

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 409. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 105 corresponds to Litir 409.

An ath-mhìos bidh deich bliadhna air a dhol seachad bho cheannaich muinntir Eige an t-eilean aca fhèin. Anns an Ògmhios naoi ceud deug, naochad 's a seachd (1997), chaidh an naidheachd air feadh na rìoghachd – is, gu dearbh, air feadh an t-saoghail, gur ann le Urras Eige a bha an t-eilean mu dheireadh thall. Bha sin às dèidh bhliadhnaichean nuair a bha e fo uachdarain phrìobhaideach – agus mòran anns an eilean gu math mì-thoilichte.

Tha e inntinneach a bhith a' coimhead air ais air na làithean ud. Nach eil an dà latha air tighinn air Alba bhon uair sin?! Tha oighreachdan eileanach – agus eileanan gu lèir – air a dhol fo smachd nan daoine – ann an Giogha, Na Hearadh, Leòdhas agus Uibhist. Ach, nuair a bha muinntir Eige a' feuchainn ris an oighreachd aca a ghabhail thairis cha robh ach aon eisimpleir eile ann – Asainte.

Bha mi ann an Asainte mar fhear-naidheachd air an oidhche a fhuair na daoine smachd air an fhearann aca. Bidh cuimhne agam air gu sìorraidh. Bha muinntir an àite **cho sona ri crodh an taoibh siar**, mar a chanas na Leòdhasaich. Bha adhbhar aca. Agus bha mòran air feadh Alba a' dèanamh gàirdeachas cuideachd. Ach, ann an Eige, cha robh cùisean cho dòchasach.

Thadhail mi air Eige, a-rithist mar neach-naidheachd, nuair a chaidh Urras Eige a thoirt seachad do mhuinntir an eilein. Bha an t-Urras air a chur air dòigh roimhe le buidheann bheag, leis an amas an t-eilean a cheannach don choimhearsnachd. Chaidh an t-Urras a thoirt seachad don choimhearsnachd air latha samhraidh ann an naoi ceud deug, naochad 's a ceithir (1994). Rinn mi agallamhan airson Radio nan Gàidheal le cuid de Ghàidheil an eilein. Cha robh fada agam ri dhol airson an lorg. Bha iad uile air a' chidhe, mar a bha cuid mhath de shluagh an eilein.

Ach bha mi ann cuideachd as leth Radio Alba – seirbheis rèidio Bheurla a' BhBC. Agus le bonaid na Beurla orm, bha cothrom agam dhol a bhruidhinn ri fear nach robh air a' chidhe, ach a bh' aig teis-meadhan a' ghnòthaich. B' esan Keith Schellenberg, uachdaran an eilein. Choisich mi suas am bruthach don taigh mhòr.

Bha Mgr Schellenberg ann, **cuide ri a nighinn**, agus cha b' urrainn dha a bhith na bu shnoige. Bha e beòthail, èibhinn is laghach. Cha robh e idir coltach ris an dealbh a rinn na meadhanan Albannach dheth. Uill, bha sin mus tug mi am maicreafòn a-mach.

Cho luath 's a thòisich mi air ceistean a chur air mu mhiann na coimhearsnachd an oighreachd a cheannach dhaibh fhèin, dh'atharraich a shunnd gu tur. Dh'fhàs e feargach, a' cur sìos air “comannaich” is “comannachas”. Bha droch bheachd aige air uachdranachd phoblach air fearann na Gàidhealtachd, agus rinn e sin follaiseach. Bha meas aige air na daoine a bhuineadh do dh'Eige bho thùs. Ach cha robh deagh bheachd aige air cuid dhen fheadhainn a

bh' air a dhol a dh'fhuireach ann anns na beagan bhliadhnaichean roimhe. Ach, air a' chidhe, cha robh an sgaradh sin ann am follais. Bha Gàidheal is Gall a' tarraing air an aon ràmh. Bha iad ag iarraidh an t-eilean a cheannach dhaibh fhèin.

Shaoil mi nach b' fhada gus am falbhadh Keith Schellenberg, a' fàgail an eilein ann an làmhan nan eileanach. Ach chan ann mar sin a thachair e. An ath-sheachdain, bidh mi a' toirt sùil air ais air fear ris an canadh iad "Maruma". A bheil cuimhne agaibh air?

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Faclan na Litreach: An t-Ògmhios: *June*; Asainte: *Assynt*; uachdranachd: *sovereignty, landlordism*.

Abairtean na Litreach: bho cheannaich muinntir Eige an t-eilean aca fhèin: *since the people of Eigg bought their own island*; gur ann le Urras Eige a bha an t-eilean mu dheireadh thall: *that the Isle of Eigg Trust finally owned the island*; fo uachdarain phrìobhaideach: *under [the control of] private landlords*; nach eil an dà latha air tighinn air Alba bhon uair sin?: *hasn't Scotland undergone an enormous change since then?*; oighreachdan eileanach: *island estates*; Giogha, Na Hearadh, Leòdhas agus Uibhist: *Gigha, Harris, Lewis and Uist*; an oidhche a fhuair na daoine smachd air an fhearann aca: *the night the people took control of their land*; bidh cuimhne agam air gu sìorraidh: *I'll remember it forever*; bha adhbhar aca: *they had a [good] reason*; a' dèanamh gàirdeachas: *expressing happiness*; bha an t-Urras air a chur air dòigh roimhe: *the Trust was set up before*; leis an amas an t-eilean a cheannach don choimhearsnachd: *with the aim of buying the island for the community*; cha robh fada agam ri dhol airson an lorg: *I didn't have far to go to find them*; a bh' aig teis-meadhan a' ghnòthaich: *who was at the epicentre of the matter*; suas am bruthach don taigh mhòr: *up the slope to the big [estate] house*; cha b' urrainn dha a bhith na bu shnoige: *he couldn't have been nicer*; beòthail, èibhinn is laghach: *lively, funny and nice*; mus tug mi am maicreafòn a-mach: *before I brought the microphone out*; mu mhiann na coimhearsnachd: *about the desire of the community*; dh'atharraich a shunnd gu tur: *his mood changed completely*; a' cur sìos air "comannaich" is "comannachas": *expressing disapproval of "communists" and "communism"*; na daoine a bhuineadh do dh'Eige bho thùs: *the people who originally belonged to Eigg*; a bh' air a dhol a dh'fhuireach ann anns na beagan bhliadhnaichean roimhe: *who had gone to live there in the previous few years*; a' tarraing air an aon ràmh: *in agreement [pulling on the same oar]*; fear ris an canadh iad X: *a man whom they would call X*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **cuide ri a nighinn:** *along with his daughter*. Cuide ri is a prepositional phrase meaning the same as còmhla ri. Although it looks like a compound preposition which would govern a noun in the genitive, the "ri" (added to cuide) means it actually only works like a simple preposition and therefore takes the dative. Nighean is slenderised (in traditional usage) because it is a definite feminine noun in the dative singular. But note the special slenderisation. Not only does the final vowel slenderise, but the final consonant changes also – from a single n to a double n. This reflects the change in pronunciation – ask your teacher or a fluent speaker to demonstrate it.

Samhla na Litreach: **cho sona ri crodh an taoibh siar:** *as happy as west side cows (a Lewis expression) – ie extremely happy*.

* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig.