

Cas-chrom gu muileann bhleith

Eist ri Coinneach Alasdair Choinnich agus e ag innse mar a chaidh a’ chas-chrom a leigeil tharais airson an spaid, mar a sguir daoine a’ bhleith as na taighean aca fhèin, agus mar a bhiodh iad a’ biadhadh sprèidh, gu sonraichte bò a bhiodh air laogh fhaighinn. **Dur: 2.03**

Se fìor sheann inneal àiteachd a tha as a’ chas-chrom agus bha i air a dhol a mach a bith ro linn Choinnich Alasdair Choinnich. Bha daoine air tòiseachadh air crainn-treabhaidh air an draghadh le eich a chleachdadh far an robh an talamh freagarrach air a shon. Air taobh sear Na Hearadh far nach b’ urrainn sin a dhèanamh se spaidan a bha aca airson na feannagan a thionndadh. Tha Coinneach ag innse mar a bhiodh iad a’ togail na talmhainn as na claisean ‘s ga chuir air na feannagan. Bha seo a’ toirt dhaibh am barrachd talmhainn airson obrachadh agus a’ cumail an t-uisge a’ ruith tro na claisean. Far an robh barrachd air ceithir feannagan ga àiteachd se gearraidh a chanadh iad ris. Bha iad a’ cur bhuntàta, coirce agus eòrna. Chuiradh iad tuinneap, curran agus càl cuideachd.

Bha an eòrna gu math pailt agus bhiodh iad ga thoirt dhan a’ chrodh anns a’ gheamhradh. Nuair a bha laogh aig bò bha iad a’ toirt bonnach no pròs eòrna dhan bhoin.

Tha Coinneach ag innse mar a thog Lord Dunmore muileann bhleith ann am Miabhag. Chaidh na clachan-bleith a bha as na taighean am bristeadh oir cha robh feum orra a-nis. Se seanair Choinnich, Mata MacAmhlaigh, a’ chiad muilear a’ thàinig dhan mhuileann ann am Miabhag.

From the crooked spade to the grinding-mill

Audio of Kenneth Campbell telling us about the demise of the “cas-chrom”, the advantages of the common spade, how people gave up grinding their own meal at home and how they fed their cattle, particularly cows that had just calved. **Dur: 2.03**

The “cas-chrom” or crooked spade is an implement peculiar to the Highlands and one of great antiquity. However, by the early years of the 20th century it had been discarded as more and more people turned to the labour-saving horse-drawn plough. This was not an option on the east coast of Harris where the ground is too sparse, rocky and boggy to be worked in this way. A spade, although it didn’t lessen the labour by very much, was more user-friendly. The spade turned the soil more evenly and was also used to dig out ditches between the rigs or “lazy-beds” as they were named by people who had obviously never laboured over them! The earth cleared out of the ditches, added to seaweed or manure hauled from shore and byre, gave a good base for the planting of potatoes, oats and barley. The barley was plentiful and acted as winter fodder for cattle. When a cow calved it was given a barley bannock or brose.

A grinding-mill was built by Lord Dunmore in Miavag and the grindstones in people’s homes were destroyed as they were no longer required. Kenneth’s grandfather, Matthew MacAulay, was the first miller in Lord Dunmore’s mill in Miavag.