

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Madaidhean-cuain a' Cur Eathraichean Fodha

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 1,361. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,057 corresponds to Litir 1,361. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

A bheil fios agaibh dè th' ann am madadh-cuain? *Ocean-wolf*. 'S e sin a' Ghàidhlig air fear de na h-ainmhidhean as iongantaiche a chithear timcheall chostaichean na h-Alba. Ann am Beurla, 's e 'killer whale' no 'orca' a chanas daoine ri a leithid.

'S e mamail mara a th' ann. Tha e càirdeach do leumadairean agus mucan-mara. Tha madaidhean-cuain air a bhith an sàs ann an droch thachartasan aig muir, faisg air an Spàinn agus Portagail. Tha buidhnean dhiubh air ionnsaigh a thoirt air bàtaichean, gu h-àraidh gheataichean. Chuir iad grunnan shoithichean fodha.

Ach a bheil, no an robh, na madaidhean-cuain a' dèanamh an aon rud ann an uisgeachan na h-Alba? Uill, dh'aithris aon sgiobair o chionn ghoirid gun tug fear ionnsaigh air a' gheat aige faisg air Sealtainn. Agus bha mi a' leughadh, an latha eile, beachd aig fear le ceangal làidir do dh'eileanan an taoibh siar. Bha e an amharas gun robh madaidhean-cuain air bàtaichean a chur fodha far taobh an iar na h-Alba cuideachd.

Tha a chunntas ri leughadh anns an leabhar '*Stories from South Uist*' – cruinneachadh de sgeulachdan agus naidheachdan aig Aonghas Beag, Aonghas Mac Ill Ialain à Uibhist a Deas. Bha iad air an cruinneachadh, agus air an eadar-theangachadh gu Beurla, leis an sgoilear, Iain Latharna Caimbeul, Fear Chanaigh.

Anns an leabhar, tha naidheachd aig Aonghas mu fhear Dòmhnall MacLeòid. Bha na sinnsirean aig Dòmhnall à Muile. Ach bha Dòmhnall fhèin a' fuireach ann an Loch Baghasdal ann an Uibhist a Deas.

Bha e ag obair air bàt'-iasgaich. Bha iad latha far costa sear Uibhist, ri iasgach an sgadain, nuair a thàinig maighdeann-mhara am bàrr air an cùlaibh. Thilg a h-uile duine a bh' air bòrd sgadan dhi. Cha deach i fodha. Ach, nuair a thilg Dòmhnall an sgadan aigesan, dh'fhalbh a' mhaighdeann-mhara fodha sa bhad. Thuirt an sgiobair ris gum faigheadh Dòmhnall bàs le bàthadh **uair no uaireigin**.

Airson a bhith sàbhailte, dh'fhuirich Dòmhnall aig port airson bliadhna. Ach an uair sin, thàinig fear thuige. Bha e ag iarraidh a thaic ann a bhith a' seòladh bàta à Loch Baghasdal gu ruige Loch Sgiopot ann an ceann a tuath an eilein. Dh'aontaich Dòmhnall a chuideachadh.

Tha an còrr dhen sgeul air innse le fear Fionnlagh MacCoinnich, leis an robh Taigh-òsta Loch Baghasdail. 'S e latha brèagha a bh' ann, agus chunnaic Fionnlagh am bàta a' falbh.

Nuair a bha i a' tighinn na b' fhaisge air Loch Sgiopot chunnaic fear dhen luchd-obrach aig Taigh-solais Uisinis i. Chuir e a phrosbaig sìos agus dh'fhalbh e airson rudeigin eile a dhèanamh. Bha e air falbh deich mionaidean. Nuair a thill e, cha robh sgeul air a' bhàta. Thuirt Fionnlagh gur dòcha gun tàinig ceàrban no muc-mhara suas **fòidhpe** agus gun deach a cur thairis.

Chuir an deasaiche, Fear Chanaigh, a bheachd ris. Choirich e madadh-cuain. Bha e an amharas gun robh madaidhean-cuain air grunnan bhàtaichean a chur fodha anns an dòigh sin. Bha e a' sgrìobhadh o chionn còrr is seasgadh bliadhna.

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Faclan na Litreach: Madadh-cuain: *orca, killer whale*; Aonghas Mac Ill Ialain: *Angus MacLellan*; Uibhist a Deas: *South Uist*; Loch Baghasdal: *Lochboisdale*; Loch Sgiopot: *Loch Skipport*; Fionnlagh MacCoinnich: *Finlay MacKenzie*; Taigh-solais Uisinis: *Ushinish Lighthouse*.

Abairtean na Litreach: fear de na h-ainmhidhean as iongantach a chithear timcheall chostaichean na h-Alba: *one of the most amazing animals which is seen around the coasts of Scotland*; càirdeach do leumadairean agus mucan-mara: *related to dolphins and whales*; an sàs ann an droch thachartasan aig muir: *involved in bad occurrences at sea*; faisg air an Spàinn agus Portagail: *near Spain and Portugal*; chuir iad grunnan shoithichean fodha: *they sank several vessels*; dh'aithris aon sgiobair o chionn ghoirid: *one skipper reported recently*; gun tug fear ionnsaigh air a' gheat aice faisg air Sealtainn: *that one attacked his yacht near Shetland*; bha e an amharas gun robh madaidhean-cuain air bàtaichean a chur fodha: *he suspected that orcas had sunk boats*; bha iad air an cruinneachadh, agus air an eadar-theangachadh gu Beurla: *they were collected and translated into English*; leis an sgoilear, Iain Latharna Caimbeul, Fear Chanaigh: *by the scholar, John Lorne Campbell, the Laird of Canna*; bha na sinnsirean aig Dòmhnall à Muile: *Donald's ancestors were from Mull*; nuair a thàinig maighdeann-mhara am bàrr air an cùlaibh: *when a mermaid came to the surface behind them*; nuair a thilg Dòmhnall an sgadan aigesan, dh'fhalbh a' mhaighdeann-mhara fodha sa bhad: *when Donald threw his herring, the mermaid dived immediately*; thàinig fear thuige: *a man came to him*; bha cuimhne aigesan air na thachair: *he remembered what happened*; bha i air a dhol à fianais: *she had disappeared*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: gur dòcha gun tàinig ceàrban no muc-mhara suas **fòidhpe**: *that perhaps a basking shark or whale came up **under her** (boats are conceptually feminine, at least when at sea). The Gaelic Orthographic Conventions (2009) recommend an accented 'o' in both the prepositional pronouns fòidhpe 'under her' and fòidhpa 'under them' (to indicate a vowel lengthening) but not all writers adhere to this. Dwelly and the Faclair Beag give fòidhpe and fòidhpa. The other prepositional pronouns with 'fo' do not have an accented 'o' – fodham 'under me', fodhad 'under you', fodha 'under him', fòdhainn 'under us' and fòdhaibh 'under you (pl)'*.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: gum faigheadh Dòmhnall bàs le bàthadh **uair no uaireigin**: *that Donald would die by drowning **at some time or other***.

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