

Hie mee dys oraid haitnyssagh er y gherrit shoh mychione bardaght Ghaelgagh ayns ny Hellanyn Sheear ayns yn eedoo lhing. Va Bill Innes loayrt mychione Donald Macintyre, ny Dòmhnall Ruadh (ruy) Phàislig, va ruggit ayns Uist y Jiass ayns 1889. Ta Macintyre coontit dy ve unnane jeh ny bardyn Gaelgagh tradishoonagh share 'syn eedoo lhing. Screeu yn scoillar Derick Thomson my e chione, 'T'eh myr dy beagh fer jeh bardyn yn hoghtoo lhing jeig er ve bio ny mast'ain ayns yn eedoo lhing... Ta bree, geyrid-cheilley as aittys er-lheh 'sy vardaght, as berçhys as diunid glare s'liklee nagh vel veg corrym rish 'sy lhing shoh.'

Bill Innes, ta çheet voish yn un aynr jeh Uist y Jiass eh hene as Gaelg echey voish y chlean, t'eh er chur magh jeshaghey jeh *Aeòlus*, nane jeh daanyn liauyrey Vacintyre, ta ny smoo na daa housane line er lhiurid, lesh recortys er CD jeh hene lhaih eh. Ta Innes credjal dy vel eh ymmyrçhagh dy chlashtyn yn vardaght er ny ghra (ny er ny singal) er ard ayns glare as blass ynnydaght yn vard, son dy vel bree ayns sheean yn ghlare ta caillit mannagh vel shiu agh lhaih ny goan er pabyr. Ta Innes hene ny smoo na kiare feed blein dy eash as t'eh credjal nagh bee peiagh erbee bio ta abyl toiggal as lhaih yn vardaght shoh ayns glare yn vard kione jeih ny feed blein. Ga dy vel paart dy leih saa ayns ny hellanyn ta goll er troggal lesh Gaelg foast, cha vel ad geddyn berçhys as bree yn ghlare ny smoo, ny ny keeadyn dy ocklyn er-lheh va kianlt rish shenn vea yn chroit. Son mac-soyley, ta Macintyre jannoo ymmyd jeh shiartanse dy enmyn son caghlaaghyn sorçh dy voain, as ny greienyn va usit dy yiarey ee.

Gys ny 1950yn, va bardaght as skeealyn ooryn dy hraa er lhiurid goll er gra harrish as er ynsaghey ayns ny thieyn *cèilidh*, ta shen thieyn sleih cadjin raad va sleih taaghey dy chlashtyn skeealyn, naightyn as kiaull as dy ghoail spoyrt. 'Sy Ghaelg Albinagh ta cur *cèilidh* er peiagh meanal cur shilley er. Va wheesh dy ynsagh as dy chreenaght ry chlashtyn ayns thie ayr Vacintyre as dy row yn sleih gra yn *Colaiste* (yn ard-scoill) rish y thie. She thieyn thooit v'ayn fegooish çhimlee; cha row agh towl beg dy lhiggey magh yn jaagh va çheet voish aile er y laare ayns mean y çhamyr. Tra haink lectraghys gys yn ellan ayns mean yn eedoo lhing haink yn radio marish as va cliaghtey yn thie *cèilidh* ec kione. Hug Ned Beg Hom Ruy tastey da'n un chaghlaa ayns Mannin 'sy nuyoo lhing jeig: 'cha vel ny shenn gheiney çhaglym ayns ny thieyn myr boallagh ad dy insh skeealyn, agh ta'n sleih aegey çhaglym dy haggloo Baarle as dy insh reddynd fardalagh nagh vel shenn sleih goaill taitnys erbee ayndoo'.

Va Donald cha mee-hreishteilagh mysh cronney yn ghlare as yn obbyr echey hene as dy beagh eh er tilgey ny laue-screenyn echey ooilley er yn aile er-be dy ren e neen lhiettal eh. Cha dooar eh yn moylley v'eh toilçhyn myr bard rish e lhing hene, agh va lioar jeh'n vardaght echey currit magh lurg e vaase. Nish ta Bill Innes treishteil dy vow eh caa dy recortys paart jeh'n vardaght roish my bee eh ro anmagh, as dy bee caa ec sheeloge noa blashtyn er yn obbyr er yn eddyr-voggyl.

I recently attended an interesting talk about Gaelic poetry in the Western Isles in the twentieth century. Bill Innes was talking about Donald Macintyre, or Dòmhnall Ruadh Phàislig (red-haired Donald of Paisley), who was born in South Uist in 1889. Macintyre is considered one of the best traditional Gaelic bards of the twentieth century. The scholar Derick Thomson wrote of him, ‘in one sense it is as though one of the eighteenth-century poets had been alive in our midst in the twentieth century... The poetry has tremendous verve, wit and humour, and a richness of linguistic texture which is probably unequalled in this century.’

Bill Innes, who is a native Gaelic speaker from the same district of South Uist himself, has published an edition of *Aeòlus*, one of Macintyre’s epic poems, which is more than two thousand lines long, with a recording on CD of himself reading it. Innes believes that it is necessary to hear the poetry said (or sung) out loud in the poet’s own dialect and accent, for there is a power in the sound of the language which is lost if the poetry is only read on the page. Innes himself is over eighty years old and he believes there will be no-one alive in ten or twenty years capable of reading this poetry in the author’s own dialect. Though some younger people from the islands are still raised with Gaelic, they get nothing like the richness and depth of language that was once taken for granted, nor the hundreds of specialized terms pertaining to the crofting way of life. For example, Macintyre uses several names for different types of peat, and the implements used in cutting it.

Until the 1950s, poems and stories several hours long were recited and learned in the *cèilidh* houses, that is, ordinary people’s homes where one would gather to hear stories, news and music and to have a good time. In Scottish Gaelic ‘putting a *cèilidh* on’ someone means visiting them (cf. Manx / Manx English ‘put a sight on’). There was so much learning to be found in the house of Macintyre’s father that it was nicknamed *an Colaiste* (the College). The houses were thatched with no chimney, only a small hole to let out the smoke from a peat fire on the floor in the centre of the room. When electricity came to the island in the middle of the twentieth century, radio came with it and the custom of the *cèilidh* house withered away. Edward Faragher noted a similar change in the Isle of Man in the nineteenth century: ‘the old men do not gather in the houses as they used to to tell stories, but the young people gather to talk English and to tell trivial things which the old do not take any pleasure in’.

Donald was so despairing about the fate of the language and his own work that he would have thrown all his manuscripts on the fire if his daughter had not stopped him. He did not receive the praise he deserved as a poet in his own life-time, but a collection of his poetry was published after his death. Now Bill Innes hopes that he will get a chance to record some of the poetry before it is too late, and that a new generation will be able to get a taste of the work on the internet.