

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 iomadh bòrd a th’ air bòrd gach bàta. Nise, chan eil mi a’ smaoinichadh air na bùird a chithear air na bàtaichean-aiseig aig Caledonian Mac a’ Bhriuthainn, air am bi daoine a’ cur an cuid bracaistean mus ruith iad a-mach airson an cuid bracaistean a chur a-mach, mar gum biodh. Air là garbh co-dhiù. Tha mi a’ smaoinichadh air seann bhàtaichean fiodha agus mar a bhios am facal *bòrd* a’ nochdadh tric ann an co-cheangal riutha.

Mar eisimpleir, canaidh sinn *bòrd-luinge* airson *the deck of a ship*. Agus, ma tha cuideigin air an luing, canaidh sinn gu bheil e ‘air bòrd’. Bidh sibh eòlach air a sin, tha mi cinnteach, is canaidh sinn an aon rud mu itealain, a bharrachd air bàtaichean. Ach càit’ eile am faic sinn ‘bòrd’ air bàta?

Uill, anns a’ chiad dol a-mach, tha e a’ ciallachadh pìos fada fiodha no dèile, agus bidh e a’ nochdadh ann an àite no dhà air an t-slige. Mar eisimpleir, ’s e an *druim* a chanas sinn ris a’ phìos mhòr aig bonn an t-soithich. *The keel*, ann am Beurla. An *druim*. Agus ’s e an ath-dhèile, ri taobh na droma, am *fliuch-bhòrd*. Canaidh cuid *garboard* ris ann am Beurla. Am *fliuch-bhòrd* agus, gu dearbh, ’s ann *fliuch* a bhitheas e. Bidh cuid ag ràdh *gearr-bhòrd* ris, agus tha amharas agam gun tàinig sin bhon Bheurla, *garboard*.

Is tha am facal *bòrd* a’ nochdadh cuideachd far am faicear a’ Bheurla *board* – a’ ciallachadh cliathaich. Tha e inntinneach coimeas a dhèanamh eadar a’ Bheurla *starboard* agus a’ Ghàidhlig air a shon – am *bòrd-beulaibh*. Nise, air eagal ’s nach eil eòlas math agaibh air bàtaichean, no plèanaichean, cuiridh mi nur cuimhne gur e sin an taobh gu deas air an t-seòladair nuair a tha e a’ coimhead a dh’ionnsaigh toiseach an t-soithich.

Agus, ann am Beurla, chan eil ceangal sam bith aige ri rionnagan, oir thàinig *starboard* bho ‘*steer-board*’ – an taobh dhen bhàta air an robh an stiùir bho shean – an ‘*stiùir-bhòrd*’, mar gum biodh. Chithear bàtaichean le stiùir air an taobh mar sin, seach aig an deireadh, fhathast ann an àiteachan eile air an t-saoghal, leithid anns an Ear-mheadhanach.

Ach am *bòrd-beulaibh*? Nach bu chòir do mharaiche sam bith a bhith a’ coimhead a-mach far a bheil am bàta a’ dol, chan ann don taobh dhith? Uill, ’s dòcha, ach tha mi a’ dèanamh dheth, nuair a bhiodh an stiùireadair a’ greimeachadh air an stiùir anns an t-seann aimsir, gur ann a’ coimhead a-mach air an taobh sin a bhitheadh e. Air a’ bhòrd-beulaibh.

Agus bhiodh am *bòrd-cùlaibh*, no *port side*, air cùlaibh an stiùireadair. O shean ann am Beurla, ’s e *larboard*, no *laddeborde*, a bh’ air – a’ ciallachadh ‘*loading side*’ oir ’s ann air an taobh sin a bhiodh an luchd air a chur air bòrd. Am *bòrd-cùlaibh* ann an Gàidhlig.

