

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Eilean nan Ròn (3)

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 1,249. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 945 corresponds to Litir 1,249. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learn Gaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learn Gaelic.scot.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Eilean nan Ròn ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Ann an naoi ceud deug is caogad (1950) chaidh buidheann a dh'fhuireach ann airson greis airson pàirt a ghabhail ann an deuchainn mheidigeach. Cha robh muinntir an àite a' fuireach ann tuilleadh. Dh'fhalbh an sluagh dusan bliadhna roimhe sin. Ach bha na taighean aca fhathast ann.

Ghluais an luchd-rannsachaidh ann san Iuchar. Bha na croitearan fhathast a' cumail chaorach anns an eilean. Chaidh iad ann airson an rùsgadh mus deach an luchd-rannsachaidh ann. Bha an luchd-rannsachaidh airson a bhith leotha fhèin airson grunn seachdainean. Bha fear le bàta ann an Sgeara, air tìr-mòr, air fhadadh airson dèanamh cinnteach nach tigeadh duine bhon taobh a-muigh don eilean fhad 's a bha an deuchainn a' dol.

Carson? Dè bha iad a' dèanamh air Eilean nan Ròn? Uill, bha iad a' dèanamh rannsachadh air a' chnatan. Bha iad mar phàirt de phròiseact rannsachaidh ris an canadh iad 'The Common Cold Research Unit' no CCRU, a fhuair an ionmhas bho Riaghaltas Bhreatainn. Bha iad stèidhichte ann an seann ospadal-airm faisg air Salisbury ann an ceann a deas Shasainn.

Bha an CCRU dìreach air a bhith a' dol fad ceithir bliadhna nuair a chaidh a' bhuidheann a dh'Eilean nan Ròn. Ach bhiodh iad ann am bith airson cha mhòr ceathrad bliadhna eile. 'S iad a lorg coronabhiorasan an toiseach. Bidh fios agaibh gur e coronabhioras a tha ag adhbharachadh Covid-19.

Fhad 's a bha an deuchainn a' dol, cha robh iad am post a' faighinn chun an eilein. Bhiodh litrichean a' dol a dh'Oifis a' Phuist ann an Sgeara, agus bhiodh iad air an leughadh thairis air an rèidio do na daoine anns an eilean. Tha mi an dùil nach robh cus anns na litrichean a bha **tuilleadh is** pearsanta!

Bha luchd-saidheans air mothachadh gum bi feadhainn a tha leotha fhèin ann an suidheachadh iomallach airson greis, leithid anns an Antartaig, air an dìon gu ìre mhòr an aghaidh a' chnatain. Airson deuchainn a dhèanamh air sin, bha luchd na deuchainn gu bhith leotha fhèin anns an eilean airson deich seachdainean. An uair sin bhiodh daoine air an robh an cnatan a' dol ann.

Bha a' chuid a bu mhotha de luchd na deuchainn à Oilthigh Obar Dheathain, le feadhainn à Oilthigh Chill Rìmhinn, Oilthigh Lunnainn agus colaiste choilltearachd. Bha biadh gu leòr aca airson trì mìosan. Chaidh aithris a dhèanamh

orra nuair a chaidh iad ann. Bha iad a' dol a chluich golf is criogad ann – air an talamh-chroite, tha fhios. Agus èistibh ris an aithris seo orra: *'Those interested in natural history will try to discover whether the grey seal breeds on the coast of Roan.'* 'S e Roan no Island Roan (R-O-A-N) a bh' aca air an eilean. Cha do thuig duine aca, feumaidh, carson as e '**Eilean nan Ròn**' a th' air an eilean mar ainm!

Chuir feadhainn de na h-oileanaich litrichean ann am botail. Thilg iad na botail gu muir. Fhuair co-dhiù aon litir do a ceann-uidhe. Bha fear de na h-oileanaich à Ceann Phàdraig. Chuir e teachdaireachd don teaghlach aige ann am botal. Thog dithis nighean am botal aige ann an Arcaibh.

An dèidh deich seachdainean, thàinig feadhainn à tìr-mòr, agus iad làn dhen chnatan. An do ghabh luchd na deuchainn an cnatan bhuapa? Innsidh mi dhuibh an-ath-sheachdain!

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: san Iuchar: *in July*; Sgeara: *Skerry*; ionmhas: *funding*; Riaghaltas Bhreatainn: *the British Government*; ospadal-airm: *military hospital*; coronabhioras: *coronavirus*; ag adhbharachadh: *causes, is causing*; luchd-saidheans: *scientists*; Ceann Phàdraig: *Peterhead*.

Abairtean na Litreach: chaidh buidheann a dh'fhuireach ann airson greis: *a group went to live there for a while*; bha na croitearan fhathast a' cumail chaorach anns an eilean: *the crofters were still keeping sheep on the island*; cha robh muinntir an àite a' fuireach ann tuilleadh: *the local people were no longer living there*; chaidh iad ann airson an rùsgadh: *they went there to shear them*; air fhastadh airson dèanamh cinnteach nach tigeadh duine bhon taobh a-muigh: *hired to make sure that nobody came from the outside*; fhad 's a bha an deuchainn a' dol: *while the experiment was taking place*; rannsachadh air a' chnatan: *research on the common cold*; bha X dìreach air a bhith a' dol fad ceithir bliadhna: *X had only been in existence for four years*; ann am bith airson cha mhòr ceathrad bliadhna eile: *in existence for almost another forty years*; a dh'Oifis a' Phuist: *to the Post Office*; bhiodh iad air an leughadh thairis air an rèidio: *they would be read over the radio*; a tha leotha fhèin ann an suidheachadh iomallach: *who are by themselves in a remote situation*; bha a' chuid a bu mhotha de luchd na deuchainn à: *most of the subjects of the experiment were from*; Oilthigh Obar Dheathain, le feadhainn à Oilthigh Chill Rìmhinn, Oilthigh Lunnainn agus colaiste choilltearachd: *the University of Aberdeen, with some from the University of St Andrews University, the University of London and a forestry college*; air an talamh-chroite, tha fhios: *on the croftland, I imagine*; fhuair co-dhiù aon litir do a ceann-uidhe: *at least one letter reached its destination*; thog dithis nighean am botal aige ann an Arcaibh: *two girls picked up his bottle in Orkney*; thàinig feadhainn à tìr-mòr, agus iad làn dhen chnatan: *some people came from the mainland, who were full of the cold*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Eilean nan Ròn:** *there are many place-names on the island which are of great interest. Some of them are given and interpreted by Donald Mackay in a recording made by the School of Scottish Studies in 1977. This can be heard on the Tobar an Dualchais website (Track 73726).*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: nach robh cus anns na litrichean a bha **tuilleadh** is pearsanta: *that there was not too much in the letters that was **too/overly** personal.*

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