

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 **

Bha na h-Albannaich is na h-Eireannaich a-riamh math air sgeulachdan innse, agus saoilidh mi gu bheil an sliochd air an aon dòigh. Nuair a bha mi a’ fuireach ann an Astràilia chuala mi mu fhear aca, air an robh Micheal mar ainm, a bha beò anns an naoidheamh linn deug. Bha e a’ fuireach ann am Bhictoria gu tuath air a’ phrìomh bhaile, Melbourne. Mar a chuala mise eachdraidh, bhuineadh e do shliochd na h-Eireann, agus ’s iongantach mura h-eil sin ceart, oir bha mòran de a leithid anns a’ cheàrnaidh sin aig an àm. Gu dearbh, ’s ann don sgìre sin a bhuineadh am fear a b’ ainmeile de shliochd na h-Eireann ann an Astràilia – Ned Kelly.

Co-dhiù, bha Micheal math math air stòiridhean innse. Bha e na dhràibhear-coidse, a’ toirt a’ phuist eadar bailtean beaga. Dh’fhaodadh an obair a bhith cunnartach, ge-tà, agus robairean a’ feitheamh riutha airson airgead a ghoid. Robairean mar Ned Kelly!

Uaireannan bhiodh luchd-siubhail nan suidhe ri taobh Mhìcheil far an robh e a’ cumail smachd air na h-eich le sriantan. Chòrdadh sin riutha, oir bhiodh cothrom aca èisteachd ris na stòiridhean aige. Bha cliù aige mar an sgeulaiche a b’ fheàrr agus am breugaire a bu mhiosa ann am Bhictoria aig an àm. ’S dòcha gu bheil an dà rud a’ dol còmhla gu nàdarrach!

Turas a bha seo, bha boireannach air ùr-nochdadh ann an Astràilia bhon t-seann dùthaich. Bha i às ceann a deas Shasainn is cha robh i cleachdte ri dòighean Astràilia neo dòighean nan Ceilteach nas motha. Ach bha i air cluinntinn mu Mhìcheal. Shuidh i cuide ris gu h-àrd airson an dùthaich fhaicinn, ach thug i rabhadh dha. “As dèidh gun deach innse dhomh,” thuirt i, “gur sibhse am breugaire as miosa san dùthaich, chan eil mi a’ dol a chreidsinn facal a chanas sibh rium.”

Rinn Micheal gàire. “Chì sinn,” thuirt e ris fhèin.

Chaidh iad greis ann an samchair, agus an uairsin thòisich Micheal air innse don boireannach mu John, cangarù a bhiodh a’ coinneachadh ris a’ choidse gach trup air an rathad sin. “Tha mi air John a thrèanadh bho bha e òg”, thuirt e, “airson poca puist a thogail bhuan. Falbhaidh e don choille leis, cuiridh e na litrichean is na parsailean a-mach air an talamh, cuiridh e ann an òrdugh iad, agus libhrigidh e iad do na diofar thaighean anns an sgìre.”

“Seadh, seadh,” thuirt am boireannach, nach robh a’ creidsinn facal dheth. “Tha sibh ag innse dhomh gu bheil comas leughaidh aig cangarù, gun cuir esan litrichean ann an òrdugh, gun gnog e dorsan nan taighean is gun toir e na litrichean do na daoine.”

“O chan ann mar sin a tha e idir,” fhreagair Mìcheal. “Cha bhi John a’ gnogadh dhorsan. Bidh e dìreach a’ feadaireachd ris na daoine, is a’ fàgail an litrichean air an stairsnich. Tha sin a’ sàbhaladh ùine is tha uiread aige ri dhèanamh.”

“Hut,” ars’ am boireannach Sasannach, “chan eil firinn sam bith anns a’ chùis.”

“O, uill, chì sibh,” thuirt Mìcheal, “’s ann aig an ath lùib anns an rathad a bhios John a’ coinneachadh rinn.”

Nuair a ràinig iad an lùb, dè bh’ ann am meadhan an rathaid ach cangarù mòr. Dh’èirich Mìcheal do chasan airson bruidhinn ris, ach cha do stad e a’ choidse. “Chan eil càil agam dhut an-diugh, John,” dh’èigh e, “faodaidh tu do chasan a thoirt leat.”

Leis a sin, thionndaidh an cangarù air a shàil agus phriob Mìcheal a shùil ris a’ bhoireannach. “Nach do dh’innis mi dhuibh?” thuirt e, agus cha bu bheag a’ ghàire a bh’ air aodann!

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Faclan na seachdaine: dràibhear-coidse: *coach-driver*; luchd-siubhail: *travellers*; sriantan: *reins*; sgeulaiche: *storyteller*; breugaire: *liar*; cangarù; *kangaroo*: lùb, aig an lùib; *bend, at the bend*; gàire: *smile*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: bha X a-riamh math air sgeulachdan innse: *X was always good at telling stories*; saoilidh mi gu bheil an sliochd air an aon dòigh: *I reckon their descendants are similarly endowed*; bhuineadh e do shliochd na h-Eireann: *he belonged to the Irish diaspora*; ’s iongantach mura a h-eil sin ceart: *I reckon that’s correct*; chòrdadh sin riutha: *they would enjoy that*; ’s dòcha gu bheil an dà rud a’ dol còmhla gu nàdarrach: *perhaps the two things go together naturally*; bha boireannach air ùr-nochdadh: *a woman had newly arrived*; shuidh i cuide ris: *she sat with him*; a bhiodh a’ coinneachadh ris a’ choidse gach trup: *which would meet with the coach every time*; lìbhrigidh e iad do na diofar thaighean anns an sgìre: *he delivers them to the various houses in the area*; gu bheil comas leughaidh aig cangarù: *that a kangaroo can read*; bidh e dìreach a’ feadaireachd ris na daoine, is a’ fàgail an litrichean air an stairsnich: *he just whistles to the people and leaves their letters on the doorstep*; tha sin a’ sàbhaladh ùine is tha uiread aige ri dhèanamh: *that saves time and he has so much to do*; chan eil càil agam dhut an-diugh: *I don’t have anything for you today*; thionndaidh X air a shàil: *X turned on his heel(s)*; cha bu bheag a’ ghàire a bh’ air aodann: *it was not a little smile that was on his face*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: As dèidh gun deach innse dhomh gur sibhse am breugaire as miosa ...: *after having been told that you are the worst liar... You may recall that we looked at the structure of a verbal clause in the active voice following as dèidh in Litir 93 (9 March 2001). Here is an example of how it operates in the passive, using the verb “rach” (to go) as the agent of passivity – which is increasingly common in modern Gaelic. Here are some other examples: as dèidh gun deach an obair a dhèanamh (after the work was done/the work having been done); as dèidh gun deach fhoillseachadh gun leigeadh e dheth a dhreuchd ... (after it was announced that he would resign...) This structure can be used as an idiomatic translation of a different type of English phrase; eg we might translate “following the revelation that William’s grandfather was dead, the boy fell ill” as “as dèidh gun deach innse do dh’Uilleam gu robh a sheanair marbh, dh’fhàs an gille tinn.” In other words, if you are called upon translate things into Gaelic, avoid a word-for-word account that sounds stilted or unnatural. You may be required to include a passive verb where none occurs in the English sentence.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: faodaidh tu do chasan a thoirt leat: *you may depart, leave.*

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