

## *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) \**

Saoilidh mi nach eil àm nas fheàrr anns a' bhliadhna nan t-àm a th' againn an-dràsta ann an Alba. Am Foghar. Uill, 's dòcha am foghar. Gu h-eachdraidheil, bha am foghar a' ciallachadh an àm dhen bhliadhna nuair a bhiodh daoine a' buain an arbhair. Foghar an eòrna – *the harvest of the barley*, mar eisimpleir. Ach an là an-diugh, thathar a' cleachdadh foghar mar a thathar ag ràdh ann am Beurla *autumn*, no ann an Aimeireagaidh a Tuath – *the fall*.

Ach an-dràsta, dhomhsa 's e an Dàmhair, an t-àm dhen bhliadhna nuair a bhios na daimh a' bùireadh, gu dearbh, nuair a bhios iad a' dàireadh. An damh-dàir – an Dàmhair. Tuigidh sibh mar a thàinig an t-ainm gu bith. A-nise tha an Dàmhair co-ionann ri *October* ann am Beurla, ach am-bliadhna co-dhiù thòisich na daimh air an dàireadh air a' mhìos sa chaidh – an t-Sultain.

Tha rudeigin ann mu dheidhinn a bhith a' coiseachd ann am beanntan na h-Alba a tha gam thoileachadh gu mo chridhe. Tha e do-dheante sin a mhìneachadh do dhaoine nach eil measail air na beanntan, ach 's ann mar sin a tha e. Ann an àite iomallach, air falbh bho bhailtean is rathaidean, tha thu air do chuirteachadh, an dà chuid le bòidhchead nàdair agus le dualchas na Gaidhealtachd. Còmhla, uill, saoilidh mi gu bheil iad gu math cumhachdach.

'Chan eil miann agam a bhith ann an àite sam bith eile,' shaoil mi, nuair a bha mi nam sheasamh air bruach locha, a' coimhead air na boghachan-froise a' falbh is a' tighinn, agus na beanntan dorcha air an cùlaibh. Miann. Chan eil fhios a'm cia mheud agaibh a th' air a bhith ag èisteachd ris na prògraman seo bho thòisich iad o chionn trì bliadhna gu leth ach, anns a' chiad fhear, thug mi sean-fhacal dhuibh: *'S e miann na lacha an loch air nach bi i.* Agus 's e miann Ruairidh a bhith anns na beanntan. Dè miann dhaoine is bheathaichean eile, ma-thà?

Seo dhuibh rann bheag a lorg mi o chionn ghoirid mu dheidhinn an dearbh ghnòthaich a tha sin – na seachd miannan a tha a' comharrachadh bheathaichean o chèile. A bharrachd air rud sam bith eile, tha i math airson an tuiseal ginideach ionnsachadh airson cuid de dh'fhaclan cumanta:

Miann mnà, mac;  
Miann fir, feachd;  
Miann eich, aonach;  
Miann coin, sneachd;  
Miann bà, braon;  
Miann caorach, teas;

Miann goibhre, gaoth,  
Air leathad caoin, cas.

Canaidh mi a-rithist e, gus am faigh sibh cothrom greimeachadh air na faclan gu ceart:

Miann mnà, mac;  
Miann fir, feachd;  
Miann eich, aonach;  
Miann coin, sneachd;  
Miann bà, braon;  
Miann caorach, teas;  
Miann goibhre, gaoth,  
Air leathad caoin, cas.

Uill, tha fhios gun fhiach meòmhrachadh air a' ghliocas a th' anns na faclan sin. Gu h-àraidh an dàrna loighne – miann fir, feachd. Dh'fhaodadh tu ràdh, 's dòcha, gur e miann na mnà a leigeas le fear a' mhiann aigesan a bhith air a coileanadh. Co-dhiù no co-dheth, bu toigh leam ur fàgail an t-seachdain seo le rann eile – tòimhseachan. Innsidh mi an tòimhseachan dhuibh agus feumaidh sibhse obrachadh a-mach cò air a tha e a-mach. Seo e:

Tri mìosan cù, còig bho chaogad cat,  
Is ionann bean is bò, bliadhna mhòr don each.

Canaidh mi a-rithist e.

Tri mìosan cù, còig bho chaogad cat,  
Is ionann bean is bò, bliadhna mhòr don each.

Seadh, tha mi cinnteach gu bheil sibh a' meòmhrachadh air. Fàgaibh mi agaibhse e agus bidh mi air ais, chan ann an ath-sheachdain air sàilleamh prògraman a' Mhòid Nàiseanta, ach an ceann ceala-deug. Mar sin leibh an-dràsta.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** am foghar: *the autumn, the harvest*; mar eisimpleir: *for example*; a' dàireadh: *copulating (particularly deer and cattle)*; an t-Sultain: *September*; cumhachdach: *powerful*; a' comharrachadh: *marking, distinguishing*; an tuiséal ginideach: *the genitive case*; aonach: *upland moor*; sneachd: *snow*; braon: *moisture, drizzle*; teas: *heat*; gliocas: *wisdom*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** saoilidh mi nach eil àm nas fheàrr anns a' bhliadhna: *I reckon there's no better time in the year*; nuair a bhiodh daoine a' buain an arbhair: *when people would harvest the corn*; ann an Aimeireagaidh a Tuath: *in North America*; dhomhsa 's e an Dàmhair: *for me it's the Dàmhair (the time of the rut)*; am-bliadhna co-dhiù thòisich na daimh air a' mhìos sa chaidh: *this year anyway the stags started last month*; tha rudeigin ann a tha gam thoileachadh gu mo chridhe: *there is something in it that pleases me to my core (heart)*; tha thu air do chuairteachadh an dà chuid le X agus Y: *you are surrounded by both X and Y*; a' coimhead air na boghachan froise a' falbh is a' tighinn: *watching the rainbows coming and going*; dè miann dhaoine is bheathaichean eile?: *what is the desire of other people and other animals?*; miann mnà, mac: *desire of wife, a son*; miann fir, feachd:

*desire of man, a fighting force; air leathad caoin, cas: on a dry steep slope; gur e miann na mnà a leigeas le fear a' mhiann aigesan a bhith air a coileanadh: that it is the desire of woman that allows a man to have his desire fulfilled (ie it is the sons who fight); còig bho chaogad cat: five from fifty (days), a cat; an ceann ceala-deug: in a fortnight from now.*

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne:** *you will notice that all of the names in the verse are in the genitive case eg mnà for bean; eich for each, bà for bò (all being possessive ie the desire of...) But could you automatically rewrite each with its article ie the desire of the...? For example would it be na mnà (feminine) or a' mhnà (masculine)? Generally speaking, if the animal or person is recognisably feminine, its noun in Gaelic will also be feminine (masculinity works in the same way). The best known exception to that is boireannach, woman, which is a masculine word. Each and cù are masculine words so we would say an eich (of the horse) and a' choin (of the dog). Bean, bò and caora are feminine so we would say na mnà (of the wife), na bà (of the cow) and na caorach (of the sheep). Gobhar is feminine or masculine in different parts of the country so there are alternative forms for the genitive singular with article: a' ghobhair, na goibhre. But I would like to say something about fear. It was demonstrably a historically masculine word throughout the Gaidhealtachd and it remains strictly so in most places today. The exception is parts of eastern Lewis where it has adopted a feminine guise in the nominative case of an fhear, rather than am fear. As a learner I would advise you to retain its traditional gender ie am fear in the nominative and an fhir in the genitive with article.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne:** *Mar sin leibh an-dràsta: cheerio just now.*

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