

## *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) \**

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, chuir mi ceist oirbh airson meòmhrachadh air. Dh’fhaighnich mi – dè a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air *kerfuffle*? ’S dòcha gun do thagh sibh rudeigin mar “cur troimh chèile”. Is iomadh turas a chaidh a’ Ghaidhealtachd a chur troimh chèile na h-eachdraidh, agus tha mòran dhen bheachd gur e ar-a-mach nan Seumasach an t-àm a bu mhiosa dhi.

Agus tha ceist agam dhuibh mu dheidhinn an dearbh ghnòthaich a tha sin. Cò loisg a’ chiad pheilear ann an ar-a-mach nan Seumasach ann am “Bliadhna a’ Phrionnsa” neo “Bliadhna Theàrlaich”? Tha fhios gum bi diofar bheachdan ann air sin ach a rèir beul-aithris à Earra-Ghaidheal, thachair e ann a sin, pìos beag gu tuath air an Òban.

Bha fear Stiùbhart, uachdaran na h-Apainn, a’ feuchainn ri nàbaidh aige, air an robh Caimbeul, is a bha na uachdaran ann am Barra Calltainn, a bhrosnachadh gus dhol còmhla ris ann an arm a’ Phrionnsa. Chaidh an Stiùbhartach tarsainn Loch Creurain ann am bàta, aig an Rubha Gharbh, airson bruidhinn ris a’ Chaimbeulach ach, mar a bhios fios agaibh, cha robh a’ chuid mhòr de na Caimbeulaich deònach dhol air taobh nan Seumasach, agus cha robh fear Bharra Chaltainn airson a dhol an aghaidh a chinn-chinnidh.

Mar sin, dhiùlt e dhol ann. Ach, leis gu robh e fhèin is an Stiùbhartach a’ faighinn air adhart gu math còmhla mar charaidean is nàbaidhean, dh’aontaich e leigeil le fear na h-Apainn dhol am measg muinntir na h-oighreachd aige, feuch feadhainn aca a thàladh gu arm nan Seumasach. Dh’aontaich feadhainn dhol còmhla ris an Stiùbhartach, agus rinn iad deiseil airson falbh.

Chaidh an Caimbeulach cuide riutha don chladach airson soraidh slàn a leigeil leotha. Chaidh an Stiùbhartach a-steach do bhàta agus thuir e na faclan seo: “Bàrr no faobhar, thig air aghaidh!” Bàrr no faobhar, thig air aghaidh. Bha e a’ brosnachadh chàich gus dhol a shabaid as leth a’ Phrionnsa.

Bha an Caimbeulach na sheasamh air creag os cionn a’ bhàt-aiseig. Thog e a ghunna, agus loisg e e. An uairsin, thuir e, “Tha an sin a’ chiad pheilear.” Agus bha muinntir an àite a-riamh dhen bheachd bhon uairsin gum b’ e sin a’ chiad pheilear a chaidh a losgadh anns an ar-a-mach, ged nach robh droch-rùn co-cheangailte ris. Gu mì-fhortanach, lean mòran pheilearan eile air an fhear sin.

A-nise seo stòiridh beag laghach dhuibh. Dh’fhaighnich gille a bha seo de nighinn, air an do ghabh e nòisean, cuin a rachadh i air chuairt leis. Bha esan taobh a-muigh an taigh aice agus bha i fhèin aig uinneig fhosgailte. Seo an fhreagairt a fhuair e:

‘Nuair a thogas mi an lìon, a leagas mi a’ ghlainne, agus a chuireas mi am marbh a thiodhlacadh a’ bheò, thig mi còmhla riut.’

