

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 **

Halò, a chàirdean. Tha sibh eòlach gu leòr air sin, nach eil? A chàirdean. Dè chanadh sibh ri buidheann de dh’fhir no ri buidheann de bhoireannaich? Uill, ris na fir, chanadh sibh “halò, fhearaibh.” Ris na boireannaich, bhiodh sibh a’ cleachdadh an fhacail *bean* anns an tuiseal ghairmeach iolra, a’ cantainn “halò a mhnathan”. Ri balaich, chanadh sibh “a bhalachaibh” agus ri caileagan chanadh sibh “a chaileagan.” Tha na notaichean-gràmair an t-seachdain seo a’ mìneachadh mar a tha an tuiseal gairmeach iolra ag obair.

Ach gu cuspair eile. Bu mhath leam rudeigin aithris dhuibh an-dràsta agus, mus bi mi deiseil, chanainn gum bi fios agaibh dè th’ ann. Seo a-nis e: Tuath, Tuath ’s a bhith ’n Ear, Tuath ’s an Ear-thuath, an Ear-thuath ’s a bhith tuath, an Ear-thuath, an Ear-thuath ’s a bhith ’n Ear, an Ear ’s an Ear-thuath, an Ear ’s a bhith Tuath, an Ear.

Bidh sibh a’ tuigsinn *Tuath* agus *an Ear* – *north* agus *east* – agus bidh e soilleir dhuibh, saoilidh mi, gur e a th’ annta àirdean na combaist, eadar Tuath agus an Ear. Agus dh’fhaodadh sibh leantainn oirbh eadar an Ear, Deas, an Iar, is air ais gu Tuath. Chan fhaca mi àirdean na combaist ann an Gàidhlig ann an clò a-riamh, co-dhiù ann an leabhar a chaidh fhoillseachadh gu proifeasanta. Ach tha iad againn a-nise ann am faclair ùr Gàidhlig a nochd o chionn ghoirid – *The Gaelic-English Dictionary, am Faclair Gàidhlig-Beurla*, le Cailean Mark. Buinidh Cailean don Ear-thuath, ma dh’fhaodas mi àirde na combaist a chleachdadh, agus dh’ionnsaigh e a’ Ghàidhlig. Sgrìobh e leabhar anns na h-ochdadan mu ghnìomhairean Gàidhlig agus tha a’ chompanaidh *Routledge* a-nise air fhaclair mòr ùr snasail fhoillseachadh.

A bharrachd air na faclan fhèin tha earrannan anns an fhaclair a tha a’ mìneachadh puingeann cudthromach gràmair, cunntadh is eile – agus àirdean na combaist. Seo an fheadhainn eadar Deas agus an Iar: Deas, Deas ’s a bhith ’n Iar, Deas ’s an Iar-dheas, an Iar-dheas ’s a bhith Deas, an Iar-dheas, an Iar-dheas ’s a bhith ’n Iar, an Iar ’s an Iar-dheas, an Iar ’s a bhith Deas, an Iar.

A bheil sibh air rudeigin a mhothachadh mu na h-àirdean ann an Gàidhlig? Seo an fheadhainn a laigheas eadar gach prìomh àirde, ann am Beurla an toiseach agus an uair sin ann an Gàidhlig: *North-east, South-east, South-west, North-west*; an Ear-thuath, an Earra-Dheas, an Iar-dheas, an Iar-thuath. Bidh sibh a’ mothachadh gu bheil a’ toirt prìomhachas do Thuath agus Deas ann am Beurla, mar eisimpleir *North-east* an àite *East-north* is *South-west* an àite *West-south*. Ach ann an Gàidhlig canaidh sinn an Ear-thuath is an Iar-dheas an àite Tuath-ear no Deas-iar.

Tha beachd aig Cailean Mark air a sin. Tha e a’ cumail a-mach gur e as coireach ri sin gu robh na h-àirdean ann an Gàidhlig co-cheangailte bho thùs ri adhradh na grèine, agus gu robh an àirde an ear fìor chudthromach oir ’s ann an sin a bhios a’ ghrian ag èirigh. Dhèilig mi ri seo ann an Litir o chionn fhada, nuair a mhìnich mi gu bheil *an ear* a’ ciallachadh *air beulaibh* a chionn ’s gum biodh daoine a’ coimhead a dh’ionnsaigh àirde èirigh na grèine. Tha *an iar* a’ ciallachadh *air cùlaibh* air an aon dòigh.

Agus 's e sin as coireach gu bheil deas airson *south* co-ionann ri deas airson *right*, oir ma choimheadas tu a dh'ionnsaigh na h-àirde an ear, tha an àirde a deas air do làimh dheis. Co-dhiù, a chàirdean, sin uile a cheadaicheas an ùine dhomh an t-seachdain seo. Beannach leibh.

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Faclan na seachdaine: Tuath 's a bhith 'n Ear: *N by E*; Tuath 's an Ear-thuath: *NNE*; an Ear-thuath 's a bhith Tuath: *E by N*; an Ear-thuath: *NE*; an Ear-thuath 's a bhith 'n Ear: *NE by E*; an Ear 's an Ear-thuath: *ENE*; an Ear 's a bhith Tuath: *E by N*; àirdean na combaist: *the points of the compass*; snasail: *neat*; an àirde an ear: *the east*; air beulaibh: *in front of*; air cùlaibh: *behind*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: halò, a chàirdean: *hello, friends*; halò, fhearaibh: *hello, men*; sgrìobh e leabhar anns na h-ochdadan mu ghnìomhairean Gàidhlig: *he wrote a book in the eighties about Gaelic verbs*; a bheil sibh air rudeigin a mhothachadh?: *have you noticed something?*; an fheadhainn a laigheas eadar gach prìomh àirde: *the ones that lie between each primary compass point*; gu bheilear a' toirt prìomhachas do X: *that priority is given to X*; tha e a' cumail a-mach: *he reckons, maintains*; gur e as coireach ri sin: *that the reason for that is*; co-cheangailte bho thùs ri adhradh na grèine: *linked originally to sun-worship*; ma choimheadas tu a dh'ionnsaigh na h-àirde an ear: *if you look eastwards*; tha an àirde a deas air do làimh dheis: *(the) south (point of the compass) is at your right hand*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: *Last week we looked at the vocative singular case in Gaelic. At the beginning of this week's Litir, I gave some examples of the vocative plural, an tuiseal gairmeach iolra. This is formed in two ways: where the nominative plural form has an –an ending, the vocative plural is equivalent to the nominative plural, except that it is lenited and preceded by an “a”. Thus càirdean becomes “a chàirdean!” and caileagan becomes “a chaileagan!” Where the nominative plural in some masculine nouns is formed by slenderisation of the nominative singular eg balaich (boys), fir (men), bodaich (old men), there is an old vocative form which still exists, and which terminates in –aibh, eg “a bhalachaibh!”, “fhearaibh!”, “a bhodachaibh!”. Note that with fhearaibh having an initial silent consonant combination because of lenition, the “a” is dropped. Also, some dialects give a “iv” sound at the end of these forms; in others, the sound is closer to “oo”. Note also that a few nouns are irregular. An example is “a mhnathan!”, the vocative plural of bean, a wife or woman.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: sin uile a cheadaicheas an ùine dhomh: *that's all that time permits me*.

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