

## **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) \**

Bha Daibhidh Ceanadach, athair Marsaili nan Òran, gu math ainmeil na là mar sheinneadair Albannach air feadh an t-saoghail, agus chuir e fhèin is a theaghlach seachad trì bliadhna ann an Astràilia is New Zealand, a’ siubhal bho àite gu àite is a’ nochdadh air an àrd-ùrlar anns gach fear aca.

Aig an àm sin, anns na seachdadan san naoidheamh linn deug, cha robh rathad math sam bith ann eadar Melbourne is Sydney, agus thug na Ceanadaich sia seachdainean air eich is ann an coidsichean, a’ dol tro choille is tarsainn aibhnichean airson Sydney a ruigsinn. Bha an turas garbh, ach chòrd e ri Marsaili. Is bha iad trang gu leòr nuair a ràinig iad Sydney, oir sheinn iad a h-uile h-oidhche airson deich seachdainean.

Chaidh iad an uair sin gu tuath, gu Tìr na Bànrigh, is ochd mìosan deug as dèidh dhaibh Astràilia a ruigsinn, chaidh iad a Thasmania, far an do choinnich iad ri seann bhoireannach laghach a bha na nighinn don fhear-ciùil ainmeil Albannach, Nathaniel Gobha, agus na ban-ogha don fhìdhlear ainmeil, Niall Gobha. As dèidh sin, chuir iad seachad ùine ann an Adelaide is an uair sin New Zealand.

Chunnaic Marsaili rudan ann an New Zealand a chuir Alba na cuimhne. Bha an t-Eilean mu Dheas car coltach ris an t-seann dùthaich agus, ann am Wellington, dh’fhairich i gaoth làidir de a leithid nach do dh’fhairich i ach ann an eileanan na h-Alba. Agus chunnaic i rudeigin a chitheadh i tric is minig anns na bliadhnaichean roimhe ann an Eilean Bharraigh – boireannach (ban-Mhaori a bh’ innte) a’ lionadh cliabh le coilleagan, no srùbain.

Sheòl iad a dh’Aimeireagaidh as t-samhradh, ochd-deug, seachdad ’s a còig (1875) agus airson a’ gheamhraidh bha iad ann an Canada, uaireannan a’ siubhal ann am fìor dhroch shìde ann an slaod a bh’ air a tharraing le eich. Is bha an teaghlach trang a-rithist, mar bu trice a’ seinn ann an sia bailtean eadar-dhealaichte gach seachdain is ann an dà eaglais Chlàireach a h-uile Sàbaid. Nuair a thill Marsaili a Dhùn Eideann, bha i ochd bliadhna deug a dh’aois agus bha i air mòran dhen t-saoghal fhaicinn.

Anns na bliadhnaichean as dèidh sin, chaidh iad air chuairt a dh’Afraga a Deas, agus chuir cuid dhen teaghlach ùine seachad anns an Eadailt airson tuilleadh ionnsachadh mu cheòl. An uair sin, ann an ochd-deug, ochdad ’s a h-aon (1881) dh’fhuiling na Ceanadaich mulad mhòr nuair a chaidh fear de bhràithrean Marsaili agus dithis pheathraichean dhi còmhla gu amharclann ann an Nice, anns an Fhraing, airson opera. Bha spreadhadh uabhasach anns an togalach agus chaidh an triùir a mharbhadh.

Thachair mòran do Mhairsili anns na h-ochdadan is toiseach nan naoidheadan. Thill i a dh’Astràilia is New Zealand, chaochail a h-athair, phòs i – fear Ailig Friseal a bha na cho-ogha do a màthair – fhuair i dithis chloinne, agus chaill i an duine aice le droch shlàinte. Bha i na banntrach aig aois trithead ’s a trì.

Chaidh còig bliadhna deug eile seachad mus do rinn Marsaili an ceangal ris na h-Eileanan Siar a bha a’ dol ga dèanamh cliùiteach. Thachair i ri fear-deilbh Albannach, Iain

MacDhonnchaidh, a bha measail air a' Ghàidhlig agus a mhol dhi dhol a dh'Eirisgeigh. Agus chaidh i ann ann an naoi-deug 's a còig (1905), a' gabhail carbad-iarainn gu ruige an t-Òban, agus bàt-aiseig a dh'ionnsaigh an eilein. Sgrìobh i bliadhnaichean as dèidh làimh gun do sheòl i a-steach do shaoghal a chumadh greim teann oirre airson a' chòrr de a beatha. Bheir sinn sùil air mar a ghlac na h-eileanan, agus saoghal na Gaidheal, i an ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdainne:** eich: *horses*; coidsichean: *coaches*; garbh: *rough*; Tìr na Bànrigh: *Queensland*; laghach: *nice*; an t-Eilean mu Dheas: *South Island*; slaod: *sleigh*; Clèireach: *Presbyterian*; an Eadailt: *Italy*; bantrach: *widow*; cliùiteach: *renowned*.

**Abairtean na seachdainne:** ainmeil na là mar sheinneadair Albannach: *famous in his day as a Scottish singer*; anns gach fear aca: *in each one of them*; anns na seachdadan: *in the seventies*; tarsainn aibhnichean: *across rivers*; ochd mìosan deug as dèidh dhaibh X a ruigsinn: *18 months after reaching X*; na ban-ogha don fhìdhlear ainmeil: *a grand-daughter of the famous fiddler*; a chuir Alba na cuimhne: *which reminded her of Scotland*; car coltach ris an t-seann dùthaich: *rather like the old country*; a' lìonadh cliabh le coilleagan, no srùbain: *filling a creel with cockles (coilleag and srùban are both common names for this shellfish)*; sheòl iad a dh'Aimeireagaidh as t-samhradh: *they sailed to America in the summer*; airson a' gheamhraidh: *for the winter*; fìor dhroch shìde: *really bad weather*; bha i air mòran dhen t-saoghal fhaicinn: *she had seen much of the world*; dh'fhulaing na Ceanadaich mulad mhòr: *the Kennedys suffered great grief*; chaidh an trìuir a mharbhadh: *the three were killed*; a bha na cho-ogha do a màthair: *who was a first cousin to her mother*; a' gabhail carbad-iarainn gu ruige an t-Òban: *taking a train to Oban*; a chumadh greim teann oirre: *that would keep a tight grip on her*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne:** chaidh fear de bhràithrean Marsaili agus dithis pheathraichean dhi còmhla gu amharclann: *one of Marjory's brothers and two of her sisters went together to a theatre. I want to say something this week about the element lann which means a repository or place in which an activity of a particular type takes place, and which occurs in compounds, with the first element referring to the activity. Amharclann ('viewing place') is not commonly used in Scotland (taigh-cluiche is more common) but you will meet with it regularly in Ireland and it has some currency here as well. Leabharlann ('book place') means a library. Note that in both these words, there is no hyphen between the elements, but in many examples there is a hyphen, eg obair-lann (work-place) and deuchainn-lann (test-place) which might refer to a laboratory or industrial workshop. Biadh-lann is sometimes used for a refectory or canteen, as in a school or large workplace, and taisbean-lann refers to an exhibition hall or gallery.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne:** chunnaic i rudeigin a chitheadh i tric is minig anns na bliadhnaichean roimhe: *she saw something she would see very often in the years ahead (of her)*. Tric is minig: *very often, frequently*.

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