

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Leanabh an Àigh

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,208. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 904 corresponds to Litir 1,208. The Litir is also available at [www.bbc.co.uk/litir](http://www.bbc.co.uk/litir) and [www.learnghaelic.scot/litir](http://www.learnghaelic.scot/litir). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learnghaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learnghaelic.scot).

*Leanabh an àigh, an Leanabh aig Màiri,  
Rugadh san stàball, Rìgh nan Dùl;  
Thàinig don fhàsach, dh'fhuiling nar n-àite  
Son' iad an àireamh bhitheas dhà dlùth!*

A bheil sibh ag aithneachadh nam briathran sin? 'S e sin a' chiad rann de laoidh a tha gu math ainmeil agus eachdraidheil ann an saoghal na Gàidhlig – *Leanabh an Àigh*. 'S e laoidh brèagha, fonnmhor a th' ann, ach bha riamh ceist agam mu dheidhinn aon fhacail. Mar as trice, 's e Moire no Muire a chanas sinn ann an Gàidhlig ri màthair Ìosa. Ach, anns an òran, 's e 'Màiri' a sgrìobh an t-ùghdar.

Agus cò bh' innte? Tè à Muile air an robh Màiri mar ainm – Màiri NicDhùghaill. Bhuineadh i don Ros Mhuileach faisg air Bun Easan. Na bu tràithe dhen t-samhradh seo, bha daoine a' comharrachadh ceud gu leth bliadhna on a chaochail i ann an ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a dhà (1872).

Mar a thuigeas sibh, bha Màiri na Crìosdaidh. Bha a h-athair na shearmonaiche Baisteach agus **bha Màiri fhèin na Baisteach** fad a beatha. Phòs i fear Niall Dòmhnallach agus bha iad ri croitearachd faisg air Bun Easan. Cha chreid mi gun robh Beurla sam bith aice.

Ged a sgrìobh Màiri na briathran airson *Leanabh an Àigh*, tha e coltach gun robh am fonn mòran na bu shine. Bha e gu math aithnichte am measg muinntir Mhuile. Canaidh daoine 'Bunessan' ris an fhonn. Seo agaibh an dàrna rann:

*Ged a bhios leanaban aig rìghrean na talmhainn,  
An greadhnachas àrd is anabarr mùirn  
'S geàrr gus am falbh iad, 's fàsaidh iad anfhann  
An àilleachd 's an dealbh a' searg san ùir.*

Tha e coltach gun do chruthaich Màiri òrain gu leòr ach gur e glè bheag dhiubh a th' againn an-diugh. Nochd *Leanabh an Àigh* ann an clò an dèidh a bàis. Agus bha e air eadar-theangachadh gu Beurla cuideachd. Seo an treas rann dheth, co-dhiù mar a tha an t-òran air a ghabhail gu minig an-diugh:

*Cha b' ionnan an t-uan a thàinig gar fuasgladh  
Iriseal stuama ghluais e 'n tùs.  
E naomh gun truailleachd, Cruithear an t-sluaigh  
Dh'èirich e suas le buaidh on ùir.*

Ann an naoi ceud deug, trithead 's a h-aon (1931), nochd faclan Beurla co-cheangailte ris an aon fhonn. B' e sin '*Morning has Broken*', laoidh a bh' air a sheinn gu tric aig tiodhlacaidhean. Rinn an seinneadair Cat Stevens – no Yusuf Islam mar a th' air an-diugh – an laoidh sin ainmeil anns na seachdadan. Bha sin timcheall air ceud bliadhna an dèidh bàs Màiri NicDhùghaill. Chlàir luchd-ciùil ainmeil eile an t-òran, leithid Neil Diamond, Nana Mouskouri agus Daniel O'Donnell.

Seo agaibh, ma-thà, an rann mu dheireadh aig Leanabh an Àigh. Mura h-eil sibh eòlach air an fhonn, cluinnidh sibh e gun duilgheadas sam bith air an eadar-lìon.

*Leanabh an àigh mar dh' aithris na fàidhean*

*'S na h-aingealan àrd, b' e miann an sùl*

*'S e 's airidh air gràdh 's ar n-urram thoirt dha.*

*Sona an àireamh bhitheas dha dlùth.*

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**Faclan na Litreach:** laoidh: *hymn*; fonnmhor: *tuneful*; Màiri NicDhùghaill: *Mary MacDougal*; croitearachd: *crofting*; chlàir: *recorded*; aingealan: *angels*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Leanabh an àigh: *child of joy*; Rugadh san stàball: *born in the stable*; Rìgh nan Dùl: *King of the Universe*; Thàinig don fhàsach, dh'fhuiling nar n-àite: *came to the wilderness, suffered in our place*; Sona iad an àireamh bhitheas dhà dlùth: *happy are those who are close to him*; bhuineadh i don Ros Mhuileach faisg air Bun Easan: *she belonged to the Ross of Mull near Bunessan*; na bu tràithe dhen t-samhradh seo: *earlier this summer*; a' comharrachadh ceud gu leth bliadhna on a chaochail i: *marking 150 years since she died*; bha a h-athair na shearmonaiche Baisteach: *her father was a Baptist preacher*; gun robh am fonn mòran na bu shine: *that the tune was much older*; An greadhnachas àrd is anabarr mùirn: *in great pomp and much joy*; 'S geàrr gus am falbh iad 's fàsaidh iad anfhann: *they leave soon and grow weak*; an àilleachd 's an dealbh a' searg san ùir: *their beauty and form withering in the soil*; nochd X ann an clò an dèidh a bàis: *X was published after her death*; co-dhiù mar a tha an t-òran air a ghabhail gu minig an-diugh: *at least how the song is often sung today*; Cha b' ionnan an t-uain a thàinig gar fuasgladh: *nothing is equal to the lamb who came to free us*; Iriseal, stuama ghluais e 'n tùs: *humble and modest when he first moved*; naomh gun truaillachd: *saintly and without impurity*; mar dh' aithris na fàidhean: *as the prophets foretold*; 's e 's airidh air gràdh 's ar n-urram thoirt dha: *it is he who deserves our love and respect*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** bha Màiri fhèin na Baisteach fad a beatha: *Mary herself was a Baptist all her life. The Baptist Church, while hardly visible among the Gaels of the Western Isles, was and is an important component in some Gaelic communities elsewhere, such as on Mull and Tiree. Baisteach is based on the verb baist 'baptise, immerse in water, which likely derives from Ancient Greek through Latin, with the loss of an original 'p' (a sound not found in early Gaelic) – making it distantly cognate with English 'baptise' (which retained the 'p'). Na Baistich 'the Baptists'; An Eaglais Bhaisteach 'The Baptist Church'; 's e Baisteach a th' ann 'he is a Baptist'.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** b' e miann an sùl: *he was the apple of their eyes (lit. 'their eyes' desire)*.

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