’S dòcha gu bheil rudeigin eile co-cheangailte ri beulaibh is cùlaibh cuideachd. Bha rudan deasa uabhasach cudthromach do ar sinnsearan. Tha mi a’ ciallachadh rudan air an làimh dheis. ’S ann tric a bheireadh maraichean bàta ann an cearcall gu deiseil mus biodh iad a’ tòisichadh air iasgach, no as dèidh dhaibh rudeigin fhaicinn a bha co-cheangailte ri droch fhortan. Bhiodh e nàdarrach dhaibh a bhith a’ coimhead air rudan air an taobh dheas dhiubh mar rudan air thoiseach orra – air am beulaibh. Agus mar rudan air an taobh chli mar rudan air an cùlaibh.

Agus sin e bhon t-seòladair Ghaidhealach an t-seachdain-sa. An ath-sheachdain bidh mi air ais air tìr.

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Faclan na seachdaine: Caledonian Mac a' Bhriuthainn: *Caledonian MacBrayne*; garbh: *rough*; fiodha: *wooden*; càit' eile?: *where else?*; dèile: *plank*; slige: *hull*; cliathaich: *side*; am bord-beulaibh: *starboard side*; am bòrd-cùlaibh: *port side*; a' greimeachadh: *taking hold of*; rudeigin eile: *something else*; droch fhortan: *bad luck*; seòladair: *sailor*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: is iomadh bòrd a th' air bòrd gach bàta: *there are many 'bòrds' on board every boat*; air am bi daoine a' cur an cuid bracaistean: *on which people will put their breakfasts*; airson an cuid bracaistean a chur a-mach: *to vomit their breakfasts*; ma tha cuideigin air an luing: *if somebody is on the ship*; ann an co-cheangal riutha: *in connection with them*; canaidh sinn an aon rud mu itealain: *we say the same thing about planes*; tha amharas agam gun tàinig sin bhon Bheurla: *I suspect it came from English*; tha e inntinneach coimeas a dhèanamh eadar X agus Y: *it is interesting to compare X and Y*; nuair a tha e a' coimhead a dh'ionnsaigh toiseach an t-soithich: *when he looks towards the bow of the vessel*; an taobh dhen bhàta air an robh an stiùir bho shean: *the side of the boat on which the rudder was in olden times*; seach aig an deireadh: *instead of at the stern*; leithid anns an Ear-mheadhanach: *such as in the Middle East*; nach bu chòir do mharaidhe sam bith a bhith a' coimhead a-mach?: *shouldn't any mariner look out?*; chan ann don taobh dhith: *not to her side (boats are usually conceptually feminine, at least when at sea)*; air an làimh dheis: *on the right hand side*; bheireadh X bàta ann an cearcall gu deiseil: *X would take a boat clockwise (sunwise, to the right) in a circle*; air am beulaibh: *in front of them*; air an cùlaibh: *behind them*; bidh mi air ais air tìr: *I will be back on land*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: chan eil mi a' smaoineachadh air na bùird a chithear air na bàtaichean-aiseig: *I'm not thinking about the tables which are seen on the ferry boats. The word chithear may not be readily recognisable and it will be difficult to find in a dictionary (although it is in Dwelly, of which I hope you all have a copy!) The chi-part may remind you of chì mi (I will/can see) and, indeed, it is the same verb (faic, an irregular verb). The -(e)ar ending is also easy to interpret; it is a future (or present habitual) passive and it is usually tacked on to the root of the verb (eg cuirear e: it will be put; òlar an t-uisge: the water will be drunk). But with the ten irregular verbs of which faic is one, the root (which is normally equivalent to the singular imperative) is also irregular. Thus we get, for example, gheibhear e (it will be got); nithear e (it will be done/made); ruigear e (it will be reached); bheirear e (it will be given); cluinnear e (it will be heard). Note, however, that the dependent form may be different. This appears in the Litir in faic as faicear – far am faicear a' Bheurla 'board' (where the English 'board' is seen).*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: cuiridh mi nur cuimhne [gur e sin an taobh gu deas air an t-seòladair]: *I will remind you (pl.) [that that is the side to the right of the sailor]. If speaking to one person, you would say cuiridh mi nad chuimhne.*

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