

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.macleaen@bbc.co.uk *. This is Litir 225*

Ann an Fhaoilleach, naoi-deug is ochd-deug (1918), chaidh riochdairean à Caidreachas Mèinneadairean Bhreatainn a bhruidhinn ri Winston Churchill mu dheidhinn an t-suidheachaidh ann an Ratharsair, far an robh na h-eileanaich, a bha ag obair anns a’ mhèinn-iarainn, air stailc. B’ e Mgr Churchill Ministear na h-Armachd, agus bha a’ mhèinn air a ruith leis a’ chompanaidh Bairds airson na Ministrealachd aige.

Bha dragh ann gu robh luchd-stiùiridh na mèinne a’ cleachdadh prìosanaich-chogaidh Ghearmailteach airson an stailc a bhriseadh. Thug Mgr Churchill òrdugh seachad nach fhaodadh a’ chompanaidh prìosanach sam bith a chur ann an dreuchd a bh’ aig eileanach ron stailc. Cha do mhair an stailc fada as deidh sin, agus fhuair na h-eileanaich àrdachadh-pàighidh.

Bha aon àite faisg air a’ chladach far an robh a’ chlach-iarainn air uachdar na talmhainn, ach bha a’ chuid a bu mhò dhith fon talamh. Bha ochd ciolomeatairean de thunailean ann far am biodh na mèinneadairean a’ cladhach na cloiche. Ma tha ùidh agaibh ann an eachdraidh na mèinne, tha leabhar ann a tha gu math fiosrachail mu a deidhinn - *The Raasay Iron Mine* le Laurence agus Pamela Draper.

Seo mar a bhiodh an là a’ dol do na mèinneadairean. Eadar aon uair deug a dh’oidhche agus sia uairean sa mhadainn, bhiodh mèinneadairean Breatannach a’ dèanamh obair-spreadhaidh. Cha robh na h-ùghdarrasan a’ dol a thoirt stuth-spreadhaidh do phrìosanaich-chogaidh. Aig seachd uairean sa mhadainn, bhiodh na Gearmailtich a’ tòiseachadh air a’ ghreis-obrach acasan. Gu ruige trì uairean feasgar bhiodh iad a’ gluasad clach a-mach às a’ mhèinn, ga cur air carbadan a bhiodh a’ falbh air rathad-iarainn. Eadar trì uairean feasgar agus aon uair deug a dh’oidhche, bhiodh buidheann eile de mhèinneadairean Breatannach a’ drileadh na cloiche.

Bha a’ mhèinn feumail aig àm a’ chogaidh ach, nuair a thàinig an cogadh gu crìch, cha robh i prothaideach tuilleadh. A bharrachd air sin, bha mì-rian ann an Ratharsair a thaobh an fhearainn. Anns a’ Mhàrt naoi-deug is fichead (1920), ghabh cuid de na h-eileanaich, a bh’ air tilleadh dhachaigh bhon chogadh, greim air fearann ann an ceann a deas an eilein.

Bliadhna as dèidh sin, chaidh grunnan à Rònaigh a-null a Ratharsair, ag iarraidh an fhearainn a bh’ aig an cuid shinnsearan. Tha Rònaigh gu tuath air Ratharsair agus bha sinnsearan nan eileanach air an cur a-mach à Ratharsair ann am fuadaichean ann am meadhan an naoidheamh linn deug. Tha an talamh fada nas torraiche ann an Ratharsair na tha e ann an Rònaigh.

Thug a’ chompanaidh Bairds, leis an robh an t-eilean, luchd-strì an fhearainn gu lagh, agus chaidh còignear aca a chur anns a’ phrìosan airson dà fhichead là. Ach cha do chuir sin stad air an strì agus ann an naoi-deug, fichead ’s a dhà (1922), reic Bairds an t-eilean do Bhòrd an Àiteachais.

Chum a’ chompanaidh a’ mhèinn a dol, ge-ta, ach air stèidh cùraim is càraidh. Bha i deiseil airson tòiseachadh as ùr nan robh feum oirre. Ach cha robh an t-uamhas iarainn anns a’ chloich agus bha i ro chosgail airson fosgladh as ùr. Agus ’s e aon iarainn a thàinig bhuaipe anns an Dàrna Cogadh an stuth a fhuair a chaidh uidheamachd na mèinne fhèin a thoirt às a chèile.

Agus, gu mì-fhortanach, ann an naoi-deug, ceathrad ’s a trì (1943), nuair a bhathar a’ toirt nan àthan as a chèile, chaidh fear de mhuinntir Ratharsair, fear Iain MacLeòid, a mharbhadh. Bha

e ann an toll-luinge nuair a thuit pìos de dh'àth air. B' e sin deireadh duilich do earrann annasach ann an eachdraidh taobh an iar na Gaidhealtachd.

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Faclan na seachdainne: am Faoilleach: *January*; riochdairean: *representatives*; Caidreachas Mèinneadairean Bhreatainn: *Miners' Federation of Great Britain*; a' mhèinn-iarainn: *the iron mine*; Ministear na h-Armachd: *Minister of Munitions*; àrdachadh-pàighidh: *pay increase*; stuth-spreadhaidh: *explosives*; sinnsearan: *ancestors*; fuadaichean: *clearances*; nas torraiche: *more fertile*; Bòrd an Àiteachais: *Board of Agriculture*; àth: *kiln*; toll-luinge: *hold of ship*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: bha dragh ann: *there was annoyance*; airson na Ministrealachd aige: *for his Ministry*; ann an dreuchd a bh' aig eileanach ron stailc: *in a position occupied by an islander before the strike*; far an robh a' chlach-iarainn air uachdar na talmhainn: *where the ironstone was on the surface of the ground*; bha ochd ciolomeatairean de thunailean ann: *there were 8km of tunnels*; far am biodh na mèinneadairean a' cladhach na cloiche: *where the miners would dig the rock*; bhiodh na Gearmailteach a' tòiseachadh air a' ghreis-obrach acasan: *the Germans would start on their shift*; carbadan a bhiodh a' falbh air rathad-iarainn: *trucks which would leave on a railway line*; bhiodh X a' drileadh na cloiche: *X would (be) drill(ing) the rock*; cha robh i prothaideach tuilleadh: *it (fem.) was no longer profitable*; bha mì-rian ann a thaobh an fhearainn: *there was disorder regarding the land*; chaidh grunn à Rònaigh a-null a Ratharsair: *some people from Rona went over to Raasay*; leis an robh an t-eilean: *to whom the island belonged*; air stèidh cùraim is càraidh: *on a care and maintenance basis*; an stuth a fhuair: *the stuff that was obtained*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne: Eadar aon uair deug a dh'oidhche agus sia uairean sa mhadainn: *between 11 o' clock at night and six o' clock in the morning*. I would like you to listen carefully to this part of the Litir. You will hear what appears to be an "s" between the "r" and "d" in aon uair deug, although it is not written. The reason it is not written is that it is not an actual letter and has no grammatical function. It is simply a sound that recurs in most dialects of Gaelic where "r" and "d" are juxtaposed. You will be familiar with it in bòrd (which sounds like "bòrsd" in most dialects), but here are some other examples with it internally in words: bàrd ("bàrsd", poet); àrd ("àrsd", high); còmhnard ("còmhnarsd", flat). But it can also occur between words when the "r" and "d" sounds meet eg air dòigh ("airs dòigh" in some dialects). The same intrusive "s" sound may also occur where "r" and "t" are juxtaposed, as in thuir, gartan, murt and ceart. But note that it is less likely to happen in the Gaelic of Lewis, compared with most other places.

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne: nuair a chaidh uidheamachd na mèinne fhèin a thoirt às a chèile: *when the equipment of the mine itself was dismantled*. A' toirt X às a chèile: *dismantling X, taking X to pieces*.

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