

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 **

Bidh sibh eòlach air “Ar-a-mach nan Seumasach”, tha mi cinnteach, agus “Ar-a-mach na Frainge”, a thug buaidh mhòr air an Roinn Eòrpa. Ach cia mheud nur measg a th’ air cluinntinn mu dheidhinn “Ar-a-mach Inbhir Ghòrdain”? Seadh, Inbhir Ghòrdain – baile beag air cladach Rois an Ear.

Thachair e air an t-seachdain seo o chionn seachdadh bliadhna ann an naoi ceud deug, trithead ’s a h-aon (1931), ged nach ann buileach ann an Inbhir Ghòrdain a bha e, ach pìos beag a-mach à cladach a’ bhaile ann an soithichean a’ Chabhlaich Rìoghail a bha aig acair ann an Linne Chrombaidh. Thug e crathadh mòr air Riaghaltas Bhreatainn.

Bha cabhlach a’ Chuain Siar air tighinn cruinn anns an acarsaid mhòir sin, agus iad a’ deiseileachadh airson eacarsaich an fhoghair. Bha sia soithichean-cogaidh deug ann, agus dusan mìle seòladair air bòrd orra, ach thàinig iad cruinn aig fìor dhroch àm. Bha eaconomaidh Bhreatainn ann an staing mhòr, agus bha an Riaghaltas ann an Lunnainn dìreach air innse gum biodh iad a’ lughdachadh gu mòr na suim a chosgadh iad anns an roinn phoblaich.

Bha an suidheachadh poilitigeach air fàs na bu mhiosa thairis air an t-samhradh, agus thuit an Riaghaltas Làbarach às a chèile anns an Lùnasdal. Bha còir aig a’ Phrìomhaire, Ramsay Dòmhnallach, falbh còmhla ri càch, ach dh’iarr an Rìgh air fuireach ann an Sràid Downing mar cheannard air Riaghaltas Nàiseanta, a ghabhadh a-steach Tòraidhean agus Libearalaich. Chuir e chùl ris na Làbaraich agus dh’fhuirich e mar phrìomhaire. Bha an Rìgh dhen bheachd gur e prìomhaire sòisealach a-mhàin a bhiodh comasach air buidseat cruaidh fhaighinn troimhe gu soirbheachail.

Agus bha am buidseat cruaidh. Airson dearbhadh do bhancairean mòra an t-saoghail gu robh Breatainn dha-rìreabh a’ dèanamh a dìchill gus an eaconomaidh a thoirt am feabhas, gheàrr an Riaghaltas na bha iad a’ dol a chosg ceud is fichead millean not – barrachd na bhathar a’ cosg air foghlam na dùthcha. Bha a’ chuid mhòr dhen ghearradh gu bhith a’ tighinn à lughdachadh ann an tuarastal. Agus am measg an fheadhainn a chailleadh airgead bha muinntir a’ Chabhlaich Rìoghail.

Gu mì-fhortanach, cha robh na gearraidhean cothromach. Bha a h-uile duine anns an nèibhidh a’ dol a chall tasdan gach là. Dh’fhàgadh sin Lieutenant-Commandair le ceithir às a’ chèud nas lugha anns an tuarastal aige. Ach bhiodh an fheadhainn faisg air a’ bhonn, na h-Able Seamen mar a chanas iad, a’ call aon not às a h-uile ceithir. Bha iad bochd co-dhiù. As dèidh gearradh mar sin, bhiodh an teaghlaichean, shaoil iad, ann am bochdainn dha-rìreabh. Agus bha an caothach orra.

Air tìr, ann an Inbhir Ghòrdain, thòisich na maraichean a dheasbad na cùise. Nuair a thill iad do na longan aca, bha cuid mhath aca a' maoidheadh nach togadh iad corrag as leth a' Chabhlaich gus am biodh iad air an riarachadh. Agus 's ann mar sin a bha e. Dhiùlt iad gabhail ri òrdughan air bòrd. Shuidh iad air slabhraidhean nan acraichean gus nach cuireadh na soithichean gu muir.

