



WATERCOLOUR MUSIC NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2024

Halò, a chàirdean uile agus blàth-dhùrachdan às Àird Ghobhar is sinn air a bhi trang! It's been a bit of a crazy year at Watercolour Music, as we embarked on some new adventures in the studio.

In this letter we're asking you to:

* Follow an upcoming TV series with original new music from Watercolour through social media hashtag **#Rùrachd**

* [Book your tickets](#) for an acid-croft 'bop til you drop' winter wonderland in Ardgour with **Shooglenifty** on December 14th

* Visit our homecoming exhibition in Oban on the Queen of Gaelic Song, **Jessie MacLachlan**

* [Come visit this part of the world](#) for Christmas!

And here's what we've been up to!

RÙRACHD - LE MÀIRI ANNA IS LIUSAIDH - BBC ALBA



Rùrachd – air BBC ALBA – a’ tighinn gun dàil

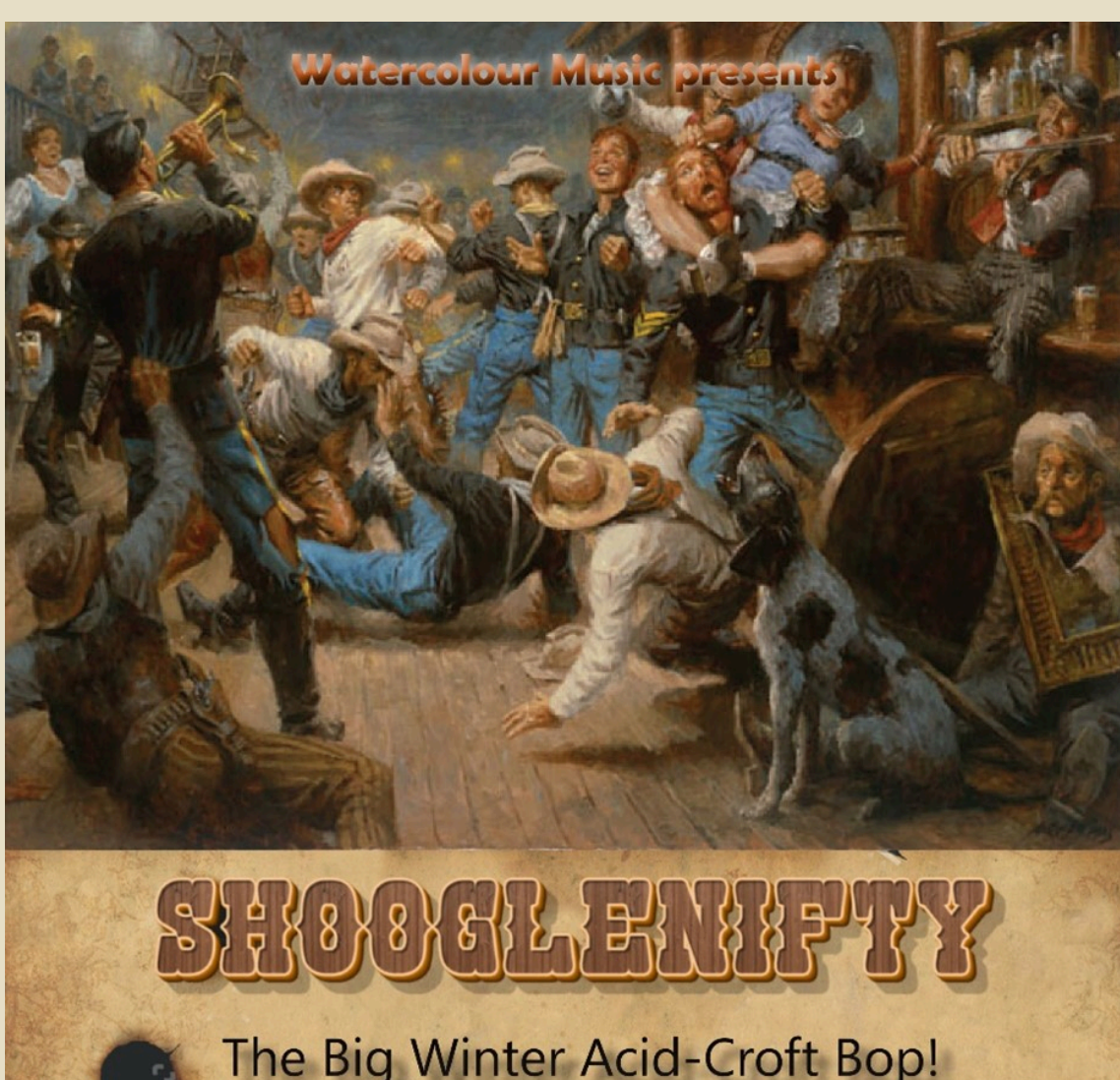
We are so happy to announce that we have spent the past twelve months filming on our first ever indie TV production with a 6-part BBC ALBA commission on wild foraging – 'Rùrachd', destined to drop on iPlayer and BBC ALBA in early 2025.

A couple of years ago, one of the UK's top foragers Lucy Cooke – aka [The Wild Cooke](#) came to live in Watercolour's home village of Ardgour. Lucy and Mary Ann really hit it off, and an idea for working together ended up in the proposal for 'Rùrachd'. They've travelled throughout Scotland in search of nature's bounty, including the islands of Skye, Luing and Tiree, and on the mainland throughout their home turf of Argyll and Lochaber, as well to the beautiful shorelines of East Lothian. They've spent time in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Belfast with botanical history, and they've shared glorious, foraged feasts in Port Appin with the famous Pierhouse Hotel and Sleat's community hub An Crùbh with local environmentalists [Climavore](#).

Five episodes will take the audience through different terrains and seasons as they find treasures from the familiar and favourite to the rare and hard-to-find. Join Mary Ann and Lucy as they go in search of foraged delicacies including chanterelles, seabuckthorn, carageen, samphire, Sweet Cecily and a lichen rarity that makes a great curry. Get your own foraging eye in as they share journeys, stories, recipes served up with plenty of nonsense, as well as paying heed to sustainability and the stuff that will definitely kill you! And be with them in the final episode in the stunning setting of the Isle of Luing in Argyll for the ultimate 'Ròic Rùrachd' in [WildLuing's](#) Observatory.

Follow Lucy, Mary Ann, Watercolour Music and BBC ALBA on socials, using the hashtag **#Rùrachd**

SHOOGLENIFTY RETURN FOR THE BIG WINTER ARDGOUR ACID-CROFT BOP



*"Shooglenifty, self-styled as "Acid Croft", have the musical wanderlust as well as the rocking electric bottom end to summon their audience to a world ceilidh. ****"* – Fiona Shepherd, The Scotsman

ARDGOUR VILLAGE HALL, SAT 14th DECEMBER, 8pm
EARLY BOOKING ADVISED! Tickets: [Eventbrite](#) or in person at [Ardgour Ales](#)

With family connections on either side of Loch Linnhe and fast approaching their 35th year in 2025, global music-minded local heroes Shooglenifty return for their third winter 'bop til you drop' night of music, Gaelic song and much, much dancing in Ardgour's characterful village hall. Watercolour Music has been behind the resurgence of live

music in the village, promoting top names including Dàimh, Heisk, Blue Rose Code, Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas, Jamie MacDougall and many more, but the December Shooglenifty gigs have been an annual and hugely popular date since the start.

Shooglenifty was formed in 1990 by musicians from the Scottish Highlands, Orkney and Edinburgh. Its bright spark was the idea of fusing traditional and traditional-sounding melodies with the beats and basslines of a mixed bag of more contemporary influences. As happy playing a small highland village hall as they are on an outdoor festival stage playing to tens of thousands, the Shoogles (as they're known to their fans) have promoted Scottish music all over the world for three decades.

In a career spanning many firsts – the first band to incite a stage invasion at the Sydney Opera House, the first UK band to play in Cuba, and the first Scots to perform in the Borneo Rainforest – Shooglenifty blazed a trail that many other top Scottish traditional bands have followed. But they are still the original and best. They will get you on your feet with their electric new tunes and a full-on set of old favourites.

(Please note that this is a standing - well, dancing - gig, but we will provide seating round the edge of the hall for those who want or need! There is also a bar on night with hot pies available. No under-16s without an accompanying adult.)



**COLIN CAMPBELL –
'WESTERFJORD' NEW ALBUM
ON WATERCOLOUR MUSIC
COMING SPRING 2025**

This year has also been a year of outside adventures with Mary Ann's cousin, Professor Colin Campbell, whose alter ego from his high-powered bio-medics role at the University of Edinburgh draws on the musical genes of his father Calum John, and his auntie Kenna, Mary Ann's mum.

What started for Colin as a lockdown collection of tunes and songs inspired by Loch Bracadale in Skye, where the Greepe Campbells' croft was situated has now grown into a fully fledged and adventurous album combining Colin's worlds of arts and science. Sounds from the album will also form the soundtrack of the 'Rùrachd' series on BBC ALBA.

Nick, Colin and Mary Ann spent time in Skye harnessing the sounds of nature in and around the loch, from playing horn on discarded pipe on the Mol Mòr beach and hydrophonic recording out on the water to cycling and running the loch perimeter from Struan to MacLeod's Maidens, the data has been sonified and incorporated into the quirky, unique lo-fi trad sounds of Colin's imagination.

The final overdubs are going down shortly and the album release is due in the Spring of 2025. 'Westerfjord' is generously supported by Creative Scotland, without whom we could not have realised Colin's musical ambitions and we thank them at what is an extremely difficult time for funding in the arts in Scotland.

(PS Colin cycled, we drove...)



**JESSIE MACLACHLAN –
HOMECOMING EXHIBITION,
MÒD NÀISEANTA AN ÒBAIN
2024**

A five-year project to bring Gaeldom's first global superstar back into public attention culminated last month in an exhibition on the story of Oban's own [Jessie MacLachlan](#). An enterprising and determined young woman blessed with a beautiful voice who caught the attention and approval of Queen Victoria, Jessie toured the world, bringing Scottish and Gaelic songs to a massive fan-base of emigré Scots.

Hers was the first voice ever to be recorded in Gaelic in 1899, and she was invited to headline the very first Mòd in Oban in 1892. Her fame dwindled following her untimely death at the peak of her powers during the Great War, and she was buried in Glasgow's imposing Cathcart Garden Cemetery, where a memorial was erected by her husband, accompanist and constant companion Robert Buchanan.

This 11ft tall, elegantly beautiful Celtic cross likewise fell into disrepair, remaining in pieces and toppled to the ground until Mary Ann and an enterprising group of enthusiasts set about establishing a fundraiser to restore the stone.

Five years, a memorial restoration and rededication, one TV documentary and a national collection of online education resources later, the Royal National Mòd commissioned an exhibition at [Calmac's](#) main Oban terminal celebrating Jessie's life and achievements, curated by Mary Ann, with Dr Priscilla Scott and Marij van Helmond, and designed at Watercolour by Nick. For everyone involved in the Jessie MacLachlan Project, the exhibition really represented a homecoming for a singer who never forgot her roots.

The ephemera and memorabilia that accompanied the exhibition are now being returned to Jessie's closest living relatives, but the beautiful bilingual exhibition boards, telling Jessie's story, will stay in place on the upper floor of the terminal as part of the legacy of one of the most successful national mòds in recent memory.



CHRISTMAS IN ARDGOUR!

We've had a great season with our very popular [Watercolour Cottage](#), and although New Year week is booked up, there's still availability for a Christmas booking for 4-7 nights during the week beginning 21st December, and the possibility to extend into the run-up to the Christmas week. Please email Mary Ann at mak@watercolourmusic.co.uk for offline direct booking prices.

STAY IN TOUCH!

Please give us a shout on info@watercolourmusic.co.uk for more information on any of the above. Think spooties and sloes, dance with

Shooglehifty, look out for the Viking longboats nestling in the fjords of Skye and have Santa visit you in Ardgour! Just maybe not all at once. Blàth dhùrachdan bho Mary Ann & Nick!



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