

[Inside Front Cover - Joe Neil MacNeil, Storyteller / Sgeulachd mu'n Droch Shuil](#)ISSUE : [Issue 4](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1973/5/1

Joe MacNeil, Storyteller I used to tell a lot of stories, but then after a time, when you'd get out around where people weren't so interested in that line, you more or less give up the telling of stories. And then you wouldn't be so good at it, once you give it up. For a long time you didn't have much confidence in yourself. I don't have so many as I did. You forget them. Giving them up for a while you don't remember certain parts. It puts you astray. There were no listeners. You need both sides. There has to be a side that produces the sound and there has to be an ear to hear it, otherwise it doesn't register. I don't know why I tell stories. Some people tell stories, well, from just hearing them and I guess you like to follow along those lines. If the stories appeal to you I imagine that you'd like to be able to tell stories as well. If you like people telling you stories you'll eventually get to learning them and tell them. I always liked to hear stories. In my time you'd hear lots of stories. Folklore was so common. There were old maids travelling in the country years ago and they were wonderful, wonderful entertainers. They had stories and songs. They would go visiting, and of course they were going to entertain you if you went to their homes. Some of the women were terrific there. They were gifted. Some families had both the boys and the girls as they grew up • both sides were good at telling stories. To be a story, it had to be fairly long. Too short would not be appealing to us. We wanted a story to have quite a little bit to it. A short story, we didn't think there was quite enough in it for us. And it wouldn't make any difference how long the stories were, I'd be learning them as they'd be telling them and when they were through I knew them, every word, Sgeulachd mu'n Droch Shuil They were telling about witches and people with the Evil Eye. Tha mi dol a dh'inne naidheachd mu fheadhainn a bhiodh a' gonadh no aig am biodh droch shuil, bhiodh iad ag cantail gim deanadh iad deifir do bheathach no do dhaoine. 'S bha aon duine sbnraichte ann, 's dheanadh e suas naidheachd, 's a dh'aindheoin cho breugach 's gum biodh i shaoileadh duine leis cho doigheil 's a bhathar 'ga dea? namh gur e an fhirinn a bh'ann. Nis tha an naidheachd seo air a dhol air di-chuimhne orm. Chan'eil mi dol a cho fìor dhomhainn innte, ach bha am fear seo ag innseadh naidheachd 's iad a' seachas mu dheidhinn buidseachd is gonadh agus droch shuil. Thuirt e gu robh esan ag creidsin ??na leithid sin agus gu robh cuimhne aige gle mhath turas a bha athair a' treabhadh; each og aca de dh'each eireachdail, each glas. Agus bha fear ag gabhail an rathaid anns an im agus thug e suil air an each a bha seo agus feumaidh gu robh e 'g orduchadh gur ann aige fhein a bha an t-each. Ta- can beag an deidh dha'n duine seo a dhol seachad laigh an t-each agus cha ghabhadh an t-each cur air a chasan. Agus b'fheudar sgar dhe'n treabhadh an latha bha sin. Ach smaoinich an seann duine gum bu choir dha a rbp a chur sìos gu boireannach son- ruichte a bha pìos de dh'astar air falbh agus innse dhi mu dheidhinn an eich. Dh' fhaoidte gu rachadh aice air an gnothach a leasachadh; bha feadhainn ann a rachadh fhaca air na buistrichean a thilleadh. Dh'fhalbh am fear og agus bha e sgith 's an rathad dona 's an t-astar fada. Agus thug a uine mhor mus do rainig e an t-kite anns an robh an t-seann te. An uair a rainig e sin tha e



coltach nach robh i aig taigh anns an am. Bha 'n uine dol seachad 's am feasgar anmoch a' tighinn agus thug iad fanear an sin gu robh an t- each an deidh am bas fhaotainn. Agus dh'fheann iad an t-each agus bhathar a' dol a tharruing na closnach sios dha'n t-sloc. Cha leigeadh iad leis gu maduinn; bha i fas ro anmoch anns an fheasgar. Agus tha e coltach gun tainig ceannaiche paca mun cuairt anns an am agus cheannaich e an t-seiche a thug iad far an eich i agus dh'fhalbh e. Ach co-dhiubh an uair a thainig an t-seann te a bha seo dhachaidh agus a dh'innis

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12