is math dhuìt*' (they're good, and they're good for you), and blending Lucy's huge foraging knowledge and skills with Mary Ann's Gaelic upbringing and their shared love of cooking for friends. The result is a big adventure through woodland, seashore, moorland, saltmarsh and more in search of their foraged feasts.

Directed by Nick and produced by Mary Ann as Watercolour Studios, the series is fact-filled, informative, sustainable, mindful, safe! and full of fun. Please check it out on the iPlayer at www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer from March 1st. Let us know what you think – email us at info@watercolourmusic.co.uk and please share this with your friends and family – it's really hard to make an impact with a new series, and we want to make Season 2!

The stunning music soundtrack to 'Rùrachd' comes from the forthcoming album on Watercolour Music, 'Westerfjord' by Colin Campbell. 'Westerfjord' is the old Viking spent family summers on the family croft in Greepe, and the album is a total love affair with the place, people and memories of a very special part of the world, and blending influences as diverse as the School of Scottish Studies and Joe Strummer. Much fun was had by Nick and Colin as they played with various techniques to harness the sounds of Bharcasaig, Greepe and Roag, as well as weaving in elements of Colin's day job as bio-chemistry professor at Edinburgh University. The album is scheduled for release in early summer, to coincide with the TV series, so watch this space for pre-order info coming soon!

BY POPULAR DEMAND – 'SEIRM' IS BACK ON

BBC ALBA

BBC iPlayer from 21st February and BBC ALBA

from 8th March

Mary Ann's long-running music series from Glasgow's legendary Celtic Connections later this month with exclusive live performances and sessions from the cream of the crop at this year's festival.

Recorded in the heart of the city during the festival, Mary Ann chats with music legends and rising stars including American songwriting royalty Loudon Wainwright III, Irish world music legends Kíla, Clydeside Gaelic songstress Ainslie Hamill, Glasgow-based trad powerhouse Ìmar, and this year's STMA Musician of the Year, Ciorstaidh Beaton.

NEW PODCAST, NEW SONGS – 'ÒRAN ÙR' ON BBC Gàidhlig

MONDAYS - 0800 BBC SOUNDS, 520 BBC RADIO NAN Gàidheal FROM MARCH 24th



Gillebrìde MacIlleMhaoil, songwriter and champion of new songwriting in Gaelic, presents a new weekly podcast on BBC Sounds from Monday 24th February, celebrating the best of new songwriting in the Gaelic world in the first quarter of the 21st Century. Whether rooted in tradition, following the legacy of watershed songwriters Runrig or carving out a new Gaelpop path, the breadth of talent and imagination in current songwriting is one of the 'reasons to be cheerful' in the Gaelic world.

Three of Mary Ann's songs feature in the series, and it's hoped there will be a live concert of the songs from the series at the end of this year. The songs are:

Caidir-Ciùil – a co-write with Sileas Sinclair as a love-song to emerging from the pandemic and being able to sing together again, and performed by Binneas.

Eadar-Thìr – the stillness and 'between worlds' of the island of Iona, featured on Mary Ann's debut solo album, 'An Dùn'.

Sith na Coille – another co-write in celebration of creativity with Mary Ann's great friend and mentor, the late, great Aonghas Dubh MacNeacail.



LÀMHAN THAR NA LINNE – ARDGOUR GAELIC EVENTS, FEBRUARY 22nd-24th

INCHREE BARN PROJECT, WATERCOLOUR MUSIC

RAIDÍÓ FÁILTE & SEACHDAIN NA Gàidhlig

(One of!) Lucy Cooke's other multi-tasking incarnations is driving forward a community project across the Corran Narrows in Inchree to return a former traditional Highland barn into a new community and arts space. As part of *Seachdain na Gàidhlig* (World Gaelic Week), she's organised some events in Inchree and Ardgour, reconnecting two communities traditionally linked by the narrows navigated by the Corran Ferry.

Everyone is welcome, at whatever stage of their Gaelic journey, or even just interested in finding out more.

We can also help with transport if required – just email mak@watercolourmusic.co.uk.

