

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 **

Is e seo Bliadhna Eadar-nàiseanta nam Beann, agus tha grunn rudan a’ dol ann an Alba airson sin a chomharrachadh oir, ged nach eil na beanntan againn àrd, tha iad prìseil dhuinne, agus tha iad ainmeil air feadh an t-saoghail. Choisinn cuid de streapadairean, Albannaich is Sasannaich, cliù dhaibh fhèin air beanntan àrda as dèidh dhaibh na sgilean bunaiteach aca ionnsachadh ann an Alba.

Am measg nam beann as ainmeil’ anns an dùthaich, tha an Cuiltheann anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Tha na beanntan sin cas, creagach, biorach, binneanach agus feumaidh duine sam bith a thèid orra a bhith gu math comasach. Am measg na rinn an Cuiltheann ainmeil mar àite airson streap, bha Tormod Collie, a bh’ air a bhith ann an iomadach àite air feadh an t-saoghail, air beanntan eadar na Rockies agus a Himalaya.

Bha spèis is gràdh àraidh aige don Chuiltheann, ge-tà, agus, mu dheireadh, chaidh e a dh’fhuireach anns an Eilean Sgitheanach, ann an Sligeachan. Bha e an uairsin faisg air na beanntan, air an do chuir e seachad mòran ùine nuair a bha e na b’ òige ann an cuideachd Iain MhicCoinnich, Sgitheanach à Sgonnsair, sìos an rathad bho Shligeachan. Tha Iain air a chuimhneachadh ann am fear de mhullaichean a’ Chuilthinn, Sgùrr MhicCoinnich, is tha Collie fhèin air a chuimhneachadh ann an Sgùrr Thormaid.

Ach, ainmeil ’s ged a bha Collie, cha b’ e an streapadair a b’ ainmeile ri linn. Bha fear eile ann, cuideachd à Breatainn, a choisinn cliù dha fhèin air feadh an t-saoghail, eadhon am measg feadhainn nach robh measail air beanntan. B’ esan an Sasannach, Seòras Mallory, a chaill a bheatha air a’ bheinn as àirde a th’ ann, Beinn Everest, ann an naoi deug, fichead ’s a ceithir (1924).

Gu o chionn ghoirid, bha fios agam gu robh Mallory air a bhith measail air beanntan na Cuimrigh, is gum biodh e a’ dol ann airson streap ann an Snowdonia gu math tric. Tha sin nàdarach, oir bha na beanntan sin na b’ fhaisge air na h-àiteachan far an robh e a’ fuireach ann an Sasainn. Cha robh fios agam, ge-tà, gu robh e air a bhith a-riamh anns an Eilean Sgitheanach, a’ streap air a’ Chuiltheann.

Ach bha - aon turas, anns an Iuchar, naoi deug ’s a h-ochd-deug (1918), nuair a bha an Cogadh Mòr fhathast a’ dol. Bha Seòras air fòrladh as dèidh a bhith anns an Roinn-Eòrpa, leis gu robh cnàmhan coise aige, a chaidh a bhriseadh naoi bliadhna roimhe ann an tubaist anns na beanntan, a’ tighinn às a chèile a-rithist. Nuair a bha e na b’ fheàrr, mus do thill e don Fhraing, chaidh e fhèin is a bhean don Eilean Sgitheanach airson seachdain. Dh’fhuirich iad ann an Taigh-òsta Shligeachain.

Bha an aimsir sgoinneil agus cha robh ceàrr ach aon nì. 'S e sin gu robh sgòthan ann dhen mheanbh-chuileig. Bha Seòras uabhasach measail air a bhith a' snàmh ann an uillt is aibhnichean gun sgàth aodaich air, agus bha e ri sin anns an Eilean Sgitheanach cuideachd, ach chan eil fhios a' m dè cho tlachdmhor 's a bha sin, agus na meanbh-chuileagan cho pailt. Co-dhiù, streap Seòras air mòran de na beanntan agus chruthaich e slighe ùr, nach do rinn duine sam bith roimhe, suas Sròn na Cìche.

