

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 roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk **

Ann an Litir mu dheireadh, dh’innis mi dhuibh a’ chiad phàirt de sgeulachd mu “sguad Coill’ a’ Chaolais” – am pàirt nuair a bha am bodachan beag a’ toirt taic don chroitear, Donnchadh, le bhith a’ treabhadh na talmhainn. Mus innis mi an còrr, tha mi airson seanfhacal a chur nur cuimhne – cuideachd bhon t-seachdain ’s a chaidh – “Nuair as teinne an taod, ’s ann as dualtaiche dha bhriseadh”.

Co-dhiù, bha Donnchadh aig mullach cnuic, a’ toirt sùil air a’ bhaile aige. Bha an t-arbhar deiseil ri bhuain agus thuir Donnchadh ris fhèin, “S truagh nach robh e a-màireach air a bhuain agus ann an adagan buidhe.” Dh’fhalbh e sìos a-rithist, agus e deiseil airson a dhol a-mach ga bhuain air an làrna-mhàireach.

Ach, nuair a choimhead e a-mach air an uinneig aige a’ chiad char anns a’ mhadainn air an làrna-mhàireach, bha an t-arbhar air a bhuain mar-thà, agus ann an adagan buidhe air feadh a’ bhaile. ’S e Donnchadh a bha toilichte.

Beagan làithean an dèidh sin, nuair a thòisich e air na h-adagan a thoirt a-staigh, nochd am bodachan beag ri thaobh. Bha taod aige a bha mu aitheamh a dh’fhaide – sin mu shia troighean, neo dà mheatair. Chuimhnich Donnchadh na thuir am bodach beag as t-earrach nuair a thug e taic dha leis an treabhadh. Bha e ag iarraidh duais airson na h-obrach – aon ghad guailne dhen arbhar. Cha bhi mòran ann a sin, agus am bodach cho beag, shaoil Donnchadh ris fhèin.

“Càit’ an dèan mi m’ eallach?” dh’fhaighnich am bodachan.

“Ann a sin,” fhreagair Donnchadh. Chomharraich e àite còmhnard tioram aig oir pàirce. Chuir an duine beag an taod aige sìos agus thòisich e air adagan a chàrnadh air. Chaidh fichead adag air, an uairsin dà fhichead agus cha robh guth air stad. Chum am bodachan a dol, a’ cur adagan air an ròp. Bha Donnchadh a’ gabhail eagal gun cailleadh e a h-uile but dhen arbhar aige.

Mu dheireadh, dh’ èigh e:

*Dihaoine a threabh mi,
Dihaoine a chuir mi
Dihaoine a chliath mi.
A Rìgh nan trì aoineachan,
Na leig mo chuid uile
Ann an aon ghad guailne!*

Bha an duine beag a' cur an eallaich air a dhruim ach dh'èist e ri faclan Dhonnchaidh. Thuir e, "Nuair as teinne an gad guailne, 's ann as dualtaiche dha bhriseadh."

Cho luath 's a thuir e sin, bhris an ròp, chaidh na h-adagan air ais do na h-àiteachan às an tàinig iad anns na pàircean, agus chaidh an duine beag à fianais. Chan fhacas a-rithist e bhon uairsin ann an Coill' a' Chaolais.

Airson crìoch a chur air an Litir an t-seachdain-sa, seo agaibh stòiridh beag. Bha balach a bha seo a' coiseachd sìos an t-sràid taobh a-muigh eaglais nuair a chunnaic e rudeigin cruinn gleansach air a' chabhsair. Stad e, chrom e sìos agus thog e an rud. 'S e bonn-nota a bh' ann.

Aig an dearbh àm, thàinig Ministear a-mach às an eaglais. "Dè lorg thu, a Sheumais?" dh'fhaighnich e. Bha e eòlach air a' bhalach.

"Airgead," fhreagair Seumas. "Bonn-nota."

"O, seadh," thuir am Ministear, "agus a bheil thu a' dol ga chumail? Hmm?"

Choimhead am balach air a' mhinistear. "Chan eil, chan eil," fhreagair e. "Chan eil idir."

"O, is math sin," thuir am Ministear. "Chan eil mòran dhe do leithid ann an latha an-diugh."

"Seadh," thuir am balach. "Chan eil mi a' dol ga chumail idir. Tha mi a' dol ga chosg!"

Agus dh'fhalbh e a dh'ionnsaigh na bùtha!

* * *

Faclan na seachdaine: toit: *smoke*; similear: *chimney*; neul: *cloud*; teadhair: *a rope, halter, tether*; Ach nan Seileach: *Achnashellach*; Loch Carrann: *Lochcarron*; cas-chrom: *the old foot-plough of the Gael. (It lit. means "crooked spade" but is always referred to by its Gaelic name, even in English)*; gualann: *shoulder*; sgrìob: *furrow made by a cas-chrom*; am put fuaraidh: *the first sod turned by a cas-chrom at the beginning of a "sgrìob"*; priobadh-sùla: *a blinking of an eye*; èasgaidh: *enthusiastic, zealous*; ag èigheachd: *shouting*; duais: *reward*; dhìrich e: *he climbed*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: cha b' urrainn dhomh dhol as àicheadh sin: *I couldn't deny that*; a tha aithnichte don mhòr-shluagh: *which is known to the population*; nan robh obair mhòr aig X ri dhèanamh: *if X had to do a lot of work*; is truagh nach eil sguad Coill' a' Chaolais againn: *it's a pity we don't have the Coill' a' Chaolais squad*; bha e a' treabhadh na talmhainn aige: *he was ploughing his land*; gum b' fheàrr leis gu robh an obair dèante: *that he wished the work were done*; airson cobhair a dhèanamh ort: *to help you*; is mi a tha taingeil d'fhaicinn: *lit. it's me that is pleased to see you*; cha b' fhada gus an robh an obair crìochnaichte: *it wasn't long before the work was finished*; a bh' air ùr-threabhadh: *that was newly ploughed*; aon ghad guailne dhen arbhar: *the amount of corn that can be carried on a person's shoulder*; cha mhòr ghabhas sin: *that won't take much*; 's iad cnuic na h-àiteachan as fheàrr leis na sìthichean: *smallish hills are the places the fairies like best*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: A Rìgh nan trì aoineachan: *O King of the three Fridays. You will already have noticed that four of the seven days of the week bear names with cognates in many other European languages (see Litir 88, 02.02.01). But the other three – Diciadain (Wednesday), Diardaoin (Thursday) and Dihaoine (Friday) – would be fairly obscure except to speakers of the other Gaelic languages. The element "aoine" is an old word meaning a "fast" and Friday was known anciently as "Aoine". The element Di-derived from Latin dies, meaning day, became adfixed, as it did with all the days of the week. So Dihaoine means "fast-day". Wednesday also became a fast day and it was the first such of the week, so it was "A' chiad aoine" – the first fast. Until recent revision of Gaelic spelling in Scotland, it was still spelled "Diciadaoin", showing more clearly its origin. So the day in between the fast-days was "Di-eadar-dà-aoine" which became contracted to*

“Diardaoin” (*although in parts of Argyll they say “Didaoirn”*). *The traditional Gaelic for Good Friday is Aoine na Ceusta or Dihaoine na Ceusta (lit. Friday of the Crucifixion).*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: *A’ chiad char anns a’ mhadainn: first thing in the morning.*

* *“Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh” is funded by Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig*