

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

**M.E.M. Donaldson (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 1,294. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 990 corresponds to Litir 1,294. 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).*

Tha mi air a bhith ag innse dhuibh mu M.E.M. Donaldson agus an leabhar aice 'Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands'. Tha cunntas aice mu mar a fhuair na MacIntyres – Clann 'ic an t-Saoir – an ainm, co-dhiù a rèir beul-aithris. Thachair e aig muir faisg air Rubha Àird nam Murchan.

Tha e a' dol air ais don linn nuair a bha Somhairle Mòr ann. B' esan ceannard Gàidhealach-Lochlannach a bha beò anns an dàrna linn deug. 'S e a chruthaich Tighearnas Earra-Ghàidheal 's nan Eilean.

Bha Somhairle ag iarraidh nighean Rìgh Mhanainn a phòsadh. B' ise Raghnaid. Ach dhiùlt a h-athair, Rìgh Amhlaibh, a chead airson a phòsaidh. Ge-tà, cha do ghabh Somhairle ris an diùltadh. Bha e airson toirt air an Rìgh a chead a thoirt dha. Agus fhuair e taic bho a bhràthair-dalta, Murchadh Mac Nèill.

Bha Somhairle agus Amhlaibh a' seòladh anns na birlinnean aca far taobh an iar na h-Alba. Bha Murchadh air bòrd birlinn Amhlaibh. Rinn e tuill ann an slige an t-soithich. Lion e na tuill le ìm, gus nach fhaigheadh an sàl a-steach. Rinn e fàsagan dhen mheud cheart airson na tuill a lìonadh nuair a dh'fhalbhadh an t-ìm.

Ràinig soitheach an Rìgh Àird nam Murchan. Bha i gu math stoirmeil. **Bha fairge mhòr ann.** Dh'fhalbh an t-ìm às na tuill, agus thòisich an t-uisge air aoidion a-steach. Bha an soitheach a' dol a dhol fodha.

Bha Somhairle faisg air làimh anns a' bhirlinn aige fhèin. Dh'iarr Amhlaibh air Somhairle cobhair a dhèanamh air. Dhiùlt Somhairle dad a dhèanamh gus an d' fhuair e gealladh bho Amhlaibh gum faigheadh e fhèin – Somhairle – cead nighean Amhlaibh a phòsadh. Dh'aontaich Amhlaibh ris an iarrtas.

Nuair a chuala e sin, chuir Murchadh fàsagan anns na tuill anns an t-slige. Chuir sin stad air an uisge faighinn a-steach agus shàbhail e an soitheach. Nise, bha Murchadh na shaor. Air sàillibh sin, bha inneal-tollaidh aige.

'S e Clann an t-Saoir a chanadh daoine ris a' chloinn aige. 'S e cinneadh ùr a bh' ann. Tha sinn eòlach orra an-diugh ann am Beurla mar 'MacIntyres'. Uill, 's e sin an sgeul, co-dhiù.

Nise, tha Mem Donaldson ag aideachadh anns an leabhar aice gur dòcha nach e an fhirinn a th' ann a sin. Tha sgeul eile mu mar a thòisich na MacIntyres. Bha tùsaire a' chinnidh latha a bha seo leis fhèin ann am bàta. Nochd toll ann an slige a' bhàta. Thòisich uisge air aoidion a-steach.

Chuir am fear òrdag don toll airson stad a chur air an uisge faighinn a-steach. Ach cha robh comas aige am bàta a stiùireadh. Mar sin, gheàrr e òrdag dheth. Leis gur e saor a bh' ann, bha inneal gearraidh air choreigin aige. Bha e a-nise comasach am bàta a stiùireadh don chala. Dè an sgeul as fheàrr leibh fhèin?!

Thog Mem Donaldson taigh ann an Sanna Beag ann an Àird nam Murchan anns na fìtheadan. Bha i a' toirt taic làidir don Eaglais Easbaigich, agus chaidh an taigh a bheannachadh le Easbaig Earra-Ghàidheal 's nan Eilean.

Ach chaidh a sgrios le teine anns na ceathradan. Ghluais Donaldson a Dhùn Èideann far an do chaochail i ann an naoi ceud deug, caogad 's a h-ochd (1958).

**Chaidh a tiodhlacadh** anns an Òban.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Somhairle Mòr: *Somerled the Great*; birlinnean: *Highland galleys*; aoidion: *leaking*; dh'aontaich: *agreed*; inneal-tollaidh: *a boring ('holing') implement*; cinneadh: *clan, bearers of a common surname*; tùsaire: *progenitor*; òrdag: *his (or 'a') thumb*; An Eaglais Easbaigeach; *the Episcopalian Church*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Thachair e aig muir faisg air Rubha Àird nam Murchan: *it happened at sea near Ardnamurchan Point*; anns an dàrna linn deug: *in the twelfth century*; bha X ag iarraidh nighean Rìgh Mhanainn a phòsadh: *X wanted to marry the daughter of the King of Man*; dhiùlt a h-athair, Rìgh Amhlaibh, a chead airson a phòsaidh: *her father, King Olaf, refused his permission for the marriage*; cha do ghabh X ris an diùltadh: *X didn't accept the refusal*; bha e airson toirt air an Rìgh a chead a thoirt dha: *he wanted to force the King to give him permission*; fhuair e taic bho a bhràthair-dalta, Murchadh Mac Nèill: *he obtained help from his foster-brother, Maurice MacNeill*; far taobh an iar na h-Alba: *off the west of Scotland*; rinn e tuill ann an slige an t-soithich: *he made holes in the vessel's hull*; lion e na tuill le ìm: *he filled the holes with butter*; gus nach fhaigheadh an sàl a-steach: *so that the seawater wouldn't get in*; rinn e fàsagan dhen mheud cheart airson na tuill a lionadh: *he made bungs of the correct size to fill the holes*; dh'iarr X air Y cobhair a dhèanamh air: *X asked Y to help him*; dhiùlt X dad a dhèanamh gus an d' fhuair e gealladh gum faigheadh e cead: *X refused to do anything until he received a promise that he would get permission*; bha X na shaor: *X was a joiner/carpenter*; inneal gearraidh air choreigin: *some cutting device or other*; comasach am bàta a stiùireadh don chala: *able to steer the boat to [the] harbour*; chaidh an taigh a bheannachadh: *the house was blessed*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **Chaidh a tiodhlacadh** anns an Òban: *she was buried in Oban. The 'a' here is the possessive pronoun, representing the third person singular feminine and therefore not causing lenition of the verbal noun (according to lenition rules). The masculine pronoun does cause lenition, so for 'he was buried' we would say chaidh a thiodhlacadh. Chaidh mo thiodhlacadh would be the first person singular (but it is an unlikely sentence!) Chaidh an tiodhlacadh is the third person plural i.e. 'they were buried'.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** **Bha fairge mhòr ann:** *the sea was rough.*

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