Fhad 's as aithne dhomh, b' e sin an aon turas aige air a' Chuiltheann. Cha b' fhada gus an robh aire air Tibet agus a' bheinn as àirde san t-saoghal, a thug a bheatha bhuaithe mu dheireadh, sia bliadhna as dèidh dha soraidh slàn a leigeil leis an Eilean Sgitheanach.

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Faclan na seachdainne: bunaitheach: *basic*; an Cuiltheann: *the Cuillin(s) (often plural in English, always singular in Gaelic)*; cas, creagach, biorach, binneanach: *steep, rocky, sharp and pinnacled*; comasach: *capable*; Sligeachan: *Sligachan (on Skye)*; Sgonnsair: *Sconser*; an Iuchar: *July*; an Cogadh Mòr: *the Great War*; Taigh-òsta Shligeachain: *the Sligachan Hotel*; tlachdmhor: *pleasurable*; soraidh slàn: *farewell*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: Bliadhna Eadar-nàiseanta nam Beann: *International Year of the Mountain (better translated as "Mountains" in Gaelic)*; tha grunn rudan a' dol: *a few things are happening*; choisinn cuid de streapadairean cliù dhaibh fhèin: *some climbers built a reputation for themselves*; tha Iain air a chuimhneachadh ann am fear de mhullaichean a' Chuilthinn: *John is remembered in one of the summits of the Cuillin*; a chaill a bheatha air a' bheinn as àirde a th' ann: *who lost his life on the highest mountain there is*; bha fios agam gu robh Mallory air a bhith measail air beanntan na Cuimrigh: *I knew that Mallory had been fond of the mountains of Wales*; bha Seòras air fòrladh: *George was on leave (furlough)*; leis gu robh cnàmhan coise aige, a chaidh a bhriseadh ann an tubaist anns na beanntan, a' tighinn às a chèile a-rithist: *that bones in his feet, which were broken in an accident in the mountains, were coming apart again*; mus do thill e don Fhraing: *before he returned to France*; gu robh sgòthan ann dhen mheanbh-chuileig: *that there were clouds of midgies (sometimes referred to in the singular in Gaelic, even when there are millions of them!)*; gun sgàth aodaich air: *without a stitch of clothing on*; chruthaich e slighe ùr, suas Sròn na Cìche: *he created a new route up Sròn na Cìche*; cha b' fhada gus an robh aire air Tibet: *it wasn't long before his attention was on Tibet*; a thug a bheatha bhuaithe: *that took his life from him*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne: Bha an aimsir sgoinneil agus cha robh ceàrr ach aon nì: *the weather was terrific and only one thing was wrong. I dare say you are all aware of rud, meaning "thing", and its derivatives, rud sam bith (anything), a h-uile rud (everything) and rudeigin (something). Be aware also of nì, which likewise means "thing". It is almost interchangeable with rud in such phrases as nì sam bith (anything), a h-uile nì (everything) and nitheigin (something), although the last is not so common. Note that while the singular form nì has a long "i", the plural nithean has a short "i" and the "th" is pronounced distinctly as an "h". One difference between the two is that rudeigin is sometimes used as an adverb meaning "a little, slightly" eg bha mi rudeigin sgìth (I was a bit tired); I am not aware of nitheigin being employed in the same way.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne: cha b' e an streapadair a b' ainmeile ri linn: *he wasn't the most famous climber of his day. Ri linn - of his day/time/generation. The "l" here is lenited, although this is not shown in the written form. It is broader than the unlenited "l" in ri a linn (in her day). If you have a Gaelic teacher or a Gaelic-speaking friend, ask him or her*

to demonstrate the different “l”s here – it is not easy for a learner (being one of the “fine tunings” of the language) and you must listen very carefully.

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