

Flòraidh NicDhòmhnaill – Gaelic Transcript and English Translation

Flora Macdonald, a North Uist resident, talks first of all about the importance of Craigard in the community, and her own interactions with Donald MacKinnon. She goes on to describe her reasons for setting up the traditional skills exhibition in Taigh Chearsabhagh, and her own thoughts on their place in the community today.

Well, tha Creag Àrd uamhasach cudromach sa choimhearsnachd airson... tha daoine a' faighinn a-mach às an dachaidh aca fhèin, agus tha iad a' cur seachad an latha còmhla ri daoine eile, agus cuideachd tha iad ag ionnsachadh sgilean, neo tha iad an sàs ann an sgilean. Agus tha e a' toirt toileachadh dhaibh fhèin, agus eh, tha e cuideachd a' toirt faochadh dha na daoine a th' aig ... aig an dachaidh aca. So, tha àite mar a tha Creag Àrd uamhasach fhèin feumail.

Well, tha na daoine a th' ann an Creag Àrd... tha iadsan a' toirt gu leòr seachad. Tha iad air a bhith a' dèanamh uinneagan sa choimhearsnachd – agus chan e sin a h-uile h-uinneag – 's e uinneagan sònraichte a tha seo – stained glass – agus tha sin ag innse gu bheil sgilean sònraichte aig a' bhoireannach a tha a' ruith Creag Àrd, agus gu bheil i gan ionnsachadh dha na daoine a tha a' tighinn a-staigh.

Thachair mi air Dòmhnall, agus um, bha fhios 'am... thuig mi glè mhath gun robh ùidh aige as a' chuibhle agus as a' bheirt cuideachd. Bha e a' sealltainn air a' bheirt cho luath 's a thàinig e a-staigh. So mar sin sheall mi dha a' chuibhle-shnìomh an toiseach agus bha e a' tuigsinn glè mhath mar a bha i ag obair. Ach bha fhios 'am – bha mi a' smaointinn gun robh eòlas aige air a' bheirt mar thà, agus, eh, rinn e rud air a' bheirt còmhla rium fhèin, agus tha fhios 'am gun dèan Dòmhnall obair beart cuideachd, no breabadaireachd.

Well, chuir mise air dòigh an taisbeanadh a bha seo, airson tha mi air a bhith a' cruinneachadh stuth agus – eh, sin na h-innealan – tha mi air a bhith a' cruinneachadh nan innealan agus a h-uile sìon a bhuinneas dha na sgilean a tha seo. Ach chuir mi air e airson gur ann às a' cheann a tuath ann an Uibhist a Tuath a dh'ionnsaich mise snìomh an toiseach nuair a bha mi glè òg. Agus 's ann bho bhoireannach thall ann an Uibhist a Tuath – Mar, Mary Margaret an t-ainm a bh' oirre – agus fhuair mi a-mach an t-ainm aice ann an rannsachadh nuair a chuir mi air an taisbeanadh – agus, eh, mar sin bha mi airson na sgilean a tha... a dh' ionnsaich mi ann an Uibhist a Tuath a thoirt air ais dha na daoine an dèidh còig bliadhna fichead co-dhiù. Agus bhon a thàinig mi a dh' fhuireach an seo bha mi a' smaointinn gum biodh e gu math freagarach gun seallainn dhaibh na sgilean a thòisich mi air o chionn dh' fhaoidhte còig bliadhna fichead.

Well, tha còmhlan air a bhith a' tighinn a-staigh, agus chuir boireannach eile a tha ag obair – Margaret Fenton – a tha ag obair air Prime Time ann an Taigh Chearsabhagh – tha ise – tha còmhlan aicese leis am bi i a' coinneachadh. So chuir ise air dòigh gun tigeadh iadsan a-staigh a shealltainn air an taisbeanadh, agus bha mi a' sealltainn nam beart.. well 's e real.. 's e a' chuibhle-shnìomh a bu mhotha a bha mi a' sealltainn dhaibh agus chòrd sin rium uamhasach math airson thachair mi air boireannaich agus daoine an

àite, agus bha ùidh aca uile as an t-snìomh agus bha mi fhìn cuideachd ag ionnsachadh rudan bho na boireannaich as ‘a choimhearsnachd airson bha fiosrachadh aca mu dheidhinn dè a bha mi a’ dèanamh.

