

# **Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh**

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## **Na Lighichean Muileach (1)**

*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 1,401. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,097 corresponds to Litir 1,401. 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).*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Ollamh Mhuileach – lighiche ainmeil a nochdas ann an eachdraidh agus beul-aithris Eilein Mhuile. Bhuineadh e do **na Peutanaich** – na Beatons. Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mun chinneadh sin.

Tha iad a' nochdadh an toiseach ann an clàr eachdraidh na h-Alba anns a' cheathramh linn deug. Phòs Triath nan Eilean [*The Lord of the Isles*], Aonghas Òg, tè Èireannach timcheall na bliadhna trì cheud deug (1300). B' ise Agnes Ó Catháin. Thug Agnes leatha sguad de dh'Èireannaich a thàinig a dh'fhuireach ann an Alba. Nam measg bha Peutanaich.

Bha na Peutanaich mu-thrath sgileil mar lighichean. Nuair a bha Raibeart I – Raibeart am Brusach – air an rìgh-chathair ann an Alba, bha Pàdraig Peutan – no Pàdraig MacBheatha mar a bh' air aig an àm – na phrìomh lighiche dha.

Anns a' chòigeamh linn deug, bha Peutanaich clàraichte ann an Ìle. Bha iad nan lighichean. Anns an t-siathamh linn deug, bha lighichean Peutanach a' fuireach ann am Muile. Bha fearann aca ann am Peighinn na Croise. Tha sin faisg air Peighinn a' Ghàidheil ann an ceann a deas an eilein.

Tha a' chrois anns an ainm-àite fhathast na seasamh. 'S e *Beaton's Cross* a chanar rithe ann am Beurla. Ann an Gàidhlig – 'Crois an Ollaimh'. An t-Ollamh Muileach, gu dearbh.

**Bliadhna no dhà air ais**, nochd leabhar air leth inntinneach, tarraingeach ann an clò. 'S e sin *Hebridean Healers: The Beatons of Mull*; bha ceathrar ùghdaran an sàs ann. Anns an leabhar tha dealbhan agus mapaichean a tha a' sealltainn far an robh leas luibheach nan lighichean. Bha na Peutanaich a' cinneadh luibhean ann a bh' air an cur gu feum anns an obair aca.

Bu chòir do dhaoine ann an Alba a bhith nas eòlaiche air na lighichean Muileach seo. Bha iad ag obair aig ìre air leth àrd a thaobh leigheas agus gnothaichean meidigeach. Bha iad a' conaltradh le sgoilearan agus lighichean ann an dùthchannan eile, agus bha iad eòlach air na làmh-sgrìobhainnean ainmeil eadar-nàiseanta mu shlàinte agus slànachadh.

Mar eisimpleir, sgrìobh an sgoilear Àisianach, Avicenna, leabhar cudromach anns an aonamh linn deug. B' e sin *Leabhar an t-Slànachaidh* no *The Book of Healing*. Bha e air a sgrìobhadh ann an Arabais, agus bha greis ann mus do nochd dreach Laidinn dheth anns an Roinn Eòrpa. Bha lethbhreacan de Leabhar an t-

Slànachaidh aig na Peutanaich. Ach dè an cànan anns an robh iad sgrìobhte? Bha – a’ Ghàidhlig. Tha sin a’ sealltainn gun robh na lighichean Muileach nan sgoilearan Gàidhealach a bha a’ cleachdadh na Gàidhlig anns an obair agus sgoilearachd aca.

Mar gheàrr-chunntas tha *Hebridean Healers* ag innse dhuinn gun robh leigheas Gàidhealach anns na meadhan-aoisean stèidhichte gu mòr air na seann teacsaichean clasaigeach à dùthchannan eile a bh’ air an eadar-theangachadh gu Gàidhlig.

Tro thìde, ge-tà, sgrìobh na lighichean Gàidhealach làmh-sgrìobhainnean aca fhèin – ann an Gàidhlig. Bha iad a’ toirt còmhla eòlas air cleachdaidhean meidigeach bho air feadh na Roinn Eòrpa agus eòlas nan lighichean Gàidhealach ann an Alba agus Èirinn. Nam measg bha fiosrachadh a lorg iad fhèin ann am Muile agus, gu sònraichte, fiosrachadh mu na luibhean a bha iad fhèin a’ cleachdadh. Tha cuid de na sgrìobhainnean sin rin lorg an-diugh ann an taighean-tasgaidh ann an Alba is Sasainn. Abair beartas a tha nam broinn.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** lighiche: *physician*; Peutanaich: *Beatons*; Peighinn na Croise: *Pennycross*; Peighinn a’ Ghàidheil: *Pennyghael*; Arabais: *the Arabic language*; taighean-tasgaidh: *museums, archives*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** lighiche ainmeil a nochdas ann an eachdraidh agus beul-aithris Eilein Mhuile: *a famous physician who appears in the history and oral tradition of the Isle of Mull*; tha mi airson innse dhuibh mun chinneadh sin: *I want to tell you about that kindred*; sguad de dh’Èireannaich a thàinig a dh’fhuireach ann an Alba: *a squad of Irish people who came to live in Scotland*; mu-thràth sgileil mar lighichean: *already skilful as physicians*; bha X – no Y mar a bh’ air aig an àm – na phrìomh lighiche dha: *X – or Y as he was called at the time – was his primary physician*; bha Peutanaich clàraichte ann an Ìle: *Beatons were recorded on Islay*; a chanar rithe ann am Beurla: *that it was called in English*; bha ceathrar ùghdaran an sàs ann: *four authors were involved in it*; a’ sealltainn far an robh leas luibheach nan lighichean: *showing where the physicians’ botanic [‘physic’] garden was*; a’ cinneadh luibhean ann a bh’ air an cur gu feum anns an obair aca: *growing herbs that were used in their work*; bha iad eòlach air na làmh-sgrìobhainnean ainmeil eadar-nàiseanta mu shlàinte agus slànachadh: *they were familiar with the famous international manuscripts about health and healing*; bha greis ann mus do nochd dreach Laidinn dheth anns an Roinn Eòrpa: *it was a while before a Latin version of it appeared in Europe*; gun robh leigheas Gàidhealach anns na meadhan-aoisean stèidhichte gu mòr air na seann teacsaichean clasaigeach: *that Gaelic curing practices in medieval times were largely based on the old classical texts* gu sònraichte, fiosrachadh mu na luibhean a bha iad fhèin a’ cleachdadh: *particularly, information about the herbs that they themselves were using*; abair beartas a tha nam broinn: *what riches they contain*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Bhuineadh e do **na Peutanaich**: *he belonged to the Beatons*. The original form of the Beaton name was MacMeic-bethad which became MacBeatha. This was MacBeth or MacBeath in anglicised form. The Beatons appear to be unconnected to MacBeth, as in the eleventh century Scottish king, despite the similarity in the name. The Beaton medical kindred are sometimes

*confused with a Lowland family, the Bethune, who also often called themselves 'Beaton' in Scotland.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Bliadhna no dhà air ais: a year or two back.**

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