

# *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) \**

Ciamar a chaidh dhuibh leis a’ cheist a chuir mi oirbh an t-seachdain ’s a chaidh – b’ e sin Gàidhlig a chur air *I am going to climb the mountain*. Tha mi an dòchas nach tuirt sibh, “tha mi a’ dol a dhìreadh na beinne”! Bha mi an dòchas gu robh sibh a’ dol a chleachdadh facal eile airson *climb* – *sreap* neo *streap*. ’S e an duilgheadas a th’ ann gu bheil feadhainn a’ cleachdadh an fhacail mar nach eil ‘t’ eadar an ‘s’ agus an ‘r’, agus tha feadhainn eile ga chleachdadh mar gu bheil. Mar sin, cluinnidh sibh an dà chuid: *Tha mi a’ dol a shreap na beinne* agus *tha mi a’ dol a streap na beinne*.

Tha mi nam bhall de Chomunn Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis, mar a tha mòran aig a bheil ùidh ann an dualchas nan Gaidheal, cuid mhath aca nach eil a’ fuireach faisg idir air a’ bhaile. Gach darnacha bliadhna, bidh an Comunn a’ foillseachadh nam pàipearan a chaidh a libhrigeadh aig coinneamhan. Anns na leabhraichean seo, ris an canar na “*Transactions*”, tha stòras air leth prìseil a tha a’ dol air ais còrr math is ceud bliadhna.

Bha mi a’ leughadh na h-iris as ùire o chionn ghoirid agus chòrd aon phàipear rium gu sònraichte. B’ e sin fear air gnàthsan-cainnte is abairtean à Eilean Bheàrnaraigh. Chan eil mi cinnteach a-nise an e Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh neo Beàrnaraigh Uibhist a bu chòir dhomh ràdh ris an eilean. Chan eil mi airson nàimhdean a dhèanamh dhomh fhìn ann!

Chaidh am pàipear a sgrìobhadh le Dòmhnall MacIlp agus tha e làn abairtean is ghnàthsan-cainnt inntinneach. Chòrd aon abairt rium gu sònraichte. Chan eil mi-fhìn uabhasach measail air a’ chuid mhòir de cheòl na Beurla, gu h-àraidh an seòrsa de dh’òrain Bheurla a chluinnear air Rèidio a h-Aon is a leithid, agus feumaidh gu bheil mi-fhìn agus Dòmhnall a’ tarraing air an aon ràmh. “*Bu cheart cho math leam a bhith a’ sgoltadh bhiorach,*” tha e ag ràdh ri bhith ag èisteachd ri a leithid de cheòl! Bu cheart cho math leam a bhith a’ sgoltadh bhiorach.

Tha mi a’ mothachadh gu bheil mòran de na gnàthsan-cainnt aig na Beàrnaraich ceangailte ris a’ mhuir, agus chan eil sin na iongnadh air eilean beag. Agus, uill, feumaidh mi ràdh gun do rinn mi gàire nuair a leugh mi an t-altachadh a bh’ aige. Bidh sibh eòlach, tha mi ’n dùil, air an iasg ris an canar lèabag – *flounder* ann am Beurla. Nise, chan eil mi cinnteach co-dhiubh bha lèabag air a’ bhòrd a bha seo gus nach robh, ach seo mar a chaidh an t-altachadh.

*“Taing dhut-sa, a Dhè ghràs-mhoir bheannaichte, gun do dhealbh thu sinn air d’ iomhaigh fhèin, ’s nach ann air iomhaigh na lèabaig aig a bheil a dà shùil air an aona pheirceall.”* O, uill, chan eil càil a dh’fios agam dè chanadh càch aig a’ bhòrd nan cluinneadh iad altachadh mar sin! Cha chreid mi gum bithinn misneachail gu leòr airson a ghabhail ann an àite sam bith, fiù ’s ann am Beàrnaraigh fhèin!

