

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Kitty NicLeòid

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 1,415. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,111 corresponds to Litir 1,415. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Tha cuimhne agam air còmhradh a chuala mi eadar dithis laoch mun t-seinneadair a b' fheàrr leotha. Chan eil **duine seach duine aca** beò an-diugh. Nochd diofar ainmean anns a' chòmhradh, ach bha fear dhen dithis deimhinne mun taghadh aigesan – Kitty NicLeòid.

Nuair a bha an còmhradh seo ann, bha Kitty fhathast beò. Chaochail i anns a' bhliadhna dà mhìle. Rugadh i ann an naoi ceud deug is ceithir-deug anns na h-Innseachan.

Bha athair Kitty, Coinneach, na shaighdear anns na Sìophortaich thall. Goirid ro thoiseach a' Chogaidh Mhòir chaidh a bhean a-null airson a bhith còmhla ris. B' ise Anna nighean Phàdraig 'ic Iain MhicLeòid à Àird Thunga ann an Leòdhas. Rugadh Catrìona – no Kitty – ann an Kasauli, baile monaidh anns na h-Innseachan.

Ge-tà, bha athair Kitty air a chur a Mhesopotamia an aghaidh nan Turcach. Fhuair Anna fios gun robh e air chall agus gun robhar a' creidsinn gun robh e marbh. Thug ise a leanabh, Kitty, dhachaigh leatha a Leòdhas. Fhuair i obair mar bhana-mhaighstir sgoile. Thogadh Kitty ann an àiteachan far an robh i air a cuartachadh leis a' Ghàidhlig.

Dà bhliadhna an dèidh dhaibh tilleadh, fhuair eadhon fios gun robh Coinneach fhathast beò. Bha e anns an ospadal anns an Èiphit, gun chomas labhairt aige.

Thill e a dh'Alba agus bhathar ag ràdh gun do thill a chainnt nuair a thachair e ri Kitty. Nuair a bha e làidir gu leòr, chaidh a theaghlach a dh'Obar Dheathain far an do dh'ionnsaich Coinneach tuathanachas-gàrraidh no *horticulture*. Chuir an teaghlach seachad bliadhnaichean ann an Obar Dheathain mus do thill iad a Sgiogarstaidh ann an Nis.

Bha ceòl anns an teaghlach. Bha bràthair Kitty, Coinneach Aonghas, na phìobaire. Bha a piuthar, Marietta, math air seinn. Agus, **mar an ceudna**, bhiodh Kitty fhèin a' coisinn cliù mar sheinneadair air leth.

Nuair a bha i aig Àrd-sgoil MhicNeacail ann an Steòrnabhagh, chuala Kitty an t-òran ainmeil 'An Ataireachd Àrd'. Chlàir i fhèin an t-òran leis a' chompanaidh Parlophone ann an naoi ceud deug, trithead 's a seachd (1937).

Bha Kitty na sgoilear air leth agus bhuannaich i sgoilearachd do dh'Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. Bha fèill mhòr oirre mar sheinneadair ann an consartan is

cèilidhean, agus bhuannaich i bonn òir a' Chomuinn Ghàidhealaich aig a' Mhòd Nàiseanta ann an trithead 's a sia (1936).

Ged a bha i na tidsear gu proifeiseanta, bha Kitty cliùmhòr mar sheinneadair. Bha i fhèin agus a piuthar, Marietta, an sàs anns na *People's Festival Cèilidhs* ann an Dùn Èideann, rud às an do dh'èirich Iomall Fèis Dhùn Èideann. Bha an dithis air an clàradh leis an eòlaiche-chiùil Ameireaganach, Alan Lomax.

Ach cha robh Kitty ro dheònach a bhith air a clàradh le companaidhean coimeirsealta. Mar sin, 's dòcha nach eil uiread de chlàraidhean dhith 's a bhiodh dùil. Mura h-eil sibh eòlach air a seinn, mholainn gun rannsaich sibh 'Kitty MacLeod Calum Sgàire' air an eadar-lìon. Cluinnidh sibh an t-òran 'Calum Sgàire' air a ghabhail le sàr-sheinneadair.

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Faclan na Litreach: seinneadair: *singer*; Na h-Innseachan: *India*; na Sìophortaich: *the Seaforths (regiment)*; Àird Thunga: *Tong*; baile monaidh: *hill town*; bana-mhaighstir sgoile: *teacher (schoolmistress)*; Sgiogarstaidh: *Skigersta*; Nis: *Ness*; Àrd-sgoil MhicNeacail: *The Nicolson Institute*; gheill: *yielded*; Feallsanachd: *Philosophy*; bonn òir: *gold medal*; eòlaiche-ciùil: *musicologist*; sàr-sheinneadair: *a singer of renown*.

Abairtean na Litreach: còmhradh a chuala mi eadar dithis laoch mun t-seinneadair a b' fheàrr leotha: *a conversation I heard between two fine gentlemen about their favourite singer*; bha fear dhen dithis deimhinne mun taghadh aigesan: *one of the pair was certain about his choice*; goirid ro thoiseach a' Chogaidh Mhòir chaidh a bhean a-null: *shortly before the start of the Great War, his wife went over*; gun robhar a' creidsinn gun robh e marbh: *that it was believed he was dead*; far an robh i air a cuartachadh leis a' Ghàidhlig: *where she was surrounded by Gaelic*; dà bhliadhna an dèidh dhaibh tilleadh, fhuair eadhon fios gun robh Coinneach fhathast beò: *two years after they returned, information was obtained that Kenneth was still alive*; bha e anns an ospadal anns an Èiphit, gun chomas labhairt aige: *he was in [the] hospital in Egypt, without the ability to speak*; chaidh a theaghlach a dh'Obar Dheathain far an do dh'ionnsaich Coinneach tuathanachas-gàrraidh: *the family went to Aberdeen where Kenneth studied horticulture*; bhiodh Kitty fhèin a' coisinn cliù mar sheinneadair air leth: *Kitty herself would win a reputation as an excellent singer*; air a beò-ghlacadh leis: *captivated by it*; bhuannaich i sgoilearachd do dh'Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann: *she won a scholarship to the University of Edinburgh*; bha fèill mhòr oirre mar sheinneadair ann an consartan is cèilidhean: *she was in great demand in concerts and ceilidhs*; às an do dh'èirich Iomall Fèis Dhùn Èideann: *from which the Edinburgh Festival Fringe arose*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Chan eil duine seach duine aca beò an-diugh: *neither man is alive today*. Seach is very useful in idiom – it can mean, for example, 'instead of, rather than, compared to, apart from'. With a repetition of a noun, and seach between them, it can mean 'neither'. Here are some examples: cha toigh leam fear seach fear dhiubh 'I don't like either one'; chan eil taobh seach taobh a' còrdadh rithe 'she doesn't like either side'; cha bhuannaich sgioba seach sgioba dhiubh a' chuach 'neither team will win the trophy'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: mar an ceudna: *likewise, similarly*.

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