

Rubh' nan Cudaigean

Words, translation and notes
by Calum and Ruaridh MacDonald

Rann 1

Buain nam bàirnich, nam bàirnich, nam bàirnich,
Gathering the limpets, the limpets, the limpets,
Buain nam bàirnich air creagan Rubh' nan Cudaigean
Gathering the limpets on the rocks at Cuddy Point
Buain nam bàirnich, nam bàirnich, nam bàirnich
Gathering the limpets, the limpets, the limpets,
'S goilidh sinn na bàirnich san taigh air Rubh' nan Cudaigean.
And we'll boil the limpets in the house at Cuddy Point.

Sèist

Be hileam bò horam bò èirich is ithibh ith!
Be hileam bò horam bò rise and take the bait!
Be hileam bò horam bò feitheamh air na cudaigean,
Be hileam bò horam bò waiting for the cuddies,
Be hileam bò horam bò èirich is ithibh ith!
Be hileam bò horam be rise and take the bait!
Nach ith sibh na bàirnich, is ithidh mi na cudaigean.
Come and eat the limpets and I will eat the cuddies.

Rann 2

Goilidh sinn na bàirnich, na bàirnich, na bàirnich,
We will boil the limpets, the limpets the limpets,
Goilidh sinn na bàirnich san taigh air Rubh' nan Cudaigean
We will boil the limpets at the house at Cuddy Point
Goilidh sinn na bàirnich, bàirnich
We will boil the limpets, limpets
'S cagnaith sinn bàirnich air cladach Rubha nan Cudaigean.
And we will chew limpets on the shore at Cuddy Point

Rann 3

Cagnaith sinn na bàirnich, na bàirnich, na bàirnich
We will chew the limpets, the limpets, the limpets
Cagnaith sinn, na cudaigean.
We will chew, the cuddies.
Cagnaith sinn na bàirnich, na bàirnich, na bàirnich
We will chew the limpets, the limpets, the limpets
'S sgaoilidh sinn na bàirnich air muir Rubh' nan Cudaigean.
We will scatter the limpets on the sea at Cuddy Point.

Rann 4

Sgaoilidh sinn na bàirnich, na bàirnich, na bàirnich
We will scatter the the limpets, the limpets, the limpets
Sgaoilidh sinn na bàirnich air muir Rubh' nan Cudaigean
We will scatter the limpets on the sea at Cuddy Point
Sgaoilidh sinn na bàirnich, na bàirnich, na bàirnich
We will scatter the the limpets, the limpets, the limpets
Suidhidh sinn le tàbh ann air creag Rubh' nan Cudaigean
We will sit with the hand net on the rocks at Cuddy Point

Buain – gathering; **bàirnich** – limpets;
creagan – rocks **Rubh nan Cudaigean** Cuddy Point ; **Cudaigean** – cuddy fish (pollock, coalfish, coley, saithe) ; **goilidh** – boil; **taigh** – house;

Èirich – rise up; **ithibh** – eat; **ith** – consume; **feitheamh** – waiting;

Goilidh – boil;

Cagnaith – chew; **cladach** – shore

Sgaoilidh – scatter

Suidhidh – sit **tàbh** – hand net

Donny Morrison of Cuddy Point, Scalpay, has won the title of Scottish inshore fisherman of the year with his boat the Agate year after year, but he showed promise from a very early age. As children we often went across to Scalpay on holiday, and it was there that he showed us the traditional method of cuddy fishing using the large circular net called the 'tamh'. You gather loads of limpets - take them back to the house - boil them - shell them - give them all a good chew - go out with the 'tamh' - set it in the water - throw the congealed mass of limpets into the water within the area of the net - then wait for the main event, loads of small fat tasty cuddies, rising to the bait. Then it's all hands to the tamh - remove the catch - get back to the house - get the frying pan out - the cycle completed.

A very particular type of song, in the traditional style of Gaelic work songs composed around a daily task such as fishing, rowing, milking, herding, harvesting, etc. Calum's original demo was quite removed from what we ended up with on the album, but we did want to try marrying a song of this type to a rock sound. This was Iain's first album with us, and he was keen to make his mark, although it took time to get him to compromise his own, natural, involved style, towards the simpler more solid sound that we were after. Together with Malcolm, as a rhythm section, he worked out a complex backing track arrangement for the song, which was later modified in the studio. The song has had a new lease of life in recent years as a result of its inclusion in the repertoire of the Fèisean movement, and it was satisfying to see a song written within the tradition, going back there.