

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 rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk **

Tha ceàrnaidhean de thaobh an iar na Gaidhealtachd àraidh. Faodaidh tu a bhith a’ coiseachd ann an àite far a bheil glè bheag ri fhaicinn de mhac an duine an là an-diugh. Ach, aig an aon àm, faodaidh an t-àite a bhith loma-làn eachdraidh. Sin mar a tha e air taobh an iar Loch Abair.

Chaidh mi air chuairt o chionn dà mhìos eadar Loch Airceig agus Loch Nibheis tro Ghleann Deiseirigh. ’S e loch uisge a th’ ann an Loch Airceig agus ’s e loch mara a th’ ann an Loch Nibheis, a tha dìreach gu deas air Cnòideart. Eatarra, no eadar Gleann Deiseirigh agus Loch Nibheis, tha bealach ann air a bheil Màm na Cloich Àirde. ’S e slighe uabhasach brèagha a th’ ann.

Bha còignear anns a’ chòmhlán agam, agus ’s e glè bheag de dhaoine a chunnaic sinn anns na beagan làithean a chuir sinn seachad anns an sgìre. Ach chòrd e rium tachairt ri aon duine, fear Sasannach a tha a’ fuireach ann an Dùn Eideann, agus a chuir seachad oidhche ann am bothan air cladach Loch Nibheis.

Bha mise a’ campachadh ann an teanta, làimh ris a’ bhothan ach, a’ chiad char anns a’ mhadainn, agus mi fhathast nam leth-chadal, chaidh mi a-steach don bhothan airson mo bhracaist ullachadh, oir bha an t-uisge ann. Bha am fear a dh’ainmich mi na shuain nuair a dh’fhosgail mi an doras, no ’s e sin an coltas a bh’ air co-dhiù. Ach nuair a chunnaic e mi, thog e cheann far na leaba agus thuir e rium ann an Gàidhlig, “madainn mhath.”

Nise, mar a thuir mi, bha mi nam leth-chadal, agus cha b’ urrainn dhomh a bhith cinnteach co-dhiù chuala mi sin gu ceart, oir bha mi air tachairt ris an oidhche roimhe, agus mi a’ cabadaich ann an Gàidhlig le mo chompanaich, agus cha robh e air bìog a ràdh a leigeadh fhaicinn dhomh gu robh Gàidhlig aige.

“Tha Gàidhlig agaibh, ma-thà,” thuir mi ris. “Tha beagan,” thuir e. “An sibhse Ruairidh MacIlleathain?” “Is mi,” fhreagair mi. “Uill,” thuir e, “bidh mi ag èisteachd ri Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh a h-uile seachdain.” Nach eil e iongantach far an nochd luchd-leughaidh na Litreach! Co-dhiù, ma tha e ag èisteachd an t-seachdain seo, mo dhùrachd dha.

Nuair a bha Teàrlach Òg Stiùbhart ann an Alba, bha muinntir Cheann Loch Airceig seo taiceil dha. B’ iad na h-uachdarain ann an Gleann Deiseirigh aig an àm Camshronaich a bha càirdeach don cheann-cinnidh, Mac Dhòmhnail Dhuibh. Mharcaich tè à Gleann Deiseirigh, Sìneag Chamshron, aig ceann na feachd à Ceann Loch Airceig nuair a chaidh iad a choinneachadh ris a’ phrionnsa aig Gleann Fhionghain aig toiseach an ar-a-mach. A rèir aithris, bha seacaid uaine oirre agus bha i air muin eich ghil. Agus, as dèidh a’ chogaidh, chaidh Teàrlach Òg tron dùthaich seo, agus e a’ teicheadh bho na saighdearan dearga.

Bha sluagh mòr ann aig an àm sin agus, eadhon anns na ficheadan anns an linn sa chaidh, bha timcheall air ochd taighean anns an robh daoine a’ fuireach ann an Gleann Deiseirigh. Bha teaghlach de Stiùbhartach a’ fuireach ann an Srathan, aig bonn a’ ghlinne,

far an robh iad nan tuathanaich is nan ciobairean, agus bha iad air leth math, a rèir choltais, air òrain a ghabhail agus sgeulachdan innse ann an Gàidhlig.

Chan eil fhios agam dè cho tric 's a chluinnear Gàidhlig anns an sgìre sin an-diugh. Glè ainneamh, chanainn, agus is duilich sin. Ach, eadar mi-fhìn is mo chompanaich, agus ar caraaid à Dùn Eideann, bha gu leòr dhith ann airson beagan làithean anns a' Chèitean.

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Faclan na seachdainne: ceàrnaidhean: *areas, districts*; àraidh: *special, unusual*; Loch Airceig: *Loch Arkaig*; Loch Nibheis: *Loch Nevis*; Gleann Deiseirigh: *Glen Dessary*; Cnòideart: *Knoydart*; a' cabadaich: *chatting*; Teàrlach Òg: *Bonnie Prince Charlie*; Mac Dhòmhnail Dhuibh: *Cameron of Lochiel*; mharcaich: *rode*; Sìneag Chamshron: *Jenny Cameron*; Gleann Fhionghain: *Glen Finnan*; saighdearan dearga: *redcoats (lit. red soldiers)*; an Cèitean: *May*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: faodaidh tu a bhith a' coiseachd (*the a' is hardly pronounced in this construction and is sometimes not written*): *you can be walking*; loma-làn eachdraidh: *chock-a-block full of history*; bha còignear anns a' chòmhlán agam: *there were 5 people in my group*; làimh ris a' bhothan: *next to the bothy*; a' chiad char anns a' mhadainn: *first thing in the morning*; airson mo bhraicist ullachadh: *to prepare my breakfast*; bha X na shuain: *X was deeply asleep*; thog e cheann far na leapa: *he raised his head from the bed*; bha mi nam leth-chadal: *I was half-asleep*; cha robh e air bìog a ràdh: *he hadn't said a cheep*; an sibhse X?: *are you X? (meaning name or identity)*; mo dhùrachd dha: *my good wishes to him*; eadhon anns na ficheadan anns an linn sa chaidh: *even in the twenties of the last century (the 1920s)*; far an robh iad nan tuathanaich is nan ciobairean: *where they were farmers and shepherds*; dè cho tric 's a chluinnear Gàidhlig: *how often Gaelic is heard*; glè ainneamh, chanainn: *pretty rarely, I would say*; is duilich sin: *that's a pity*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne: bha i air muin eich ghil: *she was on the back of a white horse. I hope you are familiar with the compound preposition air muin which means "on top of". It has a relatively restricted usage eg it is universally used for riding a horse or other animal and is also used to describe the piling of objects on top of each other eg chuir mi am pàipear sin air muin an fheadhainn eile (I put that paper on top of the others). It is also used to describe copulation, both animal and human. Because it is a compound preposition, it takes the genitive case, even without the article eg bha e air muin aillbhein (he was riding an elephant). That means that an adjective describing the noun must behave in the appropriate way. In the case of a singular masculine noun, eg each, which slenderises in the genitive case (to eich), the adjective is also slenderised. It is also lenited as it would be with a lenitable noun eg balach. Note these examples: ceann a' bhalaich bhig (the little boy's head) and ceann balaich bhig (a little boy's head). How would you say "on top of a black bull"?*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne: a leigeadh fhaicinn dhomh gu robh Gàidhlig aige: *that would reveal (would have revealed) to me that he had (spoke) Gaelic. Chaidh leigeil fhaicinn: it was revealed. A' leigeil fhaicinn do X: revealing to X.*

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