Bha cuid anns an riaghaltas ag iarraidh saighdearan is gunnaichean a chur an sàs an aghaidh nam maraichean reubalach ach, gu fortanach, bha làmh-an-uachdair aig feadhainn na bu ghlice, agus dh'aontaich an Caibineat sùil a thoirt air gearanan nan seòladairean. Mu dheireadh thall, dh'aontaich iad na gearraidhean ann an tuarastal a chumail aig deich às a' cheud, an àite còig ar fhichead às a' cheud. Agus ann an Linne Chrombaidh, an àite dhol gu muir airson eacarsaich, dh'fhalbh na soithichean-cogaidh dhachaigh gu na puirt aca, agus bha ar-a-mach Inbhir Ghòrdain seachad.

* * *

Faclan na seachdaine: Ar-a-mach nan Seumasach: *the Jacobite Rebellion*; Ar-a-mach na Frainge: *the French Revolution*; Ar-a-mach Inbhir Ghòrdain: *the Invergordon Mutiny*; eacarsaich an fhoghair: *autumn exercises*; sòisealach: *socialist*; gu soirbheachail: *successfully*; bancairean: *bankers*; tuarastal: *wages*; nèibhidh: *navy (in some places this is used rather than Cabhlach Rìoghail)*; tasdan: *shilling*; maraichean: *mariners*; slabhraidhean: *chains*; reubalach: *rebellious*; Caibineat: *Cabinet (political)*; deich às a' cheud: *ten percent*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: a thug buaidh mhòr air an Roinn Eòrpa: *which greatly influenced Europe*; ann an soithichean a' Chabhlaich Rìoghail a bha aig acair ann an Linne Chrombaidh: *in Royal Navy vessels that were at anchor in the Cromarty Firth*; thug e crathadh mòr air Riaghaltas Bhreatainn: *it shook up the British Government*; bha eaconomaidh Bhreatainn ann an staing mhòr: *the British economy was in deep trouble*; gum biodh iad a' lughdachadh gu mòr na suim a chosgadh iad anns an roinn phoblaich: *that they would be greatly decreasing the sum they would spend in the public sector*; bha còir aig a' Phrìomhaire falbh còmhla ri càch: *the Prime Minister ought to have left with the others*; chuir e chùil ris na Làbaraich: *he turned his back on Labour (lit. the Labour people)*; a' dèanamh a dèidh gus an eaconomaidh a thoirt am feabhas: *doing its (her) best to improve the economy*; ann an bochdainn dha-rìreabh: *in real poverty*; bha an caothach orra: *they were furious*; gus nach cuireadh na soithichean gu muir: *so the ships wouldn't put to sea*; bha làmh-an-uachdair aig feadhainn na bu ghlice: *wiser heads prevailed*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: Bha sia soithichean-cogaidh deug ann: *there were sixteen warships. The separation of deug from the first part of the numeral, for numbers between 10 and 20, is not always observed these days, particularly where there is a compound noun, as above. So one might hear "sia-deug soithichean-cogaidh". There is no good reason for this, other than that Gaelic is coming under increasing influence from English. I would recommend sticking to traditional counting modes between 10 and 20 where it is not too cumbersome, eg trì pàrtaidhean poilitigeach deug (thirteen political parties), còig taighean-chearc deug. But with some more complicated phrases, it may be acceptable to compromise for the sake of understanding eg sia deug ionadan fiosrachaidh-fòn (16 call centres) rather than sia ionadan fiosrachaidh-fòn deug which would be the traditional mode. The above comments are all made for adult learners – in primary schools, the system keeps the primary numeral and deug together followed by the noun, at least in the first instance, to encourage numeracy skills – before going on to explain the traditional mode in later years.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Bha cabhlach a' Chuain Siar air tighinn cruinn anns an acarsaid: *the Atlantic fleet had gathered in the anchorage.* A' tighinn cruinn – *gathering, assembling.*

Before I leave you this week, have you seen the new publication “The Essential Gaelic-English Dictionary” by Angus Watson (pub. Birlinn)? It is very useful for learners, giving modern spellings and examples of how many words are used. I can recommend it.

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