

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.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 528. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 224 corresponds to Litir 528.

Tha dealbh air mo bheulaibh an-dràsta de sheann bhaile Gàidhealach nach eil ann tuilleadh. Tha na taighean a’ coimhead snog. Tha mullaichean tughaidh orra ach tha similear air fear no dhà. **Faodar** a bhith cinnteach de dh’aon rud – gheibhte beartas mòr de sgeulachdan is òrain Ghàidhlig nam broinn!

Chaidh an dealbh a thogail ann an naoi ceud deug ’s a ceithir (1904) de bhaile beag croitearachd ann am Boraraigh, eilean far costa Uibhist a Tuath. Tha mi a’ tuigsinn gum b’ e ainm a’ bhaile Am Borgh – ged nach eil e air a’ mhap’ agam. Dhèanadh sin ciall oir tha an t-ainm Lochlannach air an eilean a’ ciallachadh Borgh-eilean no Eilean a’ Bhuirgh.

Ma tha ceangal agaibh do dh’Uibhist a Tuath bidh sibh eòlach air an ainm Erskine Beveridge, ’s dòcha. ’S e a thog an dealbh de Bhoraraigh. Bha e measail air Uibhist a Tuath, agus thog e taigh ann aig toiseach an fhicheadamh linn. Bha sin air Bhàlaigh – eilean gainmhich far costa tuath Uibhist. ’S ann le Beveridge a bha Taigh Bhàlaigh aig an àm ud.

Tha an dealbh a thog e de Bhoraraigh ann an cruinneachadh de sheann dealbhan-camara aige a chaidh fhoillseachadh o chionn ghoirid mar leabhar air a bheil *Wanderings with a Camera in Scotland*. Tha mòran àiteachan eile anns na h-Eileanan an Iar a’ nochdadh anns an leabhar, agus Colla, Tiriodh, Lios Mòr, Loch Abar, Earra-Ghàidheal, Siorrachd Pheairt – agus Fìobh. **Bhuineadh e do Fìobh** agus tha cuid de na dealbhan aige de na bailtean brèagha iasgaich aig ceann an ear na siorrachd sin air leth math.

’S ann à Dùn Phàrlain a bha Beveridge. Bha athair an sàs ann an gnìomhachas an lìn agus bha an teaghlach beartach. Ghabh Erskine a’ chompanaidh thairis nuair a bha e sean gu leòr agus rinn e gu math, a’ brosnachadh malairt eadar Alba agus na Stàitean Aonaichte. Leis gun robh airgead gu leòr aige, bha cothrom aige a bhith an sàs ann an cur-seachadan anns an robh ùidh aige. Agus, gu sònraichte, bha ùidh aige ann an àrc-eòlas, eachdraidh agus a bhith a’ togail dhealbhan le camara.

Anns na h-ochdadan dhen naoidheamh linn deug, ghabh Beveridge cuairt turas no dhà, le camara na chois, ann an ceann an iar-thuath na Gàidhealtachd, a’ siubhal eadar bailtean ann am bàtaichean-aiseig agus ann an cairt a bh’ air a tarraing le each. Ann an ochd ceud deug, naochad ’s a sia (1896) bha làithean-saora aige ann an Colla is Tiriodh. Rinn e rannsachadh air na seann làraichean arc-eòlach anns an dà eilean agus dh’fhoillsich e leabhar ann an naoi ceud deug ’s a trì (1903) – *Coll and Tìree: Their Prehistoric Forts and Ecclesiastical Antiquities*.

Dìreach bliadhna às dèidh dha a bhith ann an Tiriodh is Colla, chaidh e a dh’Uibhist a Tuath airson a’ chiad turais. Chòrd an t-àite ris agus thill e gach samhradh. Cheannaich e

Bhàlaigh agus pàirt de thìr-mòr Uibhist a Tuath ann an naoi ceud deug 's a h-aon (1901). Thog e taigh ann am Bhàlaigh agus rinn e tòrr rannsachaidh air làraichean arc-eòlach ann an Uibhist. Rinn e obair cladhaich ann an grunn àiteachan. Ann an naoi ceud deug 's a h-aon-deug (1911), dh'fhoillsich e an leabhar *North Uist: Its Archaeology and Topography*.

Agus dè thachair don choimhearsnachd ann am Boraraigh? Uill, a rèir an leabhair, chaidh an t-eilean fhalmhachadh de dhaoine ann an naoi ceud deug, fichead 's a trì (1923), trì bliadhna às dèidh bàs Erskine Beveridge. Chan e fuadach a bh' ann, ge-tà. 'S iad na croitearan fhèin a bha ag iarraidh falbh.

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Faclan na Litreach: similar: *chimney*; Boraraigh: *Boreray*; Uibhist a Tuath: *North Uist*; Bhàlaigh: *Vally*; Dùn Phàrlain: *Dunfermline*; beartach: *wealthy*; àrc-eòlas: *archaeology*.

Abairtean na Litreach: air mo bheulaibh: *in front of me*; nach eil ann tuilleadh: *that is no longer in existence*; mullaichean tughaidh: *thatched roofs*; gheibhte beartas mòr de sgeulachdan is òrain Ghàidhlig nam broinn: *a treasury of Gaelic stories and songs would be had within them*; dhèanadh sin ciall: *that would make sense*; toiseach an fhicheadamh linn: *the start of the twentieth century*; eilean gainmhich far costa tuath Uibhist: *a sandy island off the north coast of Uist*; a chaidh fhoillseachadh o chionn ghoirid: *that were published recently*; Colla, Tiriodh, Lios Mòr, Loch Abar, Earra-Ghàidheal, Siorrachd Pheairt agus Fìobh: *Coll, Tiree, Lismore, Lochaber, Argyll, Perthshire and Fife*; bailtean brèagha iasgaich aig ceann an ear na siorrachd: *the beautiful fishing ports at the eastern end of the county*; a' brosnachadh malairt: *stimulating trade*; a bhith an sàs ann an cur-seachadan anns an robh ùidh aige: *to be involved in pastimes in which he was interested*; le camara na chois: *accompanied by a camera*; ann am bàtaichean-aiseig agus ann an cairt a bh' air a tarraing le each: *in ferries and in a cart pulled by a horse*; chòrd an t-àite ris: *he enjoyed the place*; thill e gach samhradh: *he returned every summer*; rinn e obair cladhaich ann an grunn àiteachan: *he conducted digs in a few places*; chaidh an t-eilean fhalmhachadh de dhaoine: *the island was emptied of people*; chan e fuadach a bh' ann: *it wasn't a clearance (expulsion)*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Bhuineadh e do Fìobh:** *he belonged to Fife. From the grammatical rules you might have expected me to say bhuineadh e do dh'Fhìobh as the preposition do lenites a following consonant. The reason I didn't was just a feeling about the naturalness of the language, at least as we speak it in today's world. The preposition do has been replaced in much island Gaelic (and thus in much Gaelic that is picked up by learners) by a similar preposition dha, but dha does not incur lenition. So with dha, we'd naturally say bhuineadh e dha Fìobh. I suspect that part of the reason that lenition of do feels unnatural in this case is the influence of dha. If you have other thoughts on the matter, please let me know!*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: **faodar** a bhith cinnteach de dh'aon rud: ***one can be certain of one thing.***

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA