

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 * This is Litir 297.*

Bidh sibh eòlach air cuid de na samhlaidhean as cumanta ann an Gàidhlig. Rudan mar *cho reamhar ri ròn*. Uill, seo fear agaibh: *Cho cearbach ris a’ chuileig a chaidh ann am bainne Iain Mhic Fhearchair*. Tha *cearbach* an seo a’ ciallachadh “clumsy”. Cho cearbach ris a’ chuileig a chaidh ann am bainne Iain Mhic Fhearchair.

Seo mar a dh’èirich an samhlaidh seo. B’ e Iain Mac Fhearchair bàrd ainmeil Uibhisteach. ’S e *John MacCodrum* a thathar a’ gabhail air ann am Beurla. Là a bha seo bha e ann an taigh cuideigin eile. ’S e an cleachdadh a bh’ ann bainne a thoirt do neach-tadhail mar deoch. Agus fhuair Iain deoch bainne. Ach cha d’ fhuair e mòran. Cha d’ fhuair e uiread ’s a bha e an dùil. Agus, mar a tha fhios agaibh, faodaidh teanga bàird a bhith gu math sgaiteach.

Laigh cuileag anns a’ bhainne. Agus thuirt Iain, “Tubaist ort, a chreutair leibidich, a’ dol gad bhàthadh far am faodadh tu grunnachadh!” Leughaidh mi sin a-rithist. “Tubaist ort, a chreutair leibidich, a’ dol gad bhàthadh far am faodadh tu grunnachadh.” Chan eil fhios agam dè thuirt bean an taighe ris!

Chan eil fhios agam nas mòr cuin’ a sguir na Gàidheil bho bhith a’ tabhann bainne do shrainnsearan a nochdadh air an stairsnich. An-diugh ’s e tì no cofaidh, a bhiodh iad a’ tabhann. Ach o