

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh **le Ruairidh MacIlleathain**

*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 roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk **

'S e àite gu math iomallach a th' ann an Hiort. Bha na daoine a bha a' fuireach ann o shean, na Hiortaich, air an cuairteachadh le cunnart. Cunnart aig muir nuair a bha iad a' falbh a Bhoraraigh neo Sòdhaigh neo Na Hearadh. Agus cunnart air na bearraidhean nuair a bha iad a' sreap orra, agus iad an tòir air eòin neo uighean.

Ach gu h-annasach, airson àite a bha cho fad' air falbh on a h-uile h-àite eile, 's dòcha gur ann o dhaoine a thàinig an cunnart a bu mhotha. Bho àm gu àm thigeadh daoine don eilean le droch rùn. Mar sin, nuair a thigeadh bàta don eilean, 's ann tric a bhiodh an sluagh a' teicheadh bhon dachannan.

Bha na Hiortaich gu h-àraidh teagmhach mu dhaoine bhon taobh a-muigh as dèidh sgrìos a rinn Fearchar Mòr agus an Dùgan orra. A rèir beul-aithris, b' iad sin dithis Leòdhasach a chaidh a dh'fhuireach ann an Hiort o chionn fhada. Nuair a bha iad ann, shreap iad gu mullach Oiseabhail, cnoc àrd faisg air a' bhaile. Thill iad nan deann, agus iad ag èigheachd gu robh cabhlach Sasannach a' tighinn dhan ionnsaigh.

Chaidh na h-eileanaich am falach ann an seipeil, ach ghlais Fearchar Mòr is an Dùgan a-staigh iad, agus chuir iad teine ris an tughadh. Fhuair a h-uile duine bàs. Gu fortanach, ge-tà, bha aona chailleach a-muigh anns a' Ghleann Mhòr, air taobh thall an eilein, a' buachailleachd chruidh. Chaidh i am falach ann an uamh air falbh on dithis shlaoightearan airson beagan mhìosan, ga cumail fhèin beò air uighean is eòin, gus an tàinig bàta bho na h-eileanan siar as t-samhradh. An uairsin thàinig i a-mach, dh'innis i na thachair, agus chaidh ceartas a dhèanamh as leth muinntir Hiort.

Bha e na chleachdadh do na h-eileanaich as dèidh sin a dhol am falach, chan ann san eaglais, ach air falbh bhon bhaile, nan tigeadh bàta nach b' aithne dhaibh don eilean. Air sgàth sin, dh'fhàgadh boireannach òg brèagha am bròn. B' ise Mòr Bhàn agus bha i beò tràth anns an naoidheamh linn deug.

Bha na boireannaich ann an Hiort air leth brèagha, a rèir choltais. Agus bha Mòr na bu bhrèagha na càch. Thadhail duin-uasal à Ile air an eilean agus ghabh e gaol air Mòr. Cha robh e anns an eilean fada, ach bha e fada gu leòr dha airson co-dhùnadh gu robh e airson am boireannach eireachdail sin a phòsadh. Gheall e dhi gun tilleadh e is gun toireadh e a dh'Ile i.

Uill, mar a gheall e, 's ann a rinn e. Thill e a Hiort, ach ann am bàta le gunnaichean oirre agus le sgioba de dh'fhir thapaidh na chois. Nuair a chunnaic na Hiortaich an soitheach a' tighinn, cho-dhùin iad gum biodh iad ann an cunnart nam fanadh iad anns a' bhaile. Theich iad agus chaidh iad am falach air na bearraidhean is am measg nan creag.

Chaidh an t-Ileach tron bhaile ach bha na taighean fuar agus falamh. Chaidh e air feadh an eilein ach cha robh sgeul air muinntir an àite. Mu dheireadh, dh'fhalbh iad. Nuair a thàinig an sluagh a-mach o na h-àiteachan far an robh iad am falach, dh'aithnich Mòr Bhàn an suaicheantas a bh' air crann an t-soithich, a bha a-nise aig muir. Suaicheantas a leannain. Thuig i sa mhionaid gu robh i air a leannan a chall agus nach fhaigheadh i air ais e gu bràth.

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Faclan na seachdainne: iomallach: *remote*; Hiort: *St Kilda*; Sòdhaigh: *Soay*; Na Hearadh: *Harris*; bearraidhean: *cliffs*; dachannan: *homes*; cabhlach: *fleet of ships*; ghlais: *locked*; uamh: *cave*; earachdail: *beautiful, handsome*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: 's dòcha gur ann o dhaoine a thàinig an cunnart a bu mhotha: *perhaps the greatest danger came from people*; thigeadh daoine don eilean le droch rùn: *people of evil intent would come to the island*; thill iad nan deann: *they returned at great speed*; chaidh X am falach ann an seipeil: *X hid in a chapel*; chuir iad teine ris an tughadh: *they set the thatch alight*; a' buachailleachd chruidh: *herding cattle*; ga cumail fhèin beò air uighean is eòin: *keeping herself alive on eggs and birds*; chaidh ceartas a dhèanamh as leth muinntir Hiort: *justice was done on behalf of the people of St Kilda*; dh'fhàgadh boireannach òg brèagha am bròn: *a beautiful young woman was left in mourning*; na bu bhrèagha na càch: *more beautiful than the others*; thadhail duin-uasal à Ile air an eilean: *a gentleman from Islay visited the island*; le sgioba de dh'fhir thapaidh na chois: *with a team of bold men along with him*; dh'aithnich Mòr Bhàn an suaicheantas a bh' air crann an t-soithich: *Fair Marion recognised the distinguishing standard that was on the vessel's mast*; thuig i sa mhionaid gu robh i air a leannan a chall: *she understood immediately that she had lost her sweetheart*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdainne: b' iad sin dithis Leòdhasach a chaidh a dh'fhuireach ann an Hiort o chionn fhada: *they were two Lewismen who went to live on St Kilda a long time ago. Do you notice that the noun associated with dithis is in the genitive plural case which, in the case of Leòdhasach (nominative plural Leòdhasaich) reverts to the same form as the nominative singular? This is because dithis is itself a noun, a special type of numerical noun (called an "ainmear cunntaidh" in Gaelic) and can stand on its own. eg Chunnaic mi dithis (I saw two people). But where it qualifies a second noun, that second noun is in the genitive, because we are saying "two of ..." Thus we also get in the Litir air falbh on dithis shlaoightearan (away from the two rogues) with the word slaoightear in its genitive plural form, lenited as it does not have an article. Similarly, we would get dithis fhear (two men) and dithis bhàrd (two poets). The same rules apply for all the numerical nouns from dithis (2) to deichnear (10) eg triùir chroittearan (3 crofters); còignear pheathraichean (5 sisters); seachdnar mhac (7 sons).*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne: Bha e na chleachdadh do na h-eileanaich: *it was the custom of the islanders*.

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