

## JoJo Gnome and Jo Hall visit Tiree!



Writer and producer of JoJo Gnome's Story Podcast, Jo Hall, visited Tiree Primary to do a story workshop based around maths and numbers for Primary 1. The children enjoyed JoJo Gnome number stories, met Ella the Elf who is a whizz at maths and did some dancing with Robyn the Counting Robot. The children also worked with Jo on their own counting stories, in both English and Gaelic. The visit to Tiree is part of a school's tour Jo is doing around Scotland based around STEM stories and in particular, Maths and numbers. The tour has been made possible by Creative Scotland funding. The story the children enjoyed at the workshop 'JoJo Gnome's Maths Challenge' is available to view online at [www.jojognome.com](http://www.jojognome.com).

### **When did you first realize you wanted to be a writer?**

I've always written things since I was small, making up stories and poems. However, I never thought it would be my job. I worked for years at the BBC and part of my job became writing scripts. So I've written all kinds of things. I've written online games, radio drama ...lots of things. As a freelance writer, I also wrote scripts for CBeebies. I was one of the writers on Balamory, Me Too, Nina & The Neurons and also more recently wrote a script for Molly & Mack.

### **What is your writing process like?**

I write best to a deadline ...given or self-imposed. My most productive time is in the morning ...so I tend to write or draw then. However the creative part of my process also involves a good bit of walking. I walk and mull over what I have written or I am about to write ... when I'm not expecting it, is when the best ideas rise to the surface.

The character I write about now is JoJo Gnome. He's full of fun and adventures for younger children. I write and produce JoJo Gnome's Story Podcast. It's a free to use audio podcast for ages 3-6 and is filled with stories about JoJo Gnome, but also encourages younger children to make up their own stories ...let's face it - children always have the best ideas. If I am working on a JoJo Gnome book, that takes longer. The story always come first and then the illustrations, which I draw digitally, using my iPad. I try to write or draw most days and of course, I have notebooks where I write down ideas or things that might be useful for future stories or projects.

### **How many hours a day do you write on JoJo Gnome or work on the podcast?**

I spend a lot of time thinking about JoJo Gnome and planning the projects around him. The podcast require quite a bit of time writing, recording, sorting out the sound effects and stings. A podcast will take about 3 days to put together, not including planning time. I am so lucky to work with a fantastic musician called Al Fleming who does my JoJo Gnome music... I think he might have distant Tiree connections too, through his grandmother. The current STEAM story project I'm working on involves lots of schools making films with me so I have been spending lots of time editing those films together. The children in Primary 1 at Tiree Primary School made not one but two films with me, one in English and the other in Gaelic. The children were amazing.

### **Do you have a connection to Tiree? What do you love about Tiree?**

My grandmother's family originally came from the East End of the island, my middle names are Ishbel McLeod...named for her. I have been visiting the island since I was a baby. However most of my early memories come from Balemartine where my uncle and aunt, Donald and Molly Farquhar, had a house. I have so many happy memories of playing on the beach and machair. I hadn't visited the island for years until I made a film with BBC Scotland's LAB some years ago with young (and some not so young) people on Tiree. Since then, I have been back regularly with my husband to the island, walking the beaches in all weathers and enjoying the peace. My mother, Rhoda Hall, loved the beach at Gott Bay. I too love walking across that beach in any weather... a special place on a magical island.