

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

Ie 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 * This is Litir 267.*

Dè am fuaim a tha coileach a’ dèanamh ann an Gàidhlig? Bidh fios agaibh, tha mi an dùil, gur e “cock-a-doodle-doo” a chanas e ann am Beurla agus “coquerico” ann am Fraingis. Uill, tuigidh sibh dè tha mi a’ ciallachadh oir chan aithne dhomh aon choileach aig a bheil Beurla no Fraingis! No Gàidhlig, gu dearbh!

Ach canaidh na Gàidheil gur e an rud a tha coileach ag ràdh, “gog-a-ghuidh-ghaoidhe”. Gog-a-ghuidh-ghaoidhe. Bidh caoraich ag ràdh “mè” ann an Gàidhlig, seach “baa”, agus canaidh cù “uf” an àite “woof”.

Bhiodh na Gàidheil a’ cluinntinn rudan eadar-dhealaichte bho bheathaichean seach na chluinneadh luchd na Beurla, agus tha sin fìor mun a h-uile cultar air an t-saoghal. Bhiodh rannan aca airson innse dè bha beathaichean, is gu h-àraidh eòin, ag ràdh. Is aithne dhomh fear ann an Srath Spè aig a bheil stòras math fhathast de na seann rannan Gàidhlig sin.

Tha naidheachd èibhinn mu a leithid agam an t-seachdain seo, agus tha i à Barraigh. Tha i à cruinneachadh de stòiridhean is naidheachdan a chaidh innse le Iain Mac a’ Phearsain nach maireann no “An Codaidh” mar a b’ fheàrr a dh’aithnicheadh e. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ oirre “An Smeòrach”.

Bha fear, air an robh Iain, là a bha seo ann am Bagh a’ Chaisteil. Is bha botal uisge-bheatha na chois. Bha e a’ coiseachd dhachaigh Rathad Thangasdail agus thàinig sgèths no buaidh na dighe, no an dà chuid, air. Stad e agus ghabh e norrag ri taobh an rathaid. Nuair a dhùisg e, bha a’ mhadainn ann. Bha Iain ann an staid cho truagh, agus an ceann-daoraich air, gun tug e bòid nach gabhadh e deoch làidir a-chaidh tuilleadh.

Ach mus robh e air dùsgadh buileach ceart, chuala e ceilearadh binn. Bha smeòrach a’ seinn dha. Bha e deimhinne mu dheidhinn sin, oir thuig e na faclan aice: “Iain mac Iain, ’s tu tha tioram, ’s tu tha tioram, ’s tu tha tioram, Iain mac Iain ’s tu tha tioram.” Cheileirich i sin grunn tursan.

An dèidh dha sin a chluinntinn, leig Iain osna. Thuirt e ris fhèin, “Uill tha an smeòrach bhochd ag innse na fìrinn agus, eadhon ged a gheall mi dhomh fhìn nach gabhainn tuilleadh dhramaichean, feumaidh mi balgam beag a ghabhail.”

Ghabh e balgam beag. Goidid às dèidh sin, mhothaich e gu robh fonn ùr aig an smeòrach. Agus bha faclan ùr aice. Bha i an uair sin ag ràdh, “Iain mac Iain, gabh balgam eile, gabh balgam eile, gabh balgam eile, Iain mac Iain, gabh balgam eile.” Uill, shaoil Iain gum bu chòir dha comhairle ghlic na smeòrach a ghabhail, agus ghabh e balgam eile dhen uisge-bheatha.

A-nise cha robh mòran uisge-bheatha air fhàgail anns a’ bhotal. Bha Iain a’ coimhead air na bha air fhàgail, nuair a chuala e an smeòrach a-rithist. Fonn eile an turas seo. Le

faclan ùra. “Iain mac Iain, cuir crìoch air, cuir crìoch air, cuir crìoch air, Iain mac Iain, cuir crìoch air.” Ghabh Iain a’ chomhairle bhon smeòraich, agus dh’òl e a h-uile dad a bh’ air fhàgail anns a’ bhotal.

Agus an uair sin, shaoil e gum biodh e na b’ fheàrr dha tilleadh a Bhagh a’ Chaisteil, seach a dhol dhachaigh. Thill e agus b’ esan fear dhen chiad fheadhainn a nochd aig an taigh-sheinnse air an là sin.

Agus ’s e sin stòiridh na smeòraich. Ach faodaidh sibh fhèin an co-dhùnadh a dhèanamh an robh an t-eun dha-rìreabh a’ bruidhinn ris an duine no an robh an duine a’ cluinntinn na comhairle a bu mhiann leis?!

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Faclan na seachdaine: coileach: *cockerel*; cultar: *culture*; eòin: *birds*; smeòrach: *thrush*; ceann-daoraich: *hangover*; bòid: *vow*; ceilearadh: *singing of a bird*; deimhinne: *certain*; fonn: *tune*; taigh-seinnse: *pub*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: tuigidh sibh dè tha mi a’ ciallachadh: *you will understand what I mean*; chan aithne dhomh aon choileach: *I don’t know one cockerel*; seach na chluinneadh luchd na Beurla: *compared to what English-speakers would hear*; tha naidheachd èibhinn agam: *I have an amusing anecdote*; tha i à cruinneachadh de stòiridhean: *it is from a collection of stories*; Iain Mac a’ Phearsain nach maireann: *the late John MacPherson*; mar a b’ fheàrr a dh’ aithnicheadh e: *as he was better known*; bha botal uisge-bheatha na chois: *he had with him a bottle of whisky*; bha e a’ coiseachd Rathad Thangasdail: *he was walking (on) the Tangusdale road*; nach gabhadh e deoch làidir a-chaidh tuilleadh: *that he would never again take an alcoholic drink*; leig e osna: *he let out a sigh*; tha X ag innse na firinn: *X is telling the truth*; nach gabhainn tuilleadh dhramaichean: *that I wouldn’t take more drams*; bha Iain a’ coimhead air na bha air fhàgail: *John was looking at what was left*; cuir crìoch air: *finish it*; shaoil e gum biodh e na b’ fheàrr dha: *he thought it would be better for him*; a Bhagh a’ Chaisteil: *to Castlebay*; seach a dhol dhachaigh: *instead of going home*; faodaidh sibh fhèin an co-dhùnadh a dhèanamh: *you yourselves can decide*; an robh an t-eun dha-rìridh a’ bruidhinn ris an duine: *was the bird really speaking to the man*; a’ cluinntinn na comhairle a bu mhiann leis: *hearing the advice he desired*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: Iain mac Iain, ’s tu (a) tha tioram: *John, son of John, it’s yourself that is dry. Idiomatically, this would just be “you are dry” rather than “it’s yourself that is dry” but the literal translation follows the structure of the Gaelic. It is what you might expect to read in a Compton Mackenzie novel, where the author gave the English a Gaelic flavour, but in fact Gaels of my grandmother’s generation peppered their English with such constructions. Commencing with the assertive verb, is, it emphasises the object of the sentence – tioram. It is stronger than just saying “tha thu tioram”. Is mi a tha gòrach would likewise be a slightly emphatic form (it is me that is stupid), and a person (cruelly) agreeing with you might say in response, “is tu a tha”. Here are some other examples: is esan a tha làidir (it’s himself that is strong); is tusa a tha glic (it’s yourself that is wise). Is tu fhèin am balach (it’s yourself that is the lad) is better idiomatically translated as “well done” and would usually be addressed to a youngish male.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: ghabh e balgam beag: *he took a small mouthful. Balgam is a word used only of liquids, although it can refer to both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks like tea and coffee. An gabh thu balgam? – will you take a wee drop?*

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