

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Caisteal a' Bhreabadair (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 1,305. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,001 corresponds to Litir 1,305. 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 mun bhreabadair agus a theaghlach a bha a' fuireach air an Stac Àrd, deas air Èirisgeigh. Cha do mhair beò ach bean a' bhreabadair agus an gille as òige ace. 'S e Iain an t-ainm a bh' air – Iain MacNèill.

Bha iad a' fuireach còmhla ri seanair Iain ann an Uibhist a Deas. Bha Iain toilichte air a' chroit. Bhiodh e ag obair leis na caoraich, crodh agus eich. Ach bha aon rud a' cur dragh air. A h-uile latha bhiodh a mhàthair a' gul.

Dhiùlt i innse do a mac carson a bha i brònach. Nuair a ràinig esan aois ceithir-deug, dh'inns i dha mu mar a chaidh athair agus a bhràithrean a chur gu bàs ann an Èirisgeigh. Nuair a ghabh e sin a-steach, thuirt Iain, 'Tha mi a' falbh gu muir agus cha stad mi gus an lorg mi an duine a mharbh m' athair 's mo bhràithrean.' Chuir sin a mhàthair troimhe-chèile buileach. Ach bha Iain deimhinne, agus dh'fhalbh e.

An toiseach, choisich e a Loch nam Madadh, thairis air dà fhadhail. Ghabh e bàt'-aiseig gu ruige Dùn Bheagain anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Mu dheireadh, ràinig e Grianaig, air Chluaidh. Bha tòrr shoithichean anns a' chala ach cha do bhruidhinn duine ris. Cha robh mòran airgid aige ach bha gu leòr airson **cuid na h-oidhche** ann an taigh-loidsidh.

An ath latha, thill e don chala. An turas seo, chunnaic sgiobair aig tè de na soithichean e. Bha e air Iain fhaicinn an latha roimhe agus shaoil e gun robh an gille a' sireadh obair air bòrd soithich.

'Do you want to go to sea?' thuirt an caiptean ris ann am Beurla. Cha do fhreagair Iain e oir cha robh Beurla aige. Bhruidhinn an caiptean ris ann an Gàidhlig an uair sin, 'A bheil thu ag iarraidh falbh gu muir?'

'Tha,' fhreagair Iain agus chaidh cuireadh a thoirt dha dhol air bòrd soitheach a' chaiptein. Bhuineadh an caiptean do dh'Eilean Arainn agus bha Gàidhlig gu leòr aige. Gu h-iongantach, 's e MacNèill a bh' air mar ainm-cinnidh. 'Dè an t-ainm a th' ort?' dh'fhaighnich e.

'Iain MacNèill,' fhreagair am fear eile.

'Nach iongantach sin,' thuirt an caiptean. 'S e MacNèill a th' ormsa cuideachd. Agus cò às a tha thu?'

'Bha m' athair à Barraigh,' ars Iain, 'ach thogadh mise air Eileanan nan Stac, deas air Èirisgeigh.' Rug an dithis air làimh air a chèile. Bhon latha sin a-mach, **bha iad nan deagh charaidean.**

Air a' chiad turas-mhara, chaidh Iain seachad air Cape Horn gu ruige Vancouver. Dh'fhàs e eòlach air dòighean na mara gu luath. Nuair a thill e, chaidh e gu sgoil airson sgilean maraiche ionnsachadh. Fhuair e tron deuchainn. An ath thuras bha e ag obair mar dàrna meit. Mu dheireadh, an dèidh bhliadhnaichean, leig an Caiptean MacNèill dheth a dhreuchd. Ghabh Iain comann air an t-soitheach.

Cha do dhìochuimhnich Iain mar a gheall e dha fhèin gum faigheadh e dìoghaltas airson bàs athar agus a bhràithrean. Latha a bha seo bha e ann an Lunnainn. Bha e am measg sheann mharaichean ann an club. Dh'èirich fear agus dh'inns e do chàch mar a mharbh e spùinneadair agus a thriùir mhac air taobh an iar na h-Alba. Dè rinn Iain MacNèill? Innsidh mi dhuibh anns an ath Litir.

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Faclan na Litreach: Èirisgeigh: *Eriskay*; dhiùlt i: *she refused*; brònach: *sad*; Loch nam Madadh: *Lochmaddy*; fadhail: *sea-ford*; Dùn Bheagain: *Dunvegan*; cuireadh: *invitation*; Eilean Arainn: *The Isle of Arran*; Lunnainn: *London*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Cha do mhair beò ach bean a' bhreabadair agus an gille as òige ace: *the only ones that survived were the weaver's wife and her youngest son*; a' fuireach còmhla ri seanair Iain ann an Uibhist a Deas: *living with John's grandfather in South Uist*; bha aon rud a' cur dragh air: *one thing was upsetting him*; a h-uile latha bhiodh a mhàthair a' gul: *every day his mother would be crying, weeping*; mar a chaidh athair agus a bhràithrean a chur gu bàs: *how his father and brothers were killed*; cha stad mi gus an lorg mi an duine a mharbh X: *I won't stop until I find the man who killed X*; chuir sin a mhàthair troimhe-chèile buileach: *that made his mother really [even more] upset*; ràinig e Grianraig, air Chluaidh: *he reached Greenock on the Clyde*; bha tòrr shoithichean anns a' chala: *there were many vessels in the harbour*; bha e air Iain fhaicinn an latha roimhe: *he had seen John the previous day*; shaoil e gun robh an gille a' sireadh obair air bòrd soithich: *he thought the lad was looking for work on board a vessel*; 's e MacNèill a bh' air mar ainm-cinnidh: *his surname was also MacNeil*; nach iongantach sin: *isn't that amazing*; rug an dithis air làimh air a chèile: *the two of them shook hands*; chaidh e gu sgoil airson sgilean maraiche ionnsachadh: *he went to school [an education facility] to learn the skills of a mariner*; cha do dhìochuimhnich Iain mar a gheall e dha fhèin gum faigheadh e dìoghaltas: *John didn't forget how he promised himself he would get revenge*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bhon latha sin a-mach, **bha iad nan deagh charaidean**: *since that day, they were good friends. This literally means 'they were in their good friends'.* The dative case can be used in this way to express identity. Bha e na dheagh charaid dhomh 'he was [in] a good friend to me'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: airson **cuid na h-oidhche** ann an taigh-loidsidh: *for a night's accommodation in a lodging house*. Cuid na h-oidhche can also mean a free night's lodging given to a traveller.

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