

# 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) \* This is Litir 256.*

Nuair a chaidh an leabhar “Reminiscences of a Clachnacuddin Nonagenarian” fhoillseachadh ann an ochd ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a dhà (1842), bha drochaid cloiche ann an Inbhir Nis. Bha i a’ dol tarsainn Abhainn Nis ann am meadhan a’ bhaile agus bha seachd stuaghan innte. Seo na chanas Iain MacIlleathain, “Naochadair Chlach na Cùdainn” mu a deidhinn.

“Mus deach an drochaid a th’ ann a-nise a thogail, bha tè ann a bh’ air a dèanamh le fiodh-daraich is a bh’ air a cleachdadh gus an do thachair an tubaist a bha seo. Bha seann bhean a’ dol tarsainn na drochaid, oidhche geamhraidh a bha seo, agus an drochaid gun rèileachan, le eallach de fhraoch air a druim, nuair a thàinig onfhadh gaoithe sìos an gleann. Thug e am fraoch leis agus thilg e a’ bhana-chreutair bho chd don tuil, anns an do chaill i a beatha.”

Às dèidh seo, chaidh an drochaid a leagail, agus chaidh tè ùr a thogail na h-àite. Bha sin ann an sia ceud deug, ochdad ’s a còig (1685). Phàigh ceithir buidhnean air a son – am baile fhèin, MacLeòid Dhùn Bheagain, Foirbeis Chùil Lodair agus Mac Shimidh. B’ e eisimpleir de rud ris an canar an-diugh “com-pàirteachas poblach-prìobhaideach”!

Nise, dhuibhse a th’ air a bhith a’ leantainn eachdraidh cìsean Drochaid an Eilein Sgitheanaich – bidh seo inntinneach, oir bha cìsean air an drochaid seo, gum faigheadh ùghdarras a’ bhaile a chuid airgid air ais. Gach turas a rachadh cuideigin tarsainn na drochaid, bha aige ri *bodle* a phàigheadh. B’ e sin an siathamh pàirt de sgillinn.

Ach bha cuid saor bhon chis. B’ iad sin muinntir nam fìneachan a chuir airgead a dh’ionnsaigh togail na drochaid. Nam b’ urrainn dhut dearbhadh, mar eisimpleir, gum buineadh tu do Chloinn ’ic Leòid Dhùn Bheagain, gheibheadh tu a-null is a-nall saor ’s an asgaidh. Chan eil Iain MacIlleathain ag innse dhuinn ciamar a dhearbhadh na Leòdaich gur e Leòdaich a bh’ annta!

Co-dhiù, feumaidh nach robh cùisean fàbharach do Mhac Shimidh, agus reic esan a chòirichean ri ùghdarras a’ bhaile. Bho sin a-mach, cha robh an fheadhainn a bhuineadh do Mhac Shimidh saor bhon chis tuilleadh. Ach bhiodh cuid dhiubh fhathast a’ seachnadh na cìse. Seo mar a tha Iain MacIlleathain ga mhìneachadh: “... tha e air a chlàradh, goirid ron linn seachd ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a còig gu ceathrad ’s a sia (1745-6), gur e sealladh cumanta a bh’ ann a bhith a’ faicinn boireannach bochd a’ grunnachadh tarsainn na h-aibhne le fear de ‘thighearnan na cruitheachd’ air a druim, gus gun seachnadh e a’ chis.”

Agus bha plòigh aig cuid de mhuinntir Inbhir Nis fhèin airson a' chis a sheachnadh. Bha an fheadhainn seo a' fuireach gu siar air an abhainn agus madainn na Sàbaid, an àite a bhith a' dol tarsainn na drochaid don eaglais, thigeadh iad cruinn air pìos fearainn, a bh' ann an sealladh na h-eaglaise, airson iomain a chluich. Nuair a thigeadh am ministear agus a choitheanal a-mach às an eaglais às dèidh an t-searmoin, chitheadh iad na cluicheadairean a' briseadh na Sàbaid. Cha robh am ministear toilichte ach, nuair a dh'fhaighnich e dhiubh carson nach robh iad anns an eaglais, thuir iad ris gur e cìs na drochaid a chuir stad orra.

Dh'aontaich bàillidhean a' bhaile a' chis a thogail Là na Sàbaid. Ach bha aig daoine fhathast ri a pàigheadh air gach là eile dhen t-seachdain. Agus chan eil an Naochadair ag innse dhuinn cuine a chaidh a chis a thogail no cuine a ghrunnaich am boireannach bochd mu dheireadh tarsainn Abhainn Nis le fear spìocach air a druim.

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**Faclan na seachdain:** duilleagan: *pages*; naochadair: *nonagenarian*; Clach na Cùdainn: *lit. Stone of the Tub (Clachnacuddin)*; a' suiridhe: *courting, wooing, chatting up*; Cnoc Mhoire: *Kirkhill*; am Faoilleach: *January*; Blàr Chùil Lodair: *Battle of Culloden*; Iain Friseal: *John Fraser*; cota gearr: *short coat*; bucaill: *buckles*; am Frisealach: *Fraser [informal]*.

**Abairtean na seachdain:** tha mi gu mòr an comain X (genitive): *I am very much indebted to X*; ged nach b' aithne dhomh e: *although I didn't know him*; ged nach robh e càirdeach dhomh: *though he was not related to me*; leis gum biodh boireannaich a' cur an cuid chùdainean air a' chloich: *because women would put [rest] their tubs on the stone*; a dh'ionnsaigh na h-aibhne: *on the way to the river*; airson aodach a nighe: *to wash clothes*; 's e sheanair a thog an gille: *it was his grandfather that raised the lad*; bheir mi sùil aithghearr air: *I'll take a quick look at*; agus e na bhodach de chòrr is naochad bliadhna a dh'aois: *who was an old man of more than 90 years*; bha e na thàillear fad a bheatha: *he was a tailor all his life*; còmhla ri ogha: *with his grandson*; chan eil aon bhùth ... fhathast ann am bith: *there is not one shop ... still existing*; len coidsichean is mar sin air adhart: *with their coaches and what not*; bha mi còrr is seasgad bliadhna a dh'aois: *I was over sixty years of age*; mus do thòisich a' chiad choidse: *before the first coach started*; saoil dè chanadh Iain MacIlleathain?: *what would John Maclean say*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdain:** Dhuibhse nach eil eòlach air Inbhir Nis: *[to/for] those of you who don't know Inverness*. Dhuibhse is the emphatic form of dhuibh which is a prepositional pronoun made from the preposition do and the second person plural sibh, meaning "to/for you" (plural). I have used it here because I want to address a number of listeners so I am speaking directly to them. It is a slightly formal manner of address more likely to be used in a speech than in informal conversation. I could similarly use the same prepositional pronoun but with other persons, eg dhomhsa agus mo leithid (to/for myself and others like me); dhutsa, tha rudan mar sin furasta (for you, things like that are easy); dhasan, aig an robh athair ainmeil (to/for him, who had a famous father); dhise, a tha air leth sgileil (to/for her, who is very skilful); dhuinne a rugadh ann an Alba (for/to those

*of us born in Scotland); dhaibhsan nach gabh deoch làidir (for/to those [of them] who don't drink).*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** chan eil adhbhar agam a bhith a' gearan: *I have no reason to complain. Phrases of this sort are commonplace at the start of a conversation between two people who know each other: eg "Ciamar a tha thu?" "O, chan eil adhbhar [agam] a bhith a' gearan".*

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