Sat 22nd Feb, 2.30pm – 4.30pm – Gàidheil le Chèile - a gathering of folk at **Watercolour Music** from either side of Sruth na Maoile as we welcome visitors from Raidió Fáilte in Belfast. Light bites and some

short presentations from local Gaels on lives, livings, longed-for aspirations and a little music to boot. If you'd like to join us, please email Mary Ann at mak@watercolourmusic.co.uk so we can cater for numbers.

Sun 23rd Feb, 2pm-6pm – Ceòl, Òrain is Beul-Aithris & Cearcall-Còmhraidh –

2pm – at **Ardgour Ales**, a storytelling and song session from Argyll Gael and Outlander Gaelic consultant, Àdhamh Ó Bròin with his daughter Caoimhe Ní Bhròin.

4pm – this will be followed at 4pm at **Ardgour Ales** by a first gathering of an Ardgour Gaelic Conversation Circle, an informal opportunity to use your Gaelic and meet like-minded folk. Pizza and a pint on offer, and some songs, Scrabble and a rare Ardgour Gaelic poetry collection from 1870 all to be enjoyed.

If you'd like to join us on the day, it's absolutely free, but please book via this link so Lucy and Fergus at the brewery have an idea of numbers: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-inchree-barn-project-presents-lamhan-thar-na-linne-ardgour-tickets-1218011668689>

Mon 24th Feb, 11am-12.30pm – Rùrachd le Lucy is Màiri Anna – a bilingual foraging walk with BBC ALBA's newest presentation team! Based around the locality of the Inchree Barn (*Sabhal Innis Ruighe*), Lucy will lead an early spring walk in a part of the world rich with foraging potential, even this early in the year, and Mary Ann will also share the Gaelic names, traditions and knowledge associated with Lucy's finds. Some wild food drinks and snacks are also on offer!

Again, if you'd like to join us, it's absolutely free, but please help Lucy with numbers by booking a place here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-inchree-barn-project-presents-lamhan-thar-na-linne-ardgour-tickets-1218011668689>

CHOIR EVENTS!
Lochaber Choir, Dundee Puirt workshop, & Oban & Fort William Red Book Sessions

Mary Ann is loving her new role as the Musical Director of *Còisir Ghàidhlig Loch Abar* (Lochaber Gaelic Choir) with a fantastic group of singers who make a glorious noise and great company. The choir hold two Monday night sessions a month, and a day workshop on Saturday in the month to allow *Abraich* and other friends from further afield to join us for intensive but great fun rehearsals (currently welcoming folk from Skye, Drumnadrochit to Mull!).

The ability to hold a tune is an advantage! But you don't need to be able to read music or speak or read Gaelic as Mary Ann and Gaelic tutor Carolyn Groat are very supportive and all the music comes with a full suite of learning resources. We welcome new members at any time – please get in touch with Margaret, our secretary at lochaberdistrictgaelicchoir@outlook.com for more details, or email Mary Ann at mak@watercolourmusic.co.uk if you want to chat about it.

Dundee Gaelic Choir – Mary Ann and fellow Choral dynamo Sileas Sinclair will be leading a Puirt-à-Beul-and-more workshop and cèilidh in Dundee on Saturday 15th March. The Dundee choir are incredibly welcoming and their workshops take place in a great venue at the Central Baptist Church, and the girls have really enjoyed their last two visits. You can find more information by messaging them through Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/dundeegaelic>

And a final **Save The Date** alert for another two workshops coming up with Mary Ann & Sileas. Hosted by Sileas's mighty Oban Gaelic Choir, and Còisir Loch Abar, they'll be holding an open workshop and cèilidh in Oban on 10th May and in Lochaber on the 21st June. Keep an eye out for more details!

Mar a thuir sinn, tha gu leòr a' dol tron gheamhradh! We've been busy, and it's all going to get busier!

- Remember!
- 'Rùrachd' on BBC iPlayer from March 1st – check it out!
 - 'Làmhán Thar Na Linne' in Ardgour/Inchree Feb 22nd-24th – book your free places!
 - 'Seirm' on BBC iPlayer 21st Feb and Òran Ùr' podcast on BBC Sounds from 24th Feb!

Taing mhòr airson a h-uile taic a tha sibh a' toirt dhuinn – we couldn't do all this without you, so your support for new music, Gaelic language and creativity, and lively, sustainable Highland community life is always so much appreciated!

Gach dùrachd – Mary Ann & Nick

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