

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## A' Chuthag ann an Hiort

*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.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 1,029. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 725 corresponds to Litir 1,029.*

Bha mi a' bruidhinn an t-seachdain sa chaidh mun chuthaig. Bidh an t-eun sin a' tighinn a dh'Alba gach bliadhna. Anns an t-seann aimsir, 's ann ainneamh a bhiodh i a' nochdadh ann an Hiort, ge-tà. Nise, chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh a bheil i a' dol a Hiort gu tric anns an latha a th' ann. Ach tha cunntas aig Màrtainn MacIlleMhàrtainn dhen chuthaig ann an Hiort o chionn còrr is trì cheud bliadhna.

'S ann ainneamh a bhios a' chuthag ri a faicinn an seo,' sgrìobh MacIlleMhàrtainn ann an *A Late Voyage to St Kilda*, 'agus sin ann an co-cheangal ri tachartasan àraidh, mar eisimpleir bàs an uachdarain, MacLeòid [Dhùn Bheagain], no nuair a nochdas coigreach a tha cliùmhhor.' Dh'aidich MacIlleMhàrtainn gun do rinn e gàire nuair a chuala e sin. Thuirt e ri muinntir an àite nach robh e stèidhichte air reusan.

Saoilidh mi gun do **ghabh na Hiortaich** a bheachd **air an t-sròin**. Thuirt iad gun robh fios aig an sinnsirean air an dearbh rud, agus dh'iarr iad beachd a' bhàillidh air co-dhiù bha an fhìrinn aca. Dhearbh am bàillidh gun robh iad ceart. Ri a linn fhèin agus **ri linn** athar, bha e fìor. Bha grunnan de mhuinntir an eilein air a' chuthag fhaicinn an dèidh bàs na dithis uachdaran mu dheireadh, agus bàs na dithis bhàillidhean mu dheireadh, agus goirid mus do nochd coigreach ann an Hiort.

Tha fhios gu bheil ceist agaibh. An do nochd a' chuthag ann an Hiort goirid mus do nochd MacIlleMhàrtainn fhèin ann? Uill, nochd, a rèir muinntir an àite. Bha na Hiortaich deimhinne gur e an Sgitheanach fhèin a bu choireach ris, oir bha am ministear a bha cuide ris air a bhith ann an Hiort roimhe. Mar sin, chan e coigreach a bh' ann.

Tha beul-aithris anns an Eilean Sgitheanach a tha a' cur ris an sgeul seo. Bhathar ag ràdh, anns an t-seann aimsir, nuair a bha sluagh dùthchasach a' fuireach ann an Hiort, gun tachradh rudeigin annasach nuair a gheibheadh ceann-cinnidh nan Leòdach bàs. Nan tachradh e as t-samhradh, nuair a bhiodh cuthagan gu leòr beò anns na coilltean timcheall Caisteal Dhùn Bheagain, cha bhite a' cluinntinn na cuthaig tuilleadh. Bhiodh na h-eòin gu lèir a' trèigsinn Dhùn Bheagain agus a' falbh a Hiort.

Bha iad nan teachdairean. Chaidh iad a Hiort airson innse do mhuinntir an àite gun robh an uachdaran marbh. Agus thathar ag ràdh, bliadhna a bha seo o chionn fhada, gun deach bàta à Dùn Bheagain gu ruige Hiort airson innse do na daoine gun robh an ceann-cinnidh marbh. Ach bha na Hiortaich a' caoidh a bhàis mu-thràth. Bha fios aca mu dheidhinn. Bha na cuthagan air innse dhaibh!

Co-dhiù no co-dheth, tha an cunntas aig MacIlleMhàrtainn de Hiort gu math inntinneach. Tha naidheachd bheag aige de long a chuir eathar a-mach air latha ciùin gu Sòthaigh. Bha iad a' faighinn uisge. Chunnaic na seòladairean uighean air leacan neadachaidh anns an eilean. Shreap fear dhiubh suas. Thug e a bhriogais dheth. Rinn e nàdar de phoca dhith agus lion e le uighean i.

Bha Hiortaich ann an Sòthaigh an latha sin. Chunnaic iad a' 'mhèirle' a' tachairt. Chaidh iad os cionn an duine agus leig iad clachan sìos air. B' fheudar dha teicheadh, a' fàgail a bhriogais, làn uighean, anns an eilean!

\* \* \* \* \*

**Faclan na Litreach:** cunntas: *account*; Màrtainn MacIlleMhàrtainn: *Martin Martin*; a' trèigsinn: *abandoning*; teachdairean: *messengers*; naidheachd: *anecdote*; shreap: *climbed*; mèirle: *theft*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** anns an t-seann aimsir, 's ann ainneamh a bhiodh i a' nochdadh ann an Hiort: *in olden times, it's rarely that she would appear in St Kilda*; a bhios a' chuthag ri a faicinn an seo: *that the cuckoo is seen here*; tachartasan àraidh, mar eisimpleir bàs an uachdarain: *extraordinary occasions, such as the death of the proprietor*; nuair a nochdas coigreach a tha cliùmhhor: *on the arrival of some notable stranger*; gun do rinn e gàire: *that he laughed*; nach robh e stèidhichte air reusan: *that it was not founded on reason*; dhearbh am bàillidh gun robh iad ceart: *the steward confirmed that they were correct*; an dèidh bàs na dithis uachdaran mu dheireadh: *after the death of the two last landlords*; goirid mus do nochd coigrich: *shortly before a stranger appeared*; bha na Hiortaich deimhinne gur e an Sgitheanach fhèin a bu choireach ris: *the St Kildans were sure that it was the Skyeman himself [Martin] that was responsible*; gun tachradh rudeigin annasach nuair a gheibheadh ceann-cinnidh nan Leòdach bàs: *that something strange would happen when the clan chief of the MacLeods died*; anns na coilltean timcheall Caisteal Dhùn Bheagain: *in the woods around Dunvegan Castle*, cha bhite a' cluinntinn na cuthaig tuilleadh: *the cuckoo would no longer be heard*; gun robh an uachdaran marbh: *that their landlord was dead*; bha na Hiortaich a' caoidh a bhàis mu-thrath: *the St Kildans were lamenting his death already*; long a chuir eathar a-mach air latha ciùin gu Sòthaigh: *a ship that put a boat out on a calm day to Soay*; uighean air leacan neadachaidh: *eggs on a nesting ledge*; rinn e nàdar de phoca dhith agus lion e le uighean i: *he made a sort of bag of it [the trousers] and he filled it with eggs*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Ri a linn fhèin agus **ri linn** athar, bha e fìor: *in his own day and in his father's day, it was true*. *Ri linn* is a useful phrase and usually the two words are adjacent eg *ri linn nan Ròmanach* 'in the time of the Romans'; *ri linn Napoleon* 'in Napoleon's day'. However when it commands a pronoun rather than a noun, the possessive form is used and the pronoun separates 'ri' from 'linn' eg *ri mo linn fhèin* 'in my day'; *ri a linn-sa* 'in her day' [emphatic].

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** **ghabh na Hiortaich** a bheachd **air an t-sròin**: *the St. Kildans took his opinion badly [on the nose]*.

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