

## *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) \**

Fàilte oirbh a-rithist. Agus fàilte shònraichte, oir 's e seo an dà cheudamh Litir bho thòisich mi air an sgrìobhadh o chionn faisg air ceithir bliadhna. Bidh sibh toilichte cluinntinn nach bi cus gràmair ann an t-seachdain-sa, ach feumaidh sinn sùil a thoirt air na ceistean a chuir mi oirbh aig deireadh na Litreach mu dheireadh.

Dè a' Ghàidhlig a th' air *nineteen women*? An d' fhuair sibh e? *Naoi boireannaich dheug*. Naoi boireannaich dheug. No mas e *bean* a chleachd sibh, chanadh sibh *naoi mnathan deug*. Agus seventeen Scotsmen? *Seachd Albannaich dheug*. Seachd Albannaich dheug.

'S e a' cheist eile a chuir mi oirbh – dè a' Ghàidhlig a th' air *eleven o' clock*? 'S e an fhreagairt *aon uair deug*. Tha dà rud ann a dh'fheumas mi ràdh mu dheidhinn seo. Carson nach e *aon uair dheug* oir tha uair boireann? Uill, 's e as coireach nach bi an “d” air a sèimheachadh as dèidh an “r”. Bidh sin a' tachairt cuideachd le cuid de dh'fhaclan a tha a' crìochnachadh le “t”, “l”, “n” no “s”.

'S e an rud eile a bu chòir dhomh ràdh gun tuirt mi *aon uair deug* le, mar gum biodh, “s” eadar an “r” agus an “d”. Tha sin cumanta ann an grunn dualchainntean. Air an aon dòigh, canaidh sinn “bòrd”, “bàrd” agus “càirdean”. Chan eil “s” sgrìobhte ann an gin de na faclan sin.

Sin e airson gràmair an t-seachdain-sa. Bu toigh leam rudeigin a ràdh a-nise mu Ghaidheal ainmeil air an robh Adhamh Fearghasdan no 's dòcha Adhamh MacFhearghais. Chan eil mi cinnteach dè chanadh e ris fhèin ann an Gàidhlig ach 's e Adam Ferguson a bh' air ann am Beurla. Rugadh e ann an seachd-deug, fichead 's a trì (1723) aig Lag an Ràith ann an Siorrachd Pheairt.

B' e Adhamh an naoidheamh leanabh, am fear a b' òige, aig an Urramach Adhamh Fearghasdan agus a bhean, Màiri Ghòrdan, agus chaidh e gu Sgoil Ghràmair Pheairt. Fhuair e foghlam aig àrd-ìre ann an Cill Rìmhinn is an uair sin ann an Dùn Eideann far an d' fhuair e trèanadh airson a bhith na mhinistear ann an Eaglais na h-Alba.

Bha e na mhinistear don Fhreiceadan Dubh, an rèiseamaid ainmeil, airson naoi bliadhna agus 's e a' chiad rud a dh'fhoillsich e a-riamh eadar-theangachadh gu Beurla de shearmon a rinn e ann an Gàidhlig airson na rèiseamaid ann am meadhan ar-a-mach nan Seumasach ann an seachd-deug, ceathrad 's a còig (1745).

Ach cha robh e riarichte mar mhinistear agus ann an seachd-deug, caogad 's a h-ochd (1758) fhuair e obair mar leabharlannaiche do Roinn an Luchd-tagraidh, no Faculty of Advocates, ann an Dùn Eideann. Cha robh e an sin fada, ge-tà, mus d' fhuair e obair mar fhear-teagaisg prìobhaideach do mhic uaislean. An uair sin, ghabh e ceum mòr air adhart nuair a fhuair e dreuchd mar Phroifeasair na Feallsanachd Nàdarraich aig an oilthigh.

Chan e sin a' chathair a bha e a' miannachadh, ge-tà. Bha sùil aige air tè na Feallsanachd Moralta agus fhuair e mu dheireadh i ann an seachd-deug, seasgad 's a ceithir (1764). Bha e cliùiteach mar thidsear agus sgrìobh e leabhraichean airson a chuid oileanach

ann am feallsanachd, ach cha robh e fhathast aithnichte air feadh na rìoghachd. Thachair sin nuair a sgrìobh e aiste ainmeil ann an seachd-deug, seasgad 's a seachd (1767). Innsidh mi dhuibh tuilleadh mu a deidhinn agus mu bheatha Adhaimh Fheargasdain an ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdainne:** fàilte shònraichte: *a special welcome*; a' crìochnachadh: *finishing*; Lag an Ràith: *Logierait*; Siorrachd Pheairt: *Perthshire*; Cill Rìmhinn: *St Andrews*; am Freiceadan Dubh: *The Black Watch (regiment)*; riaraichte: *satisfied*; leabharlannaiche: *librarian*; Feallsanachd Nàdarrach: *Natural Philosophy*; Feallsanachd Moralta: *Moral Philosophy*; aiste: *essay*.

**Abairtean na seachdainne:** an dà cheudamh Litir bho thòisich mi air an sgrìobhadh: *the 200<sup>th</sup> Litir since I started to write them*; feumaidh mi sùil a thoirt air X: *I must look at X*; nach bi an “d” air a sèimheachadh: *the “d” won't be lenited*; tha sin cumanta ann an grunn dualchainntean: *that is common in several dialects*; ann an gin de na faclan sin: *in any of those words*: 's e a' chiad rud a dh'fhoillsich e a-riamh: *the first thing he ever published*; eadar-theangachadh gu Beurla de shearmon: *an English translation of a sermon*; ann am meadhan ar-a-mach nan Seumasach: *in the middle of the Jacobite rebellion*; mar fhear-teagaisg prìobhaideach do mhic uaislean: *as a private teacher to the sons of gentry*; chan e sin a' chathair a bha e a' miannachadh: *that is not the chair he desired*; cha robh e aithnichte air feadh na rìoghachd: *he was not recognised throughout the land*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne:** fhuair e mu dheireadh i ann an 1764: *he got it (fem.) finally in 1764. Are you a little confused about where to place a pronoun if it represents the object of a sentence? In a simple sentence, the answer is generally at the end eg you would be better to say rinn e as dèidh greis e, rather than rinn e e as dèidh greis, although the latter is not actually wrong. It also runs off the tongue more easily. Similarly if you were asked “càite an d' fhuair thu na ticeadan?”, you might say “cheannaich mi iad aig an stèisean”. This would be grammatically correct, but you would be considered better-spoken if you said “cheannaich mi aig an stèisean iad”. You will notice that the latter shows a divergence of the word order from the English “I bought them at the station”. The more you can think in Gaelic, the better it will be for your idiomatic use of the language. Returning to the sentence in the text, I might have said fhuair e i mu dheireadh ann an 1764 but it would not have been as “correct” to the ear. I might also have said fhuair e mu dheireadh ann an 1764 i. This would be absolutely correct but the space between subject and object is now so great that comprehension could be affected. You might be considered to be speaking “university Gaelic” or “pulpit Gaelic”. My own delivery was a compromise which I hope would be considered “proper” without being too formal.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne:** Tha dà rud a dh'fheumas mi ràdh mu dheidhinn seo: *there are two things I must say about this*.

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