Uill, smaoinich e airson mionaid. Nuair a thogadh i a lìon, nuair a leagadh i a’ ghlainne agus nuair a chuireadh i am marbh a thiodhlacadh a’ bheò, rachadh i còmhla ris. Bha sin ro fhada dha, shaoil e, ged a bha gràdh aige dhi, agus dh’fhalbh e gu tìrean cèin. An ceann trì bliadhna, thill e agus chuala e gu robh i a-nise pòsta aig fear eile. Chaidh e a choimhead oirre, agus mhìnich i a’ chùis dha leis na faclan seo: “Cho luath ’s a thogainn an t-anart far a’ bhùird, a dhùininn an uinneag agus a smàlainn an tèine, bha mi air a bhith deiseil dhut. Ach bha thu mì-fhoighidneach, agus dh’fhalbh thu.” Nuair a thuig e a mhearachd, tha fhios gu robh am fear bochd troimh-chèile buileach.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** ar-a-mach nan Seumasach: *the Jacobite rebellion*; Bliadhna a’ Phrionnsa/Bliadhna Theàrlaich: *the year of the Jacobite rebellion, 1745-6*; beul-aithris: *oral tradition*; uachdaran na h-Apainn: *landowner of Appin*; Loch Creurain: *Loch Creran*; anart: *linen (lìon also means linen as well as net or line)*; mì-fhoighidneach: *impatient*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** is iomadh turas a chaidh a’ Ghaidhealtachd a chur troimh-chèile na h-eachdraidh: *the Highlands were put topsy-turvy many times in its (her) history*; mu dheidhinn an dearbh ghnòthaich a tha sin: *about that same matter*; cò loisg a’ chiad pheilear?: *who fired the first bullet?*; cha robh fear Bharra Challtainn airson a dhol an aghaidh a chinn-chinnidh: *the laird of Barcaldine did not want to go against his clan chief*; airson soraidh slàn a leigeil leotha: *to farewell them*; bha e a’ brosnachadh chàich gus dhol a shabaid as leth a’ Phrionnsa: *he was exhorting the others to go and fight for the Prince*; bha an Caimbeulach na sheasamh air creag os cionn a’ bhàt-aiseig: *Campbell was standing on a rock above the ferry boat*; ged nach robh droch-rùn co-cheangailte ris: *though there was no malice associated with it*; air an do ghabh e nòisean: *whom he fancied*; cuin a rachadh i air chuairt leis: *when she would go out with him*; nuair a chuireas mi am marbh a thiodhlacadh a’ bheò: *when I put the dead to bury the living*; chaidh e a’ choimhead oirre, agus mhìnich i a’ chùis dha: *he went to see her and she explained the situation to him*; cho luath ’s a thogainn an t-anart far a’ bhùird, a dhùininn an uinneag agus a smàlainn an teine: *as soon as I would have lifted the linen off the table, closed the window and smoored the fire*.

**Puing-ghràmail na seachdaine:** dh’aontaich e leigeil le fear na h-Apainn dhol am measg muinntir na h-oighreachd aige, feuch feadhainn aca a thàladh gu arm nan Seumasach: *he agreed to let Appin go among the people of his estate to see if he could attract some of them to the Jacobite army. The use of feuch in this idiomatic way, perhaps because it does not appear as a verbal noun (feuchainn), often frightens learners, who are unwilling to use it. It means “try” or “attempt” and is here an imperative which regularly appears in conversation as an equivalent to “to see” or “to find out”. It can be used in addressing individuals or groups – there is no distinct plural form. Here are some other examples: fosgail an àmhainn, feuch a bheil am biadh teth (open the oven to see if the food is hot); tarraing an lìon, feuch a bheil iasg ann (pull in the net to see if there is a fish in it); fosglaidh ur drathairean, feuch a bheil peansail ann (open your drawers to see if there is a pencil there).*

**Seanfhacal na seachdaine:** bàrr no faobhar, thig air aghaidh!: *(by the) point or edge (of the sword), advance! An exhortation to followers. Note that air aghaidh is the Argyll equivalent to air adhart as used in more northerly parts of the Gaidhealtachd.*

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

