

An Naidheachd Againne

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Na deugaire bha Rhoda Meek na preasantair air a' phrògram chloinne Dè-a-nis? Agus a-nis, tha i a' dèanamh rudan teicnigeach do dh'Ùlpan agus a' dealbhachadh cha mhòr rud sam bith. Mar a leughas sibh gu h-ìosal, tha cothrom aice san latha an-diugh a bhith ag obair aig astar bho a dachaigh "ùr" ann an Tìriodh.

As a teen Rhoda Meek was, among other things, a presenter on the children's radio program Dè a-nis? but apparently always had a strong interest in the technical side of computing. Having recently moved back to the family croft on Tìree, she is now able to work from home doing design, marketing, and all sorts of technical things for Ùlpan who arrange Scottish Gaelic courses. In addition she designs posters, websites, and practically anything else that's needed.

A' Tilleadh a Thiriodh

le Rhoda Meek

On a bha mi beag biodach, b' e mo mhiann fuireach ann an Tìriodh.

Rugadh agus thogadh mi ann an Dùn Èideann. Chaidh mi tro Fhoghlam Gàidhlig ann an Dùn Èideann agus ann an Obair Dheathain, a' fàgail na sgoile fileanta sa Ghàidhlig.



Donald's father (Rhoda's grandfather) leading horse in stackyard 1913
Donald Meek on <http://meekwrite.blogspot.com>

Returning to Tìree

by Rhoda Meek

Ever since I was a kid, I have wanted to live in Tìree.

I was born and brought up in Edinburgh. I went through Gaelic Medium Education in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, leaving school fluent in Gaelic.

Each summer, my family returned to visit Tìree. I have one memory of my Seanair (Grandfather), sitting in front of the fire in the house 'Coll View'. I was only two and Seanair was ill. Maybe it's a memory, maybe it's a memory of a photo, but no matter, it's my first memory of Tìree. Seanair passed away shortly after.

My grandmother stayed on the island alone for five years and each summer I looked forward to visiting her, and the croft. It was a safe, beautiful place for me. Coming from the big city to a stunning island, full of places to play – beaches, rocks, old buildings and more. It was an incredible place. It was a place full of hope where I could run, jump and play – both physically and mentally.

It was a more difficult place for my Dad. There was much to do as he tried to bring the croft to order; old rubbish to move, things to fix and an elderly house needing work.

Gach samhradh on a rugadh mi, thill an teaghlach a Thiriodh. Tha aona chuimhne agam air mo sheanair, na shuidhe air beulaibh an teine san taigh, ‘Coll View’. Cha robh mise ach dà bhliadhna a dh’aois, agus bha mo sheanair tinn. ’S docha nach e cuimhne a th’ ann, ’s docha gur e cuimhne de dhealbh a th’ ann, ach tha mi coma, ge bith dè th’ ann, ’s e sin a’ chiad chuimhne a tha agam air Tiriodh. Shiubhal mo sheanair beagan mhiosan às dèidh sin.

Dh’fhuirich mo sheanmhair anns an eilean leatha fhèin airson còig bliadhna, agus gach samhradh bhiodh fiughair orm tadhal oirre, agus tadhal air a’ chroit. ’S e àite sàbhailte, àlainn a bh’ ann dhòmhsa. A’ tighinn às a’ bhaile-mhòr gu eilean eireachdail, làn àitichean-cluich – tràighean, creagan, seann togalaichean agus rudan eile. ’S e àite air leth a bh’ann. Àite làn dòchais far an robh e ceadaichte dhomh ruith, leum agus cluich – gach cuid nam chuirp agus nam eanchainn.

’S e àite nas doirbhe a bh’ ann dom athair. Bha iomadh rud ri dhèanamh, ’s e feuchainn ris a’ chroit a chur an òrdugh; seann treallaich ri ghluasad, rudan rin càradh agus an seann taigh feumach air obair.

’S cinnteach gun robh e doirbh dom mhàthair cuideachd – dh’fheumadh i uisge a ghoil nan robh uisge teth a dhith oirre – ’s ann mar sin a tha an taigh fhathast, ach ’s iongantach mura robh e fada na bu doirbhe le clann nad chois!

A bharrachd air trioblaidean an taighe, bha mi mothachail, fiù ’s nuair a bha mi nam phàisde, gun robh iomadh bliadhna de dh’eachraidh ri fhaicinn taobh a-staigh ballachan na croite, ach cha b’ ann gus an do thòisich m’ athair air sgrìobhadh o chionn ghoirid mu eachdraidh an teaghlaich a thuig mi cho cudromach sa tha an eachdraidh sin, agus cho prìseil ’s a tha i.

Tha cuimhne aig m’ athair a tha iongantach. Na sgrìobh-aidhean, tha e a’ togail dhealbhan de na làithean a dh’fhalbh, làn faireachdainn agus dath. Ged nach do choinnich mi riamh rim shinnsearan sna sgeulachdan, le bhith leughadh mun deidhinn agus mum beathannan, tha mi a’ faireachdainn glè fhaisg orra ann an dòigh nach robh mi roimhe. Thuirt mi rim m’ athair cho math ’s a bha na sgeulachdan a’ còrdadh rium, gach cuid air sgàth na bha mi ag ionnsachadh, agus cuideachd a

I’m sure it wasn’t easy for my Mum either – she had to boil water if she wanted it hot – that’s how the house still is, but I am sure it was a good deal harder with children round her feet.



Donald’s great-aunts Annabel (seated) and Maggie in 1957

Donald Meek on <http://meekwrite.blogspot.com>

As well as the issue of the house, I was aware, even as a child, that there were many years of history to be seen within the bounds of the croft; however, it wasn’t until my Dad recently began to write about the history of the family that I started to realise how important that

history is, and how valuable it is.

My Dad has an amazing memory. In his writing, he draws pictures of the old days, full of feeling and colour. Although I never met my ancestors in the stories, reading about them and their lives makes me feel close to them in a way I didn’t before. I told my Dad how much I was enjoying the stories, both because of what I was learning, and because he is saving me the trouble of sitting down with a tape recorder in twenty years’ time and trying to jog his memory!

When my own circumstances changed this year, I got the chance to fulfil my dream. I moved to Tiree. Just for a week or two, to see if it suited me. I am thirty years old. I have never had a job which allowed me to work remotely, but I do now. If I don’t grab the chance now whilst I am fit and healthy, I might not get another one.

I spent the first week bringing some order to the house. I spent the second week in the garden, digging and planting potatoes and I spent the third week helping friends with the lambing.

There was no doubt in my mind. After three weeks I was certain that Tiree was where I should be. There is nowhere else on earth where I feel peace like I do when I am in *Tir an Èrna*. It’s easier to breathe here than it is anywhere else. For me, anyway.

chionns nach bi feum agam air suidhe leis ann am fichead bliadhna eile 's mi a' feuchainn ri a chuimhneachain a dhùsgadh!

Nuair a dh'atharraich gnothaichean nam bheatha fhèin am bliadhna, fhuair mi cothrom mu dheireadh thall mo mhiann a choileanadh. Ghluais mi a Thiriodh. Son seachdain no dhà. Dìreach gus faicinn am freagradh e orm. Tha mi deich bliadhna fichead a dh'aois. Cha robh obair agam roimhe a leigeadh dhomh gluasad, ach tha a-nise. Mura greimich mi air a' chothrom an-dràsta, 's dòcha nach bi cothrom eile agam, 's mi 'fit', fallain.

Chuir mi seachad a' chiad seachdain a' cur beagan òrduigh air an taigh. Chuir mi seachad an dàrna seachdain sa ghàrradh, a' cladhach agus a' cur buntàta, agus chuir mi seachd an treas seachdain a' cuideachadh charaidean le breith nan uan.

Cha robh ceist nam inntinn. Às dèidh trì seachdainean, bha mi cinnteach gur ann an Tiriodh a bha còir agam a bhith. Chan eil àite eile air an t-saoghal far a bheil mi a' faireachdainn sìth mar a tha mi ann an Tìr an Eòrna. Tha e nas fhasa anail a ghabhail an seo na ann an àite sam bith eile. Dhòmhsa co-dhiù.

Ma tha mi son fuireach anns an eilean, chan eil ceist ann – tha tòrr obrach air thoiseach orm, ach às dèidh dhomh ionnsachadh mun uiread obrach 's a rinn mo shinnsearan thairis air na bliadhnaichean, agus às deidh dhomh faicinn uiread 's a rinn mo phàrantan gus an taigh agus a' chroit a ghleidheil, cha mhòr nach eil e na uallach orm, ach uallach math, obair a dheanamh gus an t-saothair sin a chomharrachadh le bhith a' coimhead às dèidh an tasglainn phriseil a chaidh fhàgail – eachdraidh an teaghlaich ann an Tiriodh.

'S dòcha gum faic mi ann sibh latha brèagha air choreigin.

Faodaidh sibh tuilleadh a leughadh mu eachdraidh mo theaghlaich, agus eachdraidh na croite air *blog* m' athar: <http://meekwrite.blogspot.com>.

I want to stay on the island, no question. There's a lot of work ahead of me, but after learning about the amount of work my ancestors put in over the years, and after seeing the amount of work my parents have put into keeping the house and the croft, it's almost a duty, a good duty though, to do my part to honour it by looking after the priceless archive which has been left behind – the history of our family in Tìree.

Maybe I'll see you there some day.

You can read more about my family history, and the history of the croft on my Dad's blog: <http://meekwrite.blogspot.com>.



Donald's Uncle Donald with horses and reaper
Donald Meek on <http://meekwrite.blogspot.com>

Rhoda's own blog may be found at <http://wodieskodie.com/>

Links to online ACGA resources

Main ACGA Website: <http://acgamerica.org/>
ACGA Forum: <http://forum.acgamerica.org/>
ACGA Facebook Page: <http://facebook.com/ACGAGaelic>
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<http://forum.acgamerica.org/viewforum.php?f=51>

AN NAIDHEACHD AGAINNE

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An Naidheachd Againne welcomes submissions. Contact the editors for more information.



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