

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 **

Rugadh Iain MacAoidh, am Pìobaire Dall, ann an Geàrrloch anns a’ bhliadhna sia ceud deug, caogad ’s a sia (1656). Bha e ri bàrdachd, a bharrachd air pìobaireachd, agus choisinn e cliù dha fhèin mar bhàrd. Gu mì-fhortanach, chan eil air fhàgail againn an-diugh ach sia de na dàin aige.

Tha a’ chuid as motha de dhaoine a tha eòlach air a bhàrdachd dhen bheachd gur e an dàn as fheàrr aige “Cumha Choir’ an Easain”. Cha do sgrìobh e ann an Geàrrloch e, ge-tà, ach ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh, ann an ceann a tuath Chataibh, dùthaich a shinnsearachd air taobh athar. Rugadh athair, Ruairidh Dall MacAoidh, anns an sgìre sin.

Ann an cuid de bhàrdachd-nàdair ann an Gàidhlig bidh uaireannan sreath fhaclan, sreath bhuaidhairean, a’ nochdadh fear as dèidh a chèile gun cha mhor facal de sheòrsa sam bith eile eatarra. Seo eisimpleir dheth às “Cumha Choir’ an Easain” – an dà loighne mu dheireadh de rann agus an dà loighne aig toiseach na h-ath rann:

*Mangach, maghach, aghach, tèarnach,
Gràdhach, croiceach, fradharc frìthe.
Nèineanach, gucagach, mealach
Lònanach, lusanach, imeach....*

Sin dà bhuaidhair deug le dìreach dà ainmeir – “fradharc frìthe” nam measg, agus saoilidh mi nach ann tric a bhios sinn a’ leughadh bàrdachd de a leithid ann am Beurla. Chan e sin a-mhàin, ach seo toiseach na rann a tha a’ leantainn air na dhà sin:

*Seamragach, sealbhagach, duilleach,
Min-leacach, gorm-shlèibhteach, gleannach,
Biadhchar, riabhach, riasgach, luideach...*

Is mar sin air adhart! ’S dòcha nach eil e furasta leughadh, ach tha e a’ togail iomhaigh glè shnog dhen àite ann an inntinn an leughadair. Tha rudeigin ann a tha a’ cur bàrd eile nam cheann. Bha am Pìobaire Dall na bhodach nuair a rugadh Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir, agus tha rudeigin ann an “Cumha Choir’ an Easain” a tha a’ toirt an dàn “Coir’ a Cheathaich” aig Donnchadh Bàn gu mo chuimhne:

*Gu molach, dubh-ghorm, torrach, lùisreagach,
Corrach, plùranach, dlùth-ghlan grinn,
Caoin, ballach, dìtheanach, cannach, mìsleanach,
Gleann a’ mhilltich, ’s an lìonmhor mang.*

Chanainn gu bheil “Coir’ a Cheathaich” nas fheàrr. ’S dòcha gun deach am foghlam os cionn Mhic Cruimein.

As dèidh do dh’Iain Dall a bhith ann an sgoil na pìobaireachd anns an Eilean Sgitheanach, thill e dhachaigh a Gheàrrloch far an do ghabh e dreuchd mar phìobaire don uachdaran – “Triath Gheàrrloch” mar a bh’ aige fhèin air. Sgrìobh e bàrdachd dha cuideachd, agus tha dàn air fhàgail againn air a bheil “Beannachadh Bàird do Shir Alasdair MacCoinnich”. Tha amharas agam gun do sgrìobh e fad a bharrachd de a leithid nach deach a ghleidheadh.

Co-dhiù, sin gu leòr dhen bhàrdachd an-diugh. Bu mhath leam an Litir a chrìochnachadh an t-seachdain-sa le rudeigin eadar-dhealaichte. Bha mi a’ leughadh cruinneachadh de sheann tòimhseachain agus dubh-fhaclan an latha eile, agus chòrd feadhainn aca rium glan. Ge-tà, chan eil iad uile “PC”, mar gu canadh tu.