Uaireannan, tha duilgheadas aig luchd-ionnsachaidh ann a bhith a' lorg facal airson "squeeze". Uill, seo e ann an abairt à Beàrnaraigh: *Fàisg a' phoit-teatha – squeeze the teapot*. 'S e an gnìomhair – *fàsgadh*. Is, mura h-eil teatha air fhàgail anns a' phoit, bithear ag ràdh, "air an tràghadh a rugadh tu". Uill, chan ann air an tràghadh a rugadh mise, agus chòrdadh cupa teatha sònraichte math rium an-dràsta. Ach bidh mi còmhla ribh a-rithist an ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdainne:** iris: *edition*; Beàrnaraigh: *Berneray*; Dòmhnall MacIlp: *Donald Mackillop*; measail: *fond, keen*; gàire: *smile*; altachadh: *grace (before meal)*; fàsgadh: *squeezing*.

**Abairtean na seachdainne:** ciamar a chaidh dhuibh?: *how did you get on?*; tha mi nam bhall de Chomunn Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis: *I am a member of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*; mar a tha mòran aig a bheil ùidh ann an dualchas nan Gaidheal: *as are many who have an interest in the heritage of the Gaels*; gach darnacha bliadhna: *every second year*; a chaidh a libhrigeadh aig coinneamhan: *that were presented (delivered) at meetings*; còrr math is ceud bliadhna: *a good bit more than a hundred years*; chan eil mi airson nàimhdean a dhèanamh dhomh fhìn ann: *I don't want to make myself enemies there*; gu h-àraidh an seòrsa de dh'òrain Bheurla a chluinnear air Rèidio a h-Aon is a leithid: *particularly the type of English-language songs heard on Radio One*; feumaidh gu bheil mi-fhìn is Dòmhnall a' tarraing air an aon ràmh: *Donald and I must be in agreement (lit. pulling on the same oar)*; chan eil sin na iongnadh: *that is of no surprise*; chan eil mi cinnteach co-dhiubh bha lèabag air a' bhòrd seo gus nach robh: *I am not sure if there was a flounder on the this table or not*; gun do dhealbhu thu sinn air d' iomhaigh fhèin: *that you created (designed) us in your own image*; nach ann air iomhaigh na lèabaig: *not after the image of the flounder*; aig a bheil a dà shùil air an aona pheirceall: *which has its (her) two eyes on the one (side of the) jaw*; cha chreid mi gum bithinn misneachail gu leòr: *I don't think I would be courageous enough*; air an tràghadh a rugadh tu: *you were born on the ebb-tide*; chòrdadh cupa teatha rium an-dràsta: *I would enjoy a cup of tea just now*.

**Puing ghràmair na seachdainne:** Taing dhut-sa, a Dhè ghràs-mhoir bheannaichte: *Thanks to you, gracious and blessed God. Have you noticed that, in Gaelic, God is addressed in the singular or informal "tu/thu" form and not with the more formal or plural "sibh"?* It is important to remember this if you are asked to give a grace in a Gaelic-speaking home. The Gaelic for God, Dia, is here in the vocative case – ie He is being addressed. In some places this is "a Dhè" but in others it is "a Dhia". You will sometimes hear people address the deity when they are upset as they do in English ("Oh God!") and they will say, "a Dhia!" or "a Dhè!" This should not be confused with the answer to a question in which the word Dia appears unlenited eg "Dia, tha!" which means "certainly!" or "absolutely!" I remember speaking to a Catholic Irishman who was intrigued by our use of the tu/sibh informal/formal in Scottish Gaelic because there is no similar use of the plural for singular objects in Irish. He was most particularly intrigued that a priest is referred to as "sibh" but that God is addressed as "tu". "I think I know why that is," he said presently. "It is because when the priest is there, he has God by his side, so there are the two of them. But God is God alone."

**Seanfhacal na seachdainne:** Bu cheart cho math leam a bhith a' sgoltadh bhiorach: *I would be just as happy gutting dogfish. ie I don't think much of this!*

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