

# **Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh**

**le Ruairidh MacIlleathain**

**Fàilte romhaibh gu Litir 50!**

**Welcome to Litir 50!**

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at [rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk)\**

Tha mòran a’ deanamh gàirdeachas gun do cheannaich Urras Nàiseanta na h-Alba Eilean Mhìughlaigh o chionn ghoirid. Mura h-eil sibh ro eòlach air na h-eileanan a-muigh, tha Mìughlaigh gu deas air Barraigh. ‘S e *Mingulay* a th’ air ann am Beurla. ’S ann le buidheann de chroitèaran a bha an t-eilean, agus eileanan eile faisg air, agus chaidh an reic air fad don Urras Nàiseanta.

Uill, tha sin glè mhath gu ìre. Chan eil teagamh nach dean an t-Urras obair mhath ann a bhith a’ glèidheadh nan eun-mara a tha pailt ann, agus ann a bhith a’ coimhead as dèidh àrainneachd nàdarrach an eilein. Agus ’s dòcha gun dean iad obair air na tobhtaichean cuideachd, mar a rinn iad ann an Hiort. Tuigidh sibh nach eil duine a’ fuireach ann am Mìughlaigh an-diugh. Dh’fhàg an fheadhainn mu dheireadh ann an naoi ceud deug ’s a dhà-dheug (1912).

Ach tha aon phàirt de dhìleab Mhìughlaigh nach urrainn don Urras Nàiseanta a bheòthachadh as ùr: an cànan agus an cultar a bha na lùib. Anns an naoidheamh linn deug, bha Mìughlaigh na àite fìor mhath airson aithris-sgeulachdan. Agus ’s e an duine a b’ fheàrr a bh’ anns an eilean, co-dhiù timcheall meadhan an linn, fear Ruairidh MacNèill, neo Ruairidh Dhòmhnail.

Bidh sibh eòlach, tha mi ’n dòchas, air an t-sreath leabhraichean le Iain Og Ile, John Francis Campbell, air a bheil *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*. Bha fear eile às Ile, Eachann MacIlleathain, am measg an fheadhainn a chruinnich beul-aithris dha, agus fhuair e grunn sgeulachdan bho Ruairidh MacNèill ann am Mìughlaigh.

Seo beagan de na sgrìobh MacIlleathain mu dheidhinn an sgeulaiche: Bidh e a’ dol timcheall ceannruisgte is casruisgte agus thathar ag ràdh nach do chuir e brògan air bho chionn leth-cheud bliadhna. Bidh e ag innse a chuid sgeulachdan le brìgh anabarrach... cleachdaidh e dàil is anail is àrdachadh is ìsleachadh a ghuth’ airson faireachdainn a libhrigeadh mar gu robh e air trèanadh fhaighinn bho na h-actairean a b’ fheàrr ri linn...

Chuir Iain Og Ile e fhèin ùine seachad ann an Mìughlaigh cuide ri Alasdair MacIlleMhìcheil, a tha ainmeil airson cruinneachadh eile de bheul-aithris na Gàidhlig, *Carmina Gadelica*. Bha iad glaiste anns an eilean le stoirm ann an ochd ceud deug trì fichead ’s a h-aon-deug (1871), agus tha fhios gu robh cothrom gu leòr aca còmhraidh ri Ruairidh MacNèill.

Seo beagan de na sgrìobh MacIlleMhìcheil mu dheidhinn bliadhnaichean as dèidh làimh: Bha MacNèill an uairsin ceithir fichead bliadhna ‘s a dhà-dheug (92). Cha robh e air a bhith tinn a-riamh, cha robh brògan air a bhith air a chasan a-riamh, agus cha robh e air tì a ghabhail a-riamh... Na òige bha e na eunadair air leth, a’ gluasad gu sgiobalta air creagan ochd ceud troigh os cionn na mara, far a chuireadh an t-eagal dàil air gobhar neo cat...

Cha do rugadh MacNèill ann am Miùghlaigh, ge-tà. Bhuineadh e do Bharraigh, ach chaidh e fhèin is a theaghlach gu ruige Mhiùghlaigh ann an ochd ceud deug, ’s còig ar fhichead (1825) nuair a chaidh am fuadachadh. Bha e cliùiteach am measg nan eileanach airson cho math ’s a bha e air sgeulachdan aithris. ’S dòcha, ge-tà, gu robh aon duine anns an eilean nach robh cho measail sin air – an greusaiche!

Ged a bha e a’ fuireach ann an eilean beag iomallach, bhuineadh na sgeulachdan aige do dhualchas farsaing na Gaidhealtachd. Bha aon tè aige air a bheil feadhainn eòlach an-diugh fhathast – Sgeulachd a’ Ghille Charaich, Mac na Bantraich. Bheireadh i còrr is leth-uair a thìde ri h-aithris air fad. Ach bheir sinn sùil air criomag aiste an ath sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** na h-eileanan a-muigh: *the Outer Isles (colloquial)*; croitearan: *crofters*; a’ glèidheadh: *conserving*; eun-mara: *seabird*; pailt: *plentiful*; tobhtaichean: *ruined houses*; Hiort: *St Kilda*; dileab: *legacy*; aithris-sgeulachdan: *telling of (orally-transmitted) stories*; ceannruisgte: *bareheaded*; casruisgte: *barefooted*; ri linn: *in his day*; eunadair: *hunter of birds, wildfowler*; cliùiteach: *renowned*; greusaiche: *shoemaker*; iomallach: *remote, on the edge*;

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** tha sin glè mhath gu ìre: *that’s OK as far as it goes*; ann a bhith a’ coimhead as dèidh àrainneachd nàdarach an eilein: *in caring for the island’s natural environment (note that a’ coimhead as dèidh is English phraseology, equivalent to “looking after” but it is so common in modern Gaelic that we have to accept as part of today’s language)*; nach urrainn do X a bheòthachadh as ùr: *that X cannot bring back to life*; bha X am measg an fheadhainn a chruinnich beul-aithris dha: *X was among those who collected oral tradition for him (note that grammatically it should am measg nam feadhna as feadhainn is feminine, but that is not what people say)*; bidh e ag innse a chuid sgeulachdan le brìgh anabarrach: *he tells (future verbal form for habitual actions) his stories with exceptional effect*; cleachdaidh e dàil is anail is àrdachadh is ìsleachadh a ghuth’ airson faireachdainn a libhrigeadh: *he uses delay and breath and a raising and lowering of his voice to deliver expression*; bha iad glaiste anns an eilean le stoirm: *they were stormbound on the island*; chaidh X gu ruige Mhiùghlaigh: *X went to Mingulay*; bhuineadh X do dhualchas farsaing na Gaidhealtachd: *X belonged to the broad heritage of the Gaidhealtachd*; Sgeulachd a’ Ghille Charaich, Mac na Bantraich: *the Story of the Shifty Lad, the Widow’s Son*; bheireadh e còrr is leth-uair a thìde ri h-aithris air fad: *it would take more than half-an-hour to tell in its entirety*; bheir sinn sùil air criomag aiste: *we will take a look at a little bit of (from) it (sgeulachd is feminine)*.

**Puing ghràmair na seachdaine:** chaidh an reic air fad: *they were all sold. In Litir 19 (24.09.99), we looked at the use of the verb rach, “go” with a verbal noun to produce a passive. This is an example of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, as is chaidh am fuadachadh (they were cleared). Note that the verbal noun remains unlenited, even when it starts with a lenitable consonant. Thus we say chaidh an ceannach (they were bought), chaidh an togail (they were built). But here is an important point: The verbal noun is lenited if the subject of the clause is a noun, rather than a (hidden) pronoun. So we say chaidh na h-uinneagan a bhriseadh an-dè (the windows were broken yesterday) but seall air na h-uinneagan; chaidh am briseadh an-dè (look at the windows; they were broken yesterday).*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** tha mòran a’ deanamh gàirdeachas: *many are expressing pleasure, rejoicing.*

\* “*Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh*” is funded by Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig