

# Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Roddy Maclean's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" which is broadcast at approximately 1150 every Friday morning on BBC Radio nan Gaidheal (103-105 FM)\**

Thàinig an gille agam dhachaigh bhon sgoil latha a bha seo le fealla-dhà dhomh. Mar is trice 's e *jokes* Beurla a bhios aig a' chloinn, ach an turas seo bha rudeigin eibhinn aige ri ràdh ann an Gàidhlig. Cha robh e ach òg òg. Cha chreid mi nach robh e ann an Clas 2 anns a' bhun-sgoil. "Dè an t-òran Gàidhlig," dh'fhaighnich e, "as fheàrr leis an ochd-chasach, neo *octopus*?"

"Chan eil càil a dh'fhios agam," fhreagair mi, "dè an t-òran as fheàrr leis an ochd-chasach?"

Dhùin e a shùilean, mar gu robh e air an àrd-ùrlar aig a' Mhòd Nàiseanta, agus thòisich e air seinn... "Teann a-nall 's thoir dhomh do làmh, do làmh, do làmh, do làmh, do làmh, do làmh, do làmh." Bha e gu math toilichte leis fhèin agus cha b'urrainn dhomh ach gàire a dhèanamh.

An uairsin, dh'fhaighnich e dhìom gu dè bh'ann ann an seachd-chasach. "Chan eil càil a dh'fhios agam," arsa mise ris, a' smaoinichadh air a h-uile beathach air an robh mi eòlach, "dè th'ann ann an seachd-chasach?"

"Tha," ars' esan, "ochd-chasach a th'air cas a chall!"

Bha mi a' dol ga òrdachadh a-mach às mo shealladh, ach thuirt e rium gu robh pìos beag eile de dh'fhealla-dhà aige. Agus bha sin mu dheidhinn casan cuideachd.

"Siuthad, ma tha," thuirt mi ris, "innis do sgeul dhomh agus thalla!"

Bha e mu dheidhinn lannsair agus euslainteach ann an ospadal. Bha an t-euslainteach air a bhith fon lannsa mar tha. "Tha droch naidheachd agus deagh naidheachd agam dhut," thuirt an lannsair ris an euslainteach. "An toiseach – an droch naidheachd. Thug sinn a' chas cheàrr dhìot. Ach 's i an naidheachd mhath – as dèidh a h-uile rud, nach leig sinn a leas a' chas eile a thoirt dhìot idir!"

Faodaidh sinn fealla-dhà a dhèanamh mu dheidhinn casan, gu h-àraidh leis gu bheil am facal "cas" neo, mar a tha e uaireannan, "cois" neo "coise" a' nochdadh gu math tric ann an gnàthsan-cainnt. Canaidh sinn "cas a' falbh is cas a' fuireach" mu dheidhinn duine nach urrainn co-dhùnadh a dhèanamh. Neo gu robh taigh an cois na mara, ged nach eil cas aig a' mhuir ann. Neo gun tug cuideigin a chasan leis. Ach nach eil sinn uile a' toirt ar casan leinn?!

Uill, 's dòcha nach eil, agus tha cuimhn' agam air turas a dh'fhàg gnàths-cainnt anns an robh am facal "cas" neo "cois" uabhas air fear is aithne dhomh a bha na fhear-naidheachd. Chuir e fòn don duine eile a bha seo mu dheidhinn mar a chaill am fear eile a dhà chois ann an tubaist. Cha robh e freagarrach bruidhinn aig an àm agus thuirt mo charaid gum fònadh e air ais air an lathairne-mhàireach. Bha e airson faighinn a-mach am biodh an duine eile ag èirigh tràth anns a' mhadainn, gus am biodh fios aige cuin' a bhiodh e freagarrach fònadh. Ach 's e na thuirt e ris "am bi thu air do chois trath?" Cho luath 's a thuirt e e, bha fios aige gu robh e air mearachd a dhèanamh. Gu fortanach thuig am fear eile nach ann a' deanamh di-meas air a bha e, ach gur e dìreach gnàths-cainnt nàdarrach a bh'ann.

Ach air ais gu smuaintean nas aighearaich. Air latha eile, thàinig mo nighean dhachaigh le fealla-dhà eile agus 's ann mu dheidhinn casan a bha sin cuideachd. "Chaidh fear a-steach a bhùth-tàilleir," thuirt i. "Bha aon chas aige ochd òirlich na b'fhaide nan t'eile. 'Bu toil leam deise fhaicinn a bhiodh freagarrach dhomh,' thuirt e ris an tàilleir.

'Bu toil is leamsa,' fhreagair an tàilleir.

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**Faclan na seachdainne:** fealla-dhà: *fun, joke*; èibhinn: *funny, amusing*; bun-sgoil: *primary school*; ochd-chasach: *octopus (lit. eight-legged)*; lannsair: *surgeon*; euslainteach: *patient*; droch, deagh naidheachd: *bad, good news*; gnàths-cainnt: *figure of speech*; freagarrach: *suitable*; an lathairne-mhàireach: *the next day*; bùth-tàilleir: *a tailor's shop*; deise: *suit*.

**Abairtean na seachdainne:** cha robh e ach òg òg: *he was only very young*; chan eil càil a dh'fhios agam: *I have absolutely no idea*; cha b'urrainn dhomh ach gàire a dhèanamh: *I could do no other than laugh*; bha mi a' dol ga òrdachadh a-mach às mo shealladh: *I was going to order him out of my sight*; bha e air a bhith fon lannsa: *he had been operated on (lit. under the scalpel)*; a bha na fhear-naidheachd: *who was a journalist*; chuir e fòn: *he phoned*; nas aighearaich: *happier, more cheery*; ochd òirlich na b'fhaide nan t'eile: *eight inches longer than the other one (feminine)*; bu toil is leamsa: *so would I (like to see a suit which is suitable for you!)*

**Puing ghràmair na seachdainne:** Cas is feminine (a' chas = a foot, leg). Thug sinn a' chas cheàrr dhìot (we amputated the wrong leg). Cas cheàrr could also mean "left leg" but the context should make the meaning obvious. The dative is cois. Air a' chois (on the foot). A dhà chois (his two legs). Air chois also means "established". Chuir iad a' bhuidheann air chois (they established the group, organisation). An cois means "near" or "together with" and, because it is a compound preposition, it governs the genitive case in the following noun. An cois na mara (beside the sea). The plural is casan. Thug e a chasan leis (he departed – lit. he took his feet with him). The genitive is coise. Football is ball-coise (ball of foot). Bonn mo choise (the sole of my foot). Cas a' falbh is cas a' fuireach (lit. "a foot leaving and a foot staying") is said of somebody who cannot make up his mind. My friend asked the man who had lost his legs if he would be up and about but, without thinking, he used the figure of speech "air do chois" (lit. on your foot) and, naturally, felt embarrassed when he realised what he had said.

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne:** Siuthad (ma tha): Go on (then). Siuthad is a very useful word which covers a multitude of meanings in English, such as - get started, away with you, help yourself, speak up. You would often use it to encourage the start of an activity. If you have children at a Gaelic-medium unit, try it out on them. Am faod mi am buntata mu dheireadh fhaighinn neo a bheil sibhse ga iarraidh, a Mhamaidh? (may I have the last potato, Mummy, or do you want it?) Siuthad – ith e, tha gu leòr agam (go ahead – eat it, I have enough).

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