Seo fear aca: Ciamar a tha mac-talla coltach ri boireannach? Seadh? Bidh am facal mu dheireadh aige, ge b’ oil leat! Tuigidh sibh gur e fear a chuir an cruinneachadh ri chèile agus cha do lorg mi gin mar sin a’ cur sìos air fir! Seo a-nise tòimhseachan eile, is tha mi a’ dol ga fhàgail agaibh airson meòmhachadh air: *Is truagh an fheadhainn aig a bheil iad. Is truagh an fheadhainn aig nach eil iad. Cò iad? Bheir mi am fuasgladh dhuibh an ath-sheachdain.*

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Faclan na seachdainne: mangach: *abounding in fawns*; maghach: *abounding in plains*; aghach: *abounding in hinds*; tèarnach: *secure*; gràdhach: *beloved*; croiceach: *meadowy*; fradharc frìthe: *view of (the) deer forest*; neòineanach: *abounding in daisies*; gucagach: *full of buds*; mealach: *honey-sweet*; lònach: *abounding in small meadows or pools*; lusanach: *herbaceous*; ìmeach: *producing much butter*; seamragach: *abounding in clover*; sealbhagach: *abounding in sorrel*; duilleach: *foliage*; mìn-leacach: *abounding in small flat stones*; gorm-shlèibhteach: *green-hilled*; gleannach: *steep-sided (like a glen)*; biadhchar: *fruitful*; riabhach: *brindled*; riasgach: *peaty*; luideach: *ragged*; molach: *shaggy*; dubh-ghorm: *dark-blue*; torrach: *fertile*; lùisreagach: *abounding in herbs*; corrach: *precipitous*; plùranach: *full of blossoms*; dlùth-ghlan: *pure*; grinn: *handsome*; caoin: *mild*; ballach: *spotted*; dìtheanach: *flowery*; cannach: *pretty*; mìsleanach: *abounding in sweet mountain grass (you will notice from the above adjectives that Gaelic is phenomenally powerful and extremely succinct in its capacity to describe nature)*; dubh-fhaclan: *riddles*; mac-talla: *echo*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: chan eil air fhàgail againn an-diugh ach sia de na dàin aige: *we only have six of his poems left today*; dùthaich a shinnsearachd air taobh athar: *the country of his ancestry on his father’s side*; bidh sreath bhuaidhairean a’ nochdadh fear as dèidh a chèile: *a series of adjectives will appear one after the other*; an dà loighne mu dheireadh de rann agus an dà loighne aig toiseach na h-ath rainn: *the last two lines of a verse and the two lines at the start of the next verse*; tha e a’ togail iomhaigh glè shnog ann an inntinn an leughadair: *it creates a nice image in the mind of the reader*; Gleann a’ mhilltich, ’s an lìonmhor mang: *glen of the arrowgrass (in which are) numerous fawns*; ’s dòcha gun deach am foghlam os cionn Mhic Cruimein: *(the student bettered the teacher – see last week’s Litir)*; “Triath Gheàrrloch”, mar a bh’ aige fhèin air: *“The Lord of Gairloch” as he called him himself*; bidh am facal mu dheireadh aige, ge b’ oil leat: *it will have the last word*,

whatever you do; is truagh an fheadhainn aig a bheil/nach eil iad: those who have them/don't have them are to be pitied.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: chan eil iad uile “PC”, mar gu canadh tu: *they are not all “PC” as one says. Modern Gaelic often adopts English acronyms and initials even where there is an accepted Gaelic equivalent for the full term. An example is UN (United Nations). In Gaelic this is na Dùthchannan Aonaichte, but you would never hear it referred to as “na DA”. You would only hear the full Gaelic term or the English initials (eg thachair sin aig a UN). Other examples are SNP (Scottish National Party) instead of PNA (Pàrtaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba), SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage) rather than DNA (Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba) and SFA (Scottish Football Association) rather than CBA (Comann Ball-coise na h-Alba). The “PC” above, of course, stands for “Politically Correct”. Gaelic has not come under the same influence of political correctness as English, and there is, as far as I am aware, no Gaelic term for “political correctness” (unless it's in the new Parliamentary dictionary about to be published!) You will commonly hear Gaels simply using “PC” as the Gaelic equivalent eg Chan eil sin uabhasach “PC” (that's not very politically correct).*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: choisinn e cliù dha fhèin: *he won a reputation for himself.*

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