

## *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](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \**

Dhaibhsan aig a bheil ùidh ann an dualchas nan Gaidheal agus ann am fiolmaichean, bha a’ bhliadhna naoi ceud deug, trithead ’s a ceithir (1934) gu math ainmeil. Chan e dìreach gu bheil a’ bhliadhna sin ceangailte ri aon fiolm a thog aire an t-saoghail mhòir do na Gaidheil, ach ri dà fiolm. Bha fear dhiubh air a dhèanamh ann an coimhearsnachd Ghaidhealach ann an Alba, agus fear eile anns an aon seòrsa de choimhearsnachd ann an Eirinn.

Tha cuimhn’ a’ m fhathast air a’ chiad turas a chunnaic mi *Man of Aran*, fiolm a rinneadh anns na h-Eileanan Arainneach air taobh siar na h-Eireann, agus ’s e am pàirt as motha a tha a’ fuireach nam chuimhne – far a bheil gille ag iasgach bho na creagan mòra ann an Inis Mór, agus e na shuidhe na ceudan troighean os cionn na mara.

Bha rudeigin ann mu dheidhinn a fiolm a ghlac m’ aire gu mòr, agus chuir mi roimhe dhol do na h-eileanan sin uair neo uaireigin. Tha mi air a bhith ann grunn tursan a-nise, anns a h-uile gin de na trì eileanan, agus ’s e àiteachan air leth a th’ annta uile. Agus ’s i Gaeilge cànan nan eileanach chun an là an-diugh.

’S e fear Raibeart Flathartaigh, a rugadh anns na Stàitean Aonaichte, a rinn *Man of Aran*, còrr is deich bliadhna as dèidh dha fiolm ainmeil a dhèanamh anns an Arctaic, air an robh *Nanook of the North*. Chuir e seachad dà bhliadhna ann an Inis Mór agus, ged a bha ùidh aige ann an dòigh-beatha nan eileanach, cha robh e airson a bhith cus ro fhaisg’ air a sin e fhèin. Thug e còcaire *cordon bleu* leis, agus thuirt fear de mhuinntir an àite mu dheidhinn, “tha barrachd air a thilgeil a-mach às an taigh aige ... na bheireadh biadh don dàrna cuid de bhailtean an eilein...”

Dh’fhosgail *Man of Aran* ann an Lunnainn anns a’ Ghiblean naoi ceud deug, trithead ’s a ceithir (1934), agus tha e coltach gun tug am fiolm buaidh air fear aig an robh ùidh mhòr ann an dòigh-beatha nan Eilean Siar, agus a bha an sàs ann an rannsachadh sgoilearach air taighean dubha air a’ Ghaidhealtachd Albannaich. Began seachdainean as dèidh do *Man of Aran* nochdadh, bha Werner Kissling ann an sgoth far cladach an iar na h-Alba, air a shlighe a dh’Eirisgeidh.

Bha Kissling na bhall de dh’uaislean na Gearmailt, ach thàinig e a Bhreatainn agus bha e an sàs ann an rannsachadh air seann chultaran as leth Oilthigh Chambridge. Cha robh e ann an Eirisgeidh cho fada ’s a bha Flathartaigh ann an Inis Mór – nas lugha na dà mhìos – agus cha robh am fiolm aige, *A Poem of Remote Lives*, cho mòr neo cho ainmeil ri *Man of Aran*.

Ach sheall e dòigh-beatha muinntir Eirisgeidh gu math, agus tha e am measg nan clàran as prìseil' a th' againn de sheann bheatha nan Gaidheal ann an Alba – mus robh an dealan ann, neo cus dhen Bheurla air bilean an t-sluaigh. Nochd *A Poem of Remote Lives* ann an Lunnainn anns a' Ghiblean naoi ceud deug, trithead 's a còig (1935), cha mhòr bliadhna chun an là bho bha *Man of Aran* air a chur air bhog.

Agus tha smuain agam. Nach biodh e math an dà fiolm a chur air chuairt còmhla air Gaidhealtachd na h-Eireann is Gaidhealtachd na h-Alba, cuide ri seinneadairean is luchd-ciùil às gach àite, mar chomharra air an dlùth-cheangal eadar an dà dhùthaich, a th' ann an-diugh agus a bh' ann ri linn Werner Kissling – agus airson co-dhiù mìle gu leth bliadhna mus robh guth air a' chamara.

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**Faclan na seachdainne:** na h-Eileanan Arainneach: *the Aran Islands*; an Giblean: *April*; sgoth: *yacht*; Eirisgeidh: *Eriskay*; an dealan: *electricity*.

**Abairtean na seachdainne:** dhaibhsan aig a bheil ùidh: *to those who are interested*; 's e am pàirt as motha a tha a' fuireach nam chuimhne: *the part which most remains in my memory*; far a bheil gille ag iasgach bho na creagan mòra: *where a lad is fishing from the cliffs*; a ghlac m' aire gu mòr: *which strongly caught my attention*; chuir mi roimhe dhol ann uair neo uaireigin: *I decided to go there someday*; anns a h-uile gin de na trì eileanan: *in every one of the 3 islands*; chun an là an-diugh: *to the present day*; cha robh e airson a bhith cus ro fhaisg air a sin e fhèin: *he didn't want to be too close to that himself*; na bheireadh biadh don dàrna cuid de bhailtean an eilein: *than would give food to half of the island's villages*; gun tug am fiolm buaidh air X: *that the film had an effect on X*; a bha an sàs ann an rannsachadh sgoilearach air taighean dubha: *who was engaged in scholarly research on black houses*; bha X na bhall de dh'uaislean na Gearmailt: *X was a member of the German aristocracy*; am measg nan clàran as prìseile a th' againn: *among the most valuable records we have*; bho bha X air a chur air bhog: *from the launch of X*; mus robh guth air a' chamara: *before the camera existed*.

**Puing ghràmair na seachdainne:** ceangailte ri aon fiolm a thog aire an t-saoghail mhòir: *linked to one film which attracted the world's attention*. Note that the word *fiolm* (sometimes spelled *film*), which obviously derives from the English, is not inflected as one might expect here. For example, we would say 's e sin an aon fhear a bh' agam an-dè (that is the same one as I had yesterday), with *fhear* lenited to *fhear* because of the presence of *aon*. Similarly, we would say b'e sin an aon chaibideil (that was the same chapter), with *caibideil* lenited. In theory, we should do the same to *fiolm* and say *aon fhiolm*, but something stops most Gaelic speakers from leniting the word – mainly because it is a recent addition to the language and does not “bed down” comfortably within the grammatical rules. Don't worry about such a disinclination to inflect – it is quite natural and it occurs, to a greater or lesser degree, with some other recent loan words, eg *fòn* (*phone*) and *faidhle* (*file*). It also occurs with some non-traditional given names which do not comfortably lenite when addressing the person eg *Sigmund*, *Sandra*, *Debbie*. Note, however, with respect to lenition with “aon”, that we say an aon duine (*the same man*) or an aon taigh (*the same house*) or an aon suidheachadh (*the same situation*), because of the refusal of “d” or “t” or “s” sounds to lenite comfortably following an “n”.

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** na ceudan troighean os cionn na mara: *hundreds of feet above the sea* (note the use of the definite article in Gaelic).

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