

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Eilean nan Ròn (4)

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 1,250. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 946 corresponds to Litir 1,250. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu dheuchainn ann an Eilean nan Ròn faisg air Tunga ann an naoi ceud deug is caogad (1950). Bha feadhainn leotha fhèin san eilean airson deich seachdainean. Bha iad slàn, fallain. Thàinig feadhainn à tìr-mòr airson an cnatan a sgaoileadh nam measg ann an diofar dhòighean. Mar eisimpleir, bha cuid dhiubh a' casadaich agus a' sreathartaich a dh'aona-ghnothach. A rèir aithrisean anns na meadhanan, cha do ghabh duine de luchd na deuchainn an cnatan.

Cha b' e sin buileach deireadh na cùise. Bha an ùine aca anns an eilean a' teannadh dlùth. Chualas aithris mu chroitear air tìr-mòr a bha làn dhen chnatan. Chaidh a chur don eilean agus shuidh ceathrar de luchd na deuchainn cuide ris an tac an teine, a' gabhail seanchas leis airson grunn uairean a thìde. Nuair a bha iad a' fàgail an eilein, bha triùir de luchd na deuchainn a' fulang leis a' chnatan. Dè dh'ionnsaich iad bhuaithe sin, chan eil mi cinnteach!

Tha mi airson crìoch a chur air ar cuairt bheag a dh'Eilean nan Ròn le sgeul beag às an àite. Uaireigin o shean, bha nighean òg air an robh Ealasaid – no Beataidh – mar ainm a' cluich faisg air bearraidhean anns an eilean. Bha i còmhla ri a bràthair, Dòmhnall. Chunnaic iad bàta a' tighinn a dh'ionnsaigh an eilein. Cha robh am bàta ach beag.

Bha Beataidh agus Dòmhnall eòlach air a h-uile duine anns an eilean, agus air a h-uile bàta anns an eilean. Cha robh iad **ag aithneachadh na tè seo**. Bha triùir air bòrd. Bha aodach seòladair air dithis aca. Bha èideadh saighdeir air an fhear eile.

Nuair a ràinig iad an t-eilean, leum fear de na 'seòladairean' a-mach. Bha poca aige. Ruith e gu ceann thall an eilein. Ruith a' chlann às a dhèidh. Ach bha esan ro luath dhaibh. Cha b' fhada gus an robh e air a dhol à sealladh.

Nuair a ràinig a' chlann e, bha e air an rathad air ais. Cha robh am poca aige tuilleadh. Bha craiceann donn agus falt dubh air an duine. Bha coltas toilichte air.

'Càit a bheil am poca?' dh'fhaighnich Beataidh.

'Tha e far an coinnich a' ghrian ris a' mhuir,' fhreagair an coigreach.

'Dè tha na bhroinn?' dh'fhaighnich Dòmhnall.

'Òr!' thuirt am fear eile.

'Dha-rìribh?!' thuirt Dòmhnall.

'Tha am poca làn òir,' ars am fear eile, 'agus gheibh sibh e far an coinnich a' ghrian ris a' mhuir.'

Thionndaidh an duine air falbh. Thòisich e air ruith a-rithist. Goirid an dèidh sin, dh'fhalbh am bàta leis na fir air bòrd. Chaidh i à sealladh am measg stuaghan na fairge.

Bha a' chlann **cho eòlach air an eilean aca 's a tha brìdean air an tràigh**. Ach cha d' fhuair iad lorg air poca an t-seòladair no air an òr aige. Ged a tha daoine air a bhith a' meòrachadh air a' ghnothach airson còrr math is ceud bliadhna, chan eil fios aig duine dè bha am fear a' ciallachadh le 'far an coinnich a' ghrian ris a' mhuir.' Agus tha ceistean ann. An e taibhs a bh' ann? Agus a bheil an t-òr fhathast ann am badeigin air Eilean nan Ròn?!

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Faclan na Litreach: slàn, fallain: *completely healthy*; bearraidhean: *cliffs*; shreap: *climbed*; poca: *bag, sack*; coigreach: *stranger*; na bhroinn: *inside it*; làn òir: *full of gold*; taibhs: *ghost*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Thàinig feadhainn a tìr-mòr airson an cnatan a sgaoileadh nam measg ann an diofar dhòighean: *some people came from the mainland to spread the common cold among them in various ways*; bha cuid dhiubh a' casadaich agus a' sreathartaich a dh'aona-ghnothach: *some of them were coughing and sneezing deliberately*; cha do ghabh duine de luchd na deuchainn an cnatan: *not one of the experimenters caught the cold*; cha b' e sin buileach deireadh na cùise: *that wasn't entirely the end of the matter*; shuidh ceathrar cuide ris an tac an teine, a' gabhail seanchas leis: *four people sat with him by the fire, conversing with him*; dè dh'ionnsaich iad bhuaithe sin, chan eil mi cinnteach: *what they learned from that, I'm not sure*; uaireigin o shean: *at some point a long time ago*; bha aodach seòladair air dithis aca: *two of them wore sailor's clothing*; bha èideadh saighdeir air an fhear eile: *the other wore a soldier's uniform*; ruith e gu ceann thall an eilein: *he ran to the far end of the island*; às a dhèidh: *after him*; cha b' fhada gus an robh e air a dhol à sealladh: *it wasn't long until he had gone out of sight*; bha coltas toilichte air: *he looked pleased*; far an coinnich a' ghrian ris a' mhuir: *where the sun meets the sea*; dh'fhalbh am bàta leis na fir air bòrd: *the boat left with the men aboard*; à sealladh am measg stuaghan na fairge: *out of sight among the waves of the open sea*; a bheil an t-òr fhathast ann am badeigin?: *is the gold still somewhere?*

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Cha robh iad ag aithneachadh na tè seo: *they weren't recognising this one. Although the word bàta is masculine, we generally deal with vessels/boats of all sizes as feminine and use the feminine pronoun 'i' for them. We use tè rather than fear when discussing them. Tè is feminine; thus, following the verbal noun ag aithneachadh we place it in the genitive case – thus the article is 'na'.*

Seanfhacal na Litreach: Bha a' chlann **cho eòlach air an eilean aca 's a tha brìdean air an tràigh**: *the children were as familiar with their island as the oystercatcher is of the beach [i.e. they knew it like the backs of their hands].*

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