

## *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) \**

Faisg air Seapail Fhaolain ann an Srath Fhaolain tha abhainn ann air a bheil Uisge Fhaolain. Anns an abhainn, tha linne air a bheil Linne Fhaolain. Dh’fhàg Naomh Faolan dìleab mhòr as a dhèidh anns an dùthaich sin, mar a chì sibh!

Anns an t-seann aimsir, bhiodh daoine a bha a’ fulaing le tinneas-inntinn air an cur fodha anns an linne, a tha gu math domhainn. Bhiodh aca ri naoi clachan a thogail à bonn na linne agus bhiodh aca ri coiseachd trì tursan timcheall gach fir de thrì cùirn air bruach na h-aibhne, a’ tilgeil clach air gach càrn gach turas. An uair sin bhiodh iad air an ceangal le ròp gus nach fhaigheadh iad air gluasad, is bhiodh iad air am fàgail anns an t-seann seapail fad oidhche le dìreach feur orra airson an cumail blàth.

Thathar ag ràdh gun do rinneadh leigheas air iomadach duine anns an dòigh sin. Ach thathar ag ràdh cuideachd nach eil cumhachd leigheis aig an linne tuilleadh. Chaill i a cumhachd nuair a thuit tarbh innte, agus coin an tòir air.

Ma tha sibh air a bhith ann an Taigh-tasgaidh na h-Alba ann an Dùn Eideann, ’s dòcha gum bi sibh eòlach air dà rud àrsaidh aig a bheil ceangal do Naomh Faolan – a bhachall agus a chlag. Uill, leis an fhìrinn innse, chan eil a bhachall gu lèir ann – dìreach an ceann dheth, am pìos air am biodh duine a’ greimeachadh. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ air “an Coigreach”. Fhuair e an t-ainm sin leis gum biodh daoine ga thoirt leotha a dh’àiteachan fad air falbh airson rudan a chaidh a ghoid a thoirt air ais. Bhiodh am fear air an robh an t-uallach airson an Coigreach a ghlèidheadh, a’ faighinn ceithir sgillinn no paidhir bhròg, agus biadh airson aon oidhche, nuair a bhiodh e a’ falbh leis a dh’iarraidh crodh a bh’ air an iomain gu gleann eile fad air falbh.

’S e an t-ainm a bh’ air an fhear a chumadh rudan mar sin “an Deòr”, facal às a bheil an sloinneadh *Dewar* (Mac an Deòir) a’ tighinn an-diugh. B’ e a’ chiad Phrìomh Mhinistear ann an Alba, Dòmhnall Mac an Deòir nach maireann, fear de shliochd a’ chinnidh sin. Chanadh daoine “Deòr a’ Bheàrnain” ris an fhear a bha an urra ri clag Naoimh Fhaolain, oir ’s e “am Beàrnain” a chanadh iad ris a’ chlag fhèin. Bha àite sònraichte aig a’ chlag nuair a bhathar a’ crùnadh Rìgh Seumas IV ann an ceithir-deug, ochdad ’s a h-ochd (1488). Ach bha e air a ghoid bhon t-seapail, far an robh e crochte, le fear-turais Sasannach dà bhliadhna ro dhèireadh an ochdamh linn deug (1798) agus bha e air a thilleadh a dh’Alba dìreach ann an ochd-deug, seasgad ’s a naoi (1869).

Bidh sibh a’ mothachadh gu robh an clag fhathast anns an t-seann seapail nuair a bhiodh daoine, a bha a’ fulaing le tinneas-inntinn, air am fàgail ann airson na h-oidhche, as dèidh gun deach am bogadh anns an abhainn. Gu dearbh, bhiodh an clag os an cionn fhad ’s a laigheadh iad, fliuch is gun teas. Anns an fhìor sheann aimsir, bhiodh daoine a’ creidsinn ann an leigheas mar sin, ach bha droch bheachd aig ministear na sgìre air a’ chùis ann am meadhan an naoidheamh linn deug.

“Cha chuala sinn guth air gin a chaidh am feabhas,” thuirt e, “ach, air feasgar fuar geamhraidh, dhèanadh an gnothach deuchainn mhath air duine sam bith a bha am beachd a bhith a’ toirt a’ chreidsinn gu robh tinneas-inntinn air.”

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** Seapail Fhaolain: *St Fillan’s Chapel*; Uisge Fhaolain: *River Fillan*; Linne Fhaolain: *St Fillan’s Pool*; àrsaidh: *very old*; an Coigreach: [*lit.*] *the Stranger*; crochte: *hung*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** dh’fhàg X dìleab mhòr as a dhèidh: *X left a great legacy after him*; bhiodh daoine a bha a’ fulaing le tinneas-inntinn air an cur fodha: *people suffering from mental illness would be submerged*; bhiodh aca ri naoi clachan a thogail: *they would have to pick up nine stones*; timcheall gach fir de thrì cùirn air bruach na h-aibhne: *around each one of 3 cairns on the riverbank*; gus nach fhaigheadh iad air gluasad: *so they couldn’t move*; le dìreach fear orra airson an cumail blàth: *with only hay on them to keep them warm*; gun do rinneadh leigheas air iomadach duine: *that many people were healed*; chaill i a cumhachd nuair a thuit tarbh innte, agus coin an tòir air: *it lost its power when a bull, which was being chased by dogs, fell in*; ma tha sibh air a bhith ann an X: *if you have been in X*; chan eil a bhachall gu lèir ann: *his entire crozier is not there*; leis gum biodh daoine ga thoirt leotha: *as people would take it with them*; a dh’iarraidh crodh a bh’ air an iomain gu gleann eile: *to fetch cattle that had been driven to another glen*; b’ e a’ chiad Phrìomh Mhinistear Dòmhnall Mac an Deòir nach maireann: *the first First Minister was Donald Dewar (deceased)*; fear de shliochd a’ chinnidh sin: *one of the descendants of those people*; nuair a bhathar a’ crùnadh Rìgh Seumas IV: *when King James IV was being crowned*; as dèidh gun deach am bogadh: *after they had been immersed*; bhiodh an clag os an cionn: *the bell was [would be] above them*; cha chuala sinn guth air gin a chaidh am feabhas: *we never heard of any who were cured*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine:** thathar ag ràdh cuideachd nach eil cumhachd leigheis aig an linne tuilleadh: *it is also said that the pool no longer has healing power(s). Can I suggest that sometimes you take a look at one word which appears in many different guises? If you are in a Gaelic learners’ group you might all choose a word and try to use it in as many ways as possible. Tuilleadh is a good example. You will be familiar with its common use meaning “more, extra” eg am faigh mi tuilleadh? (may I have more?) – as Oliver Twist would have asked in the Gaelic version. But in the example in the Litir it is being used as an adverb meaning “any more” and is usually associated with a negative verbal form. This might be a future form eg cha bhruidhinn mi riut tuilleadh (I won’t speak to you again); cha till e tuilleadh (he will never return). It might also, as in the Litir, relate to past or present events eg chan obraicheadh e tuilleadh (it wouldn’t work any more). How else might we use tuilleadh? A bheil tuilleadh eisimpleirean agaibh?*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** dhèanadh an gnothach deuchainn mhath air duine sam bith (a bha am beachd a bhith a’ toirt a’ chreidsinn gu robh tinneas-inntinn air): *the business would be a good test of any man (who was considering pretending insanity).*

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