

## *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](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \**

Chan eil fhios a’ m cia mheud agaibh a tha eòlach air an lus ris an can sinn, ann an Gàidhlig, “buaghallan” neo “buaghallan buidhe”. Tha e cumanta gu leòr ri taobh rathaidean neo ann am pàircean. As t-samhradh, bidh dìtheanan buidhe air, a tha car coltach ri dìtheanan an neòinein. Gu dearbh, tha e ann an teaghlach nan neòinean. Tha luchd-saidheans eòlach air an lus mar *Senecio jacobaea*, agus ’s e an t-ainm oifigeil a th’ air ann am Beurla, *ragwort*.

Anns na h-eileanan a-muigh, bhiodh a’ chlann a’ cleachdadh a’ bhuaghallain ann an gèam sònraichte. Bha sin anns na làithean mus robh telebhiseanan neo geamannan-coimpiutair aca! ’S e an t-ainm a bh’ air a’ ghèam “Goid a’ Chrùn” agus seo mar a bha e air a chluich.

Bhiodh a’ chlann a’ tighinn cruinn air àite còmhnard agus bhiodh iad gan sgaradh fhèin ann an dà leth. Bhiodh an darna cuid dhiubh ann an aon sreath, agus a’ chuid eile mun coinneamh ann an sreath eile, agus bhiodh balaich agus nigheanan còmhlà anns gach sreath. Bhiodh iad a’ spìonadh lus-buaghallain agus ga thilgeil air an talamh eadar an dà sgioba. B’ e sin an “crùn”.

Bhiodh cuideigin an uairsin a’ leum air a’ chrùn, ga thogail is a’ ruith leis. Bhiodh e a’ feuchainn ri ruith timcheall na sgioba eile gu lèir, is tilleadh don fheadhainn aige fhèin. Nan dèanadh e sin, rachadh leis, agus bhiodh an geam a’ tòiseachadh a-rithist leis a’ chrùn anns a’ mheadhan.

Ach nan robh am fear leis a’ chrùn air a ghlacadh leis an sgioba eile, bhiodh aige ri falbh bhon “champa” agus chuireadh an fheadhainn eile an t-ainm “cnoimheag” neo “cnuimheag” air. Agus, mar a bu lugha de chnoimheagan air an sgioba agad aig an deireadh, ’s ann a b’ fheàrr. Agus b’ e sin an gèam.

Anns na seann leabhraichean, tha buaghallan air a litreachadh “b-u-a-d-h-g-h-a-l-l-a-n” agus thathar a’ dèanamh dheth gu bheil e a’ tighinn bhon dà fhacal “buadh” agus “gallan”, a’ ciallachadh ann am Beurla, “*the virtuous stalk*” neo ’s dòcha “*the victorious stalk*”. Chan eil fhios a’ m carson a bhiodh an darna fear iomchaidh, leis gu bheil a leithid de lus a’ toirt droch bhuidhe air beathaichean a dh’itheas e. Agus, a thaobh an fhir eile, ’s dòcha gu bheil e a’ buntainn air a’ chomas, a th’ aig an lus seo, fàs pailt ann am pàirc nach eil air a cumail ann an deagh òrdugh.

Co-dhiù neo co-dheth, sin am buaghallan, agus tha fhios gu robh am bàrd, Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir eòlach air, mar a bha e eòlach air na lusan cumanta air fad a bha a’ fàs anns an sgìre aige. Bha mi a’ leughadh beagan de bhàrdachd Dhonnchaidh an latha eile, agus thàinig mi tarsainn dà rann a chòrd rium gu mòr.

Tha iad às òran air a bheil “Oran do chaora a fhuaradh a’ ghibht o Mhnaoi Uasail àraidh”. Tha an t-òran mu dheidhinn caora cheann-fhionn, mar a bh’ aige fhèin oirre, air an robh Donnchadh gu math measail, agus a chaill e. Ach, aig an deireadh, as dèidh dha a’ chaora a mholadh, agus as dèidh dha leigeil fhaicinn mar a bha e ga h-ionndrainn, tha e a’ cur a fheallsanachd an cèill. Tha mi a’ smaoinichadh gu bheil e a’ seasamh airson mòran rudan nar beatha – ri linn Dhonnchaidh – agus an latha an-diugh. Fàgaidh mi agaibhse e:

*Beannachd leis an rud a dh’fhalbhas;  
Chan e ’s fheàrr dhuinn ach na dh’fhanas.*

*’S fheàrr bhith crìdheil leis na dh’fhuiricheas*

*Na bhith tùrsach mu na chailleas.*

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**Faclan na seachdainne:** buaghallan (buidhe): *ragwort*; Goid a’ Chrùin: *the theft of the crown*; a’ spionadh: *pulling out a plant by the root*; cnoimheag, cnuimheag: *maggot*; rann: *verse*; caora cheann-fhionn: *white headed sheep*.

**Abairtean na seachdainne:** a tha car coltach ri ditheanan an neòinein: *that are somewhat like the flowers of the daisy*; bhiodh a’ chlann a’ tighinn cruinn air àite còmhnard: *the children would come together in a flat place*; agus a’ chuid eile mun coinneamh ann an sreath eile: *and the others opposite them in another line*; nan dèanadh e sin, rachadh leis: *if he did that, he would be successful*; nan robh X air a ghlacadh: *if X were caught*; bhiodh aige ri falbh: *he would have to leave*; mar a bu lugha de chnoimheagan air an sgioba agad aig an deireadh, ’s ann a b’ fheàrr: *the fewer maggots on your team at the end, the better*; chan eil fhios a’m carson a bhiodh an darna fear iomchaidh: *I don’t know why the first one would be suitable*; ann am pàirc nach eil air a cumail ann an deagh òrdugh: *in a field which is not well looked after*; co-dhiù neo co-dheth: *whatever (the truth of the matter)*; mar a bha e ga h-ionndrainn: *as he was missing her*; tha e a’ cur a fheallsanachd an cèill: *he demonstrates his philosophy*; ri linn Dhonnchaidh: *in Duncan’s time*; beannachd leis an rud a dh’fhalbhas: *a blessing on the thing that leaves*; chan e ’s fheàrr dhuinn, ach na dh’fhanas: *it is not that which is best, but the thing that stays*; ’s fheàrr bhith crìdheil leis na dh’fhuiricheas: *it is best to be joyous about what remains*; na bhith tùrsach mu na chailleas: *than to be sad about that which is lost*.

**Puing ghràmair na seachdainne:** Oran do chaora a fhuaradh a’ ghibht o Mhnaoi Uasail àraidh: *song to a ewe which was received as a gift from a certain Lady. Many Gaelic learners will no longer be familiar with “mnaoi”, the dative singular case of the feminine noun “bean” (wife, woman) as it has largely become redundant and is only commonly met with in old poetry or song. Nowadays, the nominative form is generally used in the dative case and Donnchadh Bàn, had he been writing today, might have put “...o Bhean Uasail àraidh.” Note, however, that the genitive case, “mnà” still has currency. Note also that some other feminine nouns have a distinct, slenderised singular dative form which is still adhered to. Examples are clann (children) which is cloinn in the dative (eg thoir seo don chloinn, give this to the children), and clach (stone) which is cloich in the dative (eg cur seo fo chloich, put this under a stone). How would you say in Gaelic, “this stone fell on the children”, “put the cup on the stone” and “I am looking for my wife”?*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne:** Fàgaidh mi agaibhse e: *I’ll leave it with you.*

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