

# 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) \**

*Ged tha mo cheann air liathadh  
'S mo chiabhagan air tanachadh,  
'S tric a leig mi mial-chù  
ri fear fiadhaich, ceannartach:  
Ged bu toigh leam riamh iad,  
'S ged fhaicinn air an t-sliabh iad,  
Cha tèid mi nis gan iarraidh  
On chaill mi trian na h-analach.*

Halo a-rithist. Beagan bàrdachd airson toiseach na Litreach an t-seachdain-sa. Ach chan ann orm fhìn a tha i a-mach! Cha do chaill mi trian mo h-analach fhathast!

A bheil sibh ga h-aithneachadh? Tha i às an dàn ainmeil *Cead Deireannach nam Beann*, le Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir, anns a bheil Donnchadh a' leigeil soraidh leis a' bheinn a rinn e ainmeil na bhàrdachd - Beinn Dòrain, faisg air Taigh an Droma. Tha Slighe Taobh an Iar na Gaidhealtachd a' dol seachad air a' bheinn. Ach feumaidh mi aideachadh gu robh an là san robh mise anns an sgìre sin ro theth airson a' bheinn a dhìreadh. Uill, 's e sin mo leisgeul, co-dhiù!

Aig deireadh an là sin, ràinig mi Drochaid Urchaidh, baile beag ann an sealladh Beinn Dòrain. 'S e àite annasach a th' ann oir, a bharrachd air àiteachan-fuirich, cha mhòr gu bheil dad eile ann. Agus buinidh a h-uile duine a tha ag obair anns an taigh-seinnse do dh' Astràilia. Mar sin, chuir e iongnadh orm, nuair a chaidh mi ann airson pinnt, gun cuala mi abairt Ghàidhlig - air a libhrigeadh ann an guth mòr.

“Suidh air do thòn!” ars' an guth, agus choimhead mi a-null don àite às an tàinig e. Bha mi a' smaoinichadh gu robh cuideigin gam aithneachadh is gu robh e a' dol a thabhann deoch dhomh! Ach cha robh. Gu dearbh, cha robh an duine - fear a bha eadar ceathrad is leth-cheud bliadhna a dh'aois - eadhon a' coimhead orm. “Suidh air do thòn!” thuirt e a-rithist. Bha e a' coimhead air duine a bha ri taobh. Agus bha am fear eile na shuidhe mu thràth.

Thuirt am fear na dearbh fhaclan a-rithist, ach lean e air ann am Beurla. “Suidh air do thòn!” That means sit down. And, if we say it to a Mull-man, we say ‘Suidh air do thòn, a Mhuilich!’” Cha b' e Muileach ris an robh e a' bruidhinn ge-tà, ach Sasannach. Uill, bu chòir dhomh ghluasad air falbh gus nach robh mi ann an claisneachd a' chòmhradh, ach cha b' urrainn dhomh. Bidh a' Ghàidhlig gam tharraing ga h-ionnsaigh an-còmhnaidh. Bha mi dìreach a' dol a ràdh rudeigin nuair a chuala mi guth eile air cùl a' chunntair - “*Giddy, can I get you anything ...?*”

Cha do bhruidhinn mi ris a' Ghaidheal an uair sin, ach shaoil mi gum faighinn facal air na b' fhaide dhen fheasgar. Ghabh mi an deoch a-muigh leis cho math 's a bha an t-sìde agus, as deidh greis, thill mi a-steach agus bha fear ùr ri taobh a' Ghaidheil. Sasannach eile. Agus ghabh mi iongnadh nuair a chuala mi an còmhradh. “Suidh air do thòn, a Mhuilich!” Shaoil mi gur dòcha nach bu chòir dhomh leigeil air gu robh Gàidhlig agam!

Is iomadh trup a shuidh Donnchadh Bàn air a thòn air Beinn Dòrain, tha mi cinnteach. Agus bu toigh leam ur fàgail an t-seachdain seo le faclan brèagha mun sgìre sin - an rann mu dheireadh à *Cead Deireannach nam Beann*.

*Mo shoraidh leis na frithean  
O 's mìorbhailteach na beannan iad,  
Le biolair uaine is fìor-uisg',  
Deoch uasal, rìomhach, cheana ta:  
Na blàran a tha prìseil,  
'S na fàsaichean tha lìonmhor,  
O 's àite a leig mi dhìom iad,  
Gu bràth mo mhìle beannachd leo'!*

**Faclan na seachdaine:** Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir: *Duncan Ban MacIntyre*; Drochaid Urchaidh: *Bridge of Orchy*; pinnt: *a pint*; biolair-uaine: *watercress*; fìor-uisge: *spring-water, fresh-water*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** ged tha mo cheann air liathadh: *although my head has gone grey*; 's mo chiabhagan air tanachadh: *and my whiskers have thinned*; 's tric a leig mi mial-chù ri fear fiadhaich, ceannartach: *it's often I let a greyhound go at a wild, imperious one (stag)*; ged fhaicinn: *though I would see*; on chaill mi trian na h-analach: *since I lost a third of the (my) breath*; Cead Deireannach nam Beann: *The Last Farewell of (to) the Mountains*; 's e sin mo leisgeul: *that's my excuse*; a bharrachd air àiteachan-fuirich: *other than dwelling places*; buinidh X do dh'Astràilia: *X belongs to Australia*; chuir e iongnadh orm: *it surprised me*; air a libhrigeadh ann an guth mòr: *delivered in a loud voice*; ann an claisneachd a' chòmhradh: *in earshot of the conversation*; bidh a' Ghàidhlig gam tharraing ga h-ionnsaigh: *Gaelic attracts me towards it (fem.)*; shaoil mi gum faighinn facal air: *I thought I would get a word with (on) him*; nach bu chòir dhomh leigeil air: *that I should not let on*; mo mhìle beannachd leo' (leotha): *my thousand blessings with them*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine:** gu robh an là san robh mise anns an sgìre sin ro theth: *that the day in which I was in that area was too hot. A short point this week on the word san. It is an abbreviated form of the phrase anns an, meaning "in the"(tha an cù san taigh), or, as here, "in which" and reflects modern pronunciation of anns an in many instances (though not all). It has now been officially adopted as a standardised abbreviation - and note that it has no apostrophe.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** *Two items this week: (1) is iomadh trup a shuidh Donnchadh: many times Duncan sat. Trup is not easily found in a dictionary; it is a loanword from English ("trip"). It might mean "once" e.g. chaidh mi ann trup (I went there once) but it is also heard in a plural sense as above. (2) Suidh air do thòn!: sit on your backside! This is not an overly polite phrase and would only be used with a child or with a friend who doesn't mind you being a bit cheeky. To be polite, you would say (in the singular or informal) - suidh sìos (sit down) or dèan suidhe (lit. make sit). In the plural or formal, you would say suidhibh sìos or dèanaibh suidhe.*

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