Agus cuideachd ‘s ann à Uibhist a Tuath a thàinig cuideachd m’ athar, agus s’ e tuairneir a bh’ annta. Bhiodh iad a’ dèanamh beairtean agus cuibhlichean-shnìomh agus aig an taisbeanadh a tha seo chì sinn mar a tha na sgilean tradaiseanta a bh’ aig na fir ri obair a’ chlà cuideachd. Agus tha mi a’ smaointinn bu bheil sin gu math cudromach gum faic daoine mar a chaidh na h-innealan a thogail leis a’ làimh.

Bha coir, tha mi a’ smaointinn, barrachd cothrom a bhith aig daoine òg na h-eileanan a tha seo barrachd, eh, a dhèanamh airson na sgilean ionnsachadh, airson mura h-ionnsaich mar a tha mo leithid fhìn – agus daoine nas sine na mi – aig a bheil na sgilean bàsaichidh na sgilean a-mach... Tha mi a’ cluintinn gu bheil an clò a’ fàs gu math fasanta a-rithist, agus gu bheil iad a’ sealltainn airson barrachd dhaoine a nì obair a’ chlà, agus gu bheil iad a’ tairgsinn beairtean a thoirt do dhaoine òga ann an Leòdhas airson gun ionnsaich iad e. So, mar sin, cha deach an clò riamh a-mach à fasan, agus tha mi a’ smaointinn gu bheil e a’ sìor-fhàs fasanta.

English Translation

Well, Craigard is terribly important in the community because... people get out of their own home and they spend a day with other people, and also they learn skills, or they’re involved in skills. And it gives themselves pleasure, and it also gives respite to the people that are... that are in their own home. So a place like Craigard is terribly useful.

Well, the people that are in Craigard... they contribute a lot. They’ve been making windows in the community – and that’s not all windows – these are special windows – stained glass – and that tells (you) that the woman who runs Craigard has special skills, and that she teaches them to the people that come in.

I met Donald, and um, I knew... I understood very well that he was interested in the wheel and in the loom as well. He was looking at the loom as soon as he came in. So I showed him the spinning wheel at first, and he understood very well how it worked. But I knew – I thought he was already familiar with the loom, and, eh, he did a thing on the loom with me, and I know that Donald can do loom work as well, or weaving.

Well, I organised this exhibition, because I have been collecting material and – eh, that’s the equipment – I have been collecting the equipment and everything related to these skills. But I put it on because it’s from the north end in North Uist that I learned spinning at first when I was very young. And it’s from a woman over in North Uist – Mar, Mary Margaret was her name – and I found out her name in research when I put the exhibition on – and, eh, so I wanted to give back to the people the skills that I learned in North Uist after at least twenty-five years. And since I came to live here I thought it would be very

appropriate that I should show them the skills that I started on, maybe twenty-five years ago.

Well, a group has been coming in, and another woman that's working set – Margaret Fenton – that works on Prime Time in Taigh Chearsabhagh – she – she has a group that she meets. So she set it up that they would come in to see the exhibition, and I was showing the looms... well it's real... it's the spinning wheel mostly that I was showing them and I really enjoyed that because I met women and people of the place, and they were all interested in the spinning and I myself also learned things from the women in the community because they had knowledge about what I was doing.

And also it's from North Uist that my father's people came, and they were turners. They would make looms and spinning wheels and at this exhibition we also see how the traditional skills that the men had are involved in working the tweed. And I think that's very important that people see how the equipment was made by hand.

I think there should have been more opportunity for young people (in) these islands to do more to learn the skills, because if people like me – and people older than me – who have the skills don't teach, the skills will die out... I hear that tweed is becoming fashionable again, and that they are looking for more people to work the tweed, and that they are offering to give looms to young people in Lewis so that they can learn it. So, the tweed never went out of fashion, and I think it's getting more fashionable.