

## *Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh* le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at [rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk) \**

Tha deagh chuimhn’ agam air an latha a thàinig làraidh mhòr sìos an rathad cumhang a dh’ionnsaigh an taigh anns an robh mi-fhìn, mo bhean is ar dithis chloinne a’ fuireach anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Bha tòrr stuth againn fhèin na broinn, nach robh sinn air fhaicinn fad mhìosan. Beagan àirneis, aodach gu leòr, acfhainn de dh’iomadh seòrsa, leabhraichean, dèideagan is mòran rudan eile. Thàinig iad uile dusan mìle mìle thar a’ chuain bho Astràilia far an robh sinn a’ fuireach roimhe.

Bha taigh againn ann am baile beag brèagha an cois Loch Eiseort ann an ceann a deas an eilein – baile ris an canar Heasta. ’S e rathad singilte a th’ ann eadar Heasta agus an t-Ath Leathann agus tha e gu math cumhang airson làraidh mhòr. Gu dearbh, bha dràibhear na làraidh, a bhuineadh do Ghlaschu is a bh’ air a bhith glè ainneamh air taobh siar na Gaidhealtachd, gu math mì-chinnteach gu robh an rathad a’ dol a dh’àite sam bith!

Thachair mi ris air an rathad nuair a bha mi a’ falbh a dh’obair anns an Ath Leathann. Stad mi an càr, fhuair mi a-mach agus chaidh mi a bhruidhinn ris. Thuir e gu robh e a’ coimhead airson fear “Ruairidh MacIlleathain”, ged a thuigeas sibh gur ann anns a’ chànan eile a bha an còmhradh.

“Mi-fhìn a th’ ann,” thuir mi ris.

“Thus?” dh’fhaighnich e. Bha e follaiseach gu robh droch bheachd aige orm. “Dè rinn thu?”

“Dè tha sibh a’ ciallachadh?” fhreagair mi, “dè rinn mi?”

“Feumaidh gun do rinn thu rudeigin,” thuir an dràibhear. “Dh’fhàg thu Astràilia is tha thu a-nise a’ fuireach ann am meadhan a’ mhonaidh, sìos an rathad a bu chuinge a chunnaic mi a-riamh! Tha e follaiseach gu bheil thu a’ ruith air falbh. A bheil fios aig a’ phoilis gu bheil thu an seo?!”

A-nise bha e a’ dèanamh nàdar de ghàire mar a bha mi-fhìn. Ach lean e air. “Dè thug ort Astràilia fhàgail airson tighinn a dh’fhuireach an seo?” Choimhead mi timcheall. Bha mi air mo chuirteachadh le bòidhchead – sliabh, beinn, coille is muir – agus beanntan Rois is Chnòideirt a’ coimhead cho brèagha ri àite sam bith air an t-saoghal ann an solas na grèine. Ach feumaidh nach robh an dràibhear a’ faicinn na dùthcha mar a bha mise.

Co-dhiù, dh’innis mi an fhìrinn dha. “Tha mi an seo,” thuir mi, “airson na Gàidhlig.” Uill, nan robh e a’ smaoinichadh gu robh sglèat a dhith orm roimhe, bha e deimhinne às an deidh dhomh sin a ràdh ris! Bha e fhathast a’ crathadh a chinn nuair a chunnaic mi mu dheireadh e, agus e a’ dràibheadh air falbh a dh’ionnsaigh Heasta.

Bha sin o chionn deich bliadhna, agus ’s e an rud a tha iongantach mu dheidhinn gu bheil mi fhathast, bho àm gu àm, a’ smaoinichadh “càit’ an do chuir mi an rud sin neo an rud eile?” Agus uaireannan tha e a’ tighinn a-steach orm nach fhaca mi a-riamh e bho dh’fhàg mi Astràilia. Ged a bha luchd mòr anns an làraidh cha robh a h-uile rud innte a bha sinn an dùil.

Tha seanfhacal againn ann an Gàidhlig a tha a-mach air an dearbh rud. 'S iomadh nì a chailleas fear na h-imrich. Tha sin a' ciallachadh, nuair a tha sinn a' dèanamh imrich, a' gluasad stuth bho àite gu àite, neo bho thaigh gu taigh, gu bheil sinn tric a' caill rudeigin. 'S iomadh nì a chailleas fear na h-imrich. Innsidh mi dhuibh mar a chaidh an seanfhacal a chruthachadh an ath sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdain:** làraidh: *lorry*; na broinn: *inside it (feminine)*; àirneis: *furniture*; acfhainn: *implements, tools*; dèideagan: *toys (but note that many people use the English word)*; cumhang: *narrow*; luchd: *load (eg in lorry or ship)*.

**Abairtean na seachdain:** thàinig iad dusan mìle mìle thar a' chuain: *they came twelve thousand miles across the ocean*; a bhuineadh do Ghlaschu is a bh' air a bhith glè ainneamh air taobh siar na Gaidhealtachd: *who belonged to Glasgow and had been rarely in the west Highlands*; bha e follaiseach gu robh droch bheachd aige orm: *it was obvious he had a bad opinion of me*; an rathad a bu chuinge a chunnaic mi a-riamh: *the narrowest road I ever saw*; bha mi air mo chuirteachadh le bòidhchead: *I was surrounded by beauty*; beanntan Rois is Chnòideirt: *the mountains of Ross and Knoydart*; nan robh e a' smaoinichadh gu robh sglèat a dhìth orm roimhe: *if he thought I had a slate missing (ie was not the full shilling) before*; bha e deimhinne às an dèidh dhomh sin a ràdh ris: *he was certain of it after me telling him that*; bha e fhathast a' crathadh a chinn: *he was still shaking his head*; 's e an rud a tha iongantach mu dheidhinn: *the thing that is surprising about it*; tha e a' tighinn a-steach orm nach fhaca mi e: *I realise I haven't seen it*.

**Puing ghràmair na seachdain:** Dè thug ort Astràilia fhàgail airson tighinn a dh'fhuireach an seo?: *what made you leave Australia to come and live here? There is more than one way of saying in Gaelic that somebody was "made to" or "forced to" do something. Two common ways are by using the verbs co-èignich (a' co-èigneachadh) and thoir with the preposition air (a' toirt air). Co-èignich has more of a sense of compelling, even with violence or the threat of violence. Bha na Iudhaich air an co-èigneachadh gus dhol air an trèana leis na saighdearan Gearmailteach (the Jews were compelled to go on the train by the German soldiers). Thoir air may have similar connotations but may also be used in the sense of "circumstances conspiring to force one to..."*. Thug an droch aimsir orm tilleadh a-steach (*the bad weather forced me to retreat indoors*). Carson a tha thu aig an t-sinc, 'ille? (*why are you at the sink, lad?*) Tha, a chionn 's gun tug mo mhathair orm na soithichean a nighe (*because my mother made me clean the dishes*). Chan eil duine a' toirt ort a bhith an seo, a bheil? (*nobody's forcing you to be here, are they?*).

**Seanfhacal na seachdain:** 'S iomadh nì a chailleas fear na h-imrich: *the man that flits loses much. The reputed origin of this proverb, and its implications, will be the subject of next week's letter. Make sure you tune in!*

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