

# 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.maclea@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk) \**

As t-samhradh, chaidh mi a champachadh air cladach Loch Shubhairne, eadar Gleann Eilg agus Malaig air taobh an iar na Gaidhealtachd. Gu deas air an loch, tha Cnòideart, rubha mòr beanntach anns a bheil glè bheag de shluagh. Chaidh mi ann còmhla ris an teaghlach agam, agus teaghlach eile, ann am bàta, oir cha mhòr gu bheil rathad anns an sgìre, agus chosgadh e ùine mhòr coiseachd a-steach.

Dh’fhuirich sinn beagan làithean ann an teantaichean làimh ris a’ chladach. Bha àiteachan fada os cionn a’ chladaich a bha còmhnard, ach cha robh iad math airson campachadh. Bha cus rainich agus cus fasnach anna. Bha sinn airson a bhith ann an àite fosgailte, far am biodh a’ ghaoth ann, gus nach biodh a’ mheanbh-chuileag a’ cur cus dragh oirnn. As t-samhradh air taobh an iar na Gaidhealtachd, bidh a’ mheanbh-chuileag dona. Tha sin cho cinnteach ri ... uill, *cho cinnteach ri tràghadh is lìonadh na mara*.

A bheil sibh eòlach air na faclan sin? Tràghadh, *the ebbing of the tide*, lìonadh, *the flowing or filling of the tide*. Co-dhiù, bha ar teantaichean faisg air *an tiùrr*. ’S e sin an loighne aig ceann shuas cladaich far a bheil feamainn, a chaidh a ghiulain ann leis an tìde-mhara. An tiùrr.

Mar a bhios fios agaibh, chan eil an tìde-mhara a’ ruigsinn an aon àite air a’ chladach fad na bliadhna. Bidh a h-àirde ag atharrachadh bho là gu là, bho sheachdain gu seachdain is bho ràith gu ràith. Aig àm annan, chan eil astar mòr ann eadar ìre an làin agus ìre na traghaid. Bidh làn ìosal ann, agus tràigh bheag. Aig an àm sin, canar *contraigh* ris. Bidh cuid ag ràdh *contraigh*. Ann am Beurla canaidh daoine *neap tide*.

Ach, aig àm annan eile, tha astar mòr ann eatarra. Ruigidh an làn ìre àrd air a’ chladach, agus bidh tràigh mhòr ann cuideachd. Canaidh sinn *reothart* ris an tìde-mhara sin. Ann am Beurla ’s e *spring tide*. Uill, tha fios agaibh dè tha mi a’ dol a ràdh a-nise, nach eil? Bha sinne air a dhol a Chnòideart, a’ campachadh aig ceann shuas a’ chladaich, aig àm an reothairt.

Nuair a ràinig sinn an t-àite-campachaidh anns a’ bhàta air an fheasgar, bha a’ mhuir a’ lìonadh ach bha tràigh mhòr ann fhathast. Chuir sinn na teantaichean suas os cionn an tiùrr. Thàinig a’ mhuir suas an cladach thairis air clachan a bh’ air an teasachadh leis a’ ghrèin, agus chaidh sinn a shnàmh. Cha robh a’ mhuir blàth ach cha robh i cianail fuar na bu mhò.

Nuair a thàinig e gu uair an làin, sheas sinn is choimhead sinn air an t-sàl airson dèanamh cinnteach nach ruigeadh e na teantaichean. Cha do ràinig, ach cha robh e fad’ air falbh. Agus bha sin na rabhadh dhuinn, ged nach do ghabh sinn sùim gu leòr dheth. Agus air feasgar an làrna-mhàireach, bha làn fìor àrd ann – na b’ àirde nan oidhche roimhe. Agus, aig uair an làin, bha na h-inbhich, mi-fhìn nam measg, ann an teanta mhòr, a’ gabhail fois.

Chuala sinn mo nighean ag èigheachd. “Na teantaichean!” Chaidh sinn a-mach. Bha an sàl cha

mhòr aig doras na tè a b' fhaisge air a' chladach. Cha b' e ruith ach leum ga h-ionnsaigh airson na cnagan a thoirt a-mach agus an teant' a ghluasad! Gu fortanach, bha làrach na b' àirde ann dhi faisg air làimh. Cha robh againn ri a cur suas am measg na rainich oir bha na milleanan de mheanbh-chuileagan ann a sin, a' feitheamh airson cothrom blasad fhaighinn de ar cuid fala!

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** as t-samhradh: *in the summer*; Loch Shubhairne: *Loch Hourn*; Gleann Eilg: *Glenelg*; Cnòideart: *Knoydart*; beanntach: *mountainous*; còmhnard: *flat*; feamainn: *seaweed*; tìde-mhara: *tide*; an làn: *high-tide*; an tràigh: *low-tide (also a beach and the expanse of shore left by the ebbing tide)*; contraigh, contraigh: *neap tide*; reothart: *spring tide*; an làrna-mhàireach: *the next day*; cnagan: *pegs*; làrach: *site*; blasad: *taste*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** anns a bheil glè bheag de shluagh: *in which there is a very small population*; oir cha mhòr gu bheil rathad ann: *because there is hardly a road there*; chosgadh e ùine mhòr: *it would take a long time*; bha cus rainich is cus fasnagaidh annta: *there was too much bracken and too much shelter there*; gus nach biodh a' mheanbh-chuileag a' cur dragh oirnn: *so the midges would not annoy us (midges are often referred to in the singular)*; bha ar teantaichean faisg air an tiùrr: *our tents were close to the line of seaweed thrown up at the highest point of the tide*; eadar ìre an làin agus ìre na traghaid: *between the high-tide level and the low-tide level*; bidh tràigh mhòr mhòr ann: *there is a very low low-tide (ie a big beach is left)*; thairis air clachan a bh' air an teasachadh leis a' ghrèin: *over stones which had been warmed by the sun*; ach cha robh i cianail fuar na bu mhò: *but she wasn't excessively cold either*; ged nach do ghabh sinn sùim gu leòr dheth: *although we didn't take enough notice of it*; aig uair an làin: *at the time of the high-tide*; a' gabhail fois: *having a rest*; bha an sàl cha mhòr aig an doras: *the sea-water was almost at the door*; cha b' e ruith ach leum: *(we) raced..*; cha robh againn ri a cur suas am measg na rainich: *we didn't have to put it up amongst the bracken*; de ar cuid fala: *of our blood*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine:** Bha sin na rabhadh dhuinn: *that was a warning for (to) us. This is the same construction as another which will be familiar: tha e na thidsear (he is a teacher) or bha e na bhalach aig an àm (he was a boy at the time). It allows you to use the verb to be, rather than the emphatic verb is (as you would in 's e tidsear a tha ann or is tidsear e, a form more common in Irish Gaelic than in Scottish). In tha e na thidsear, we are literally saying "he is in his teacher"; the feminine equivalent is tha i na tidsear ("she is in her teacher"), with the "t" unlenited following the feminine possessive. In bha e na rabhadh dhuinn we are saying "it was in its warning to us". Because the phrase contains the third person singular masculine possessive, the initial "r" in rabhadh is actually lenited, giving it a thicker sound, although we do not write "rh" as we write "h" next to some other consonants. With "sin" we are presuming it operates the same as "e", ie the third person singular masculine. Here are two other examples: bha i na cunnart dhaibh (she/it [fem.] was a danger to them); bha e na chùis-mhagaidh (he was a laughing stock).*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** Cho cinnteach ri tràghaidh is lìonadh na mara: *as certain as the ebbing and flowing of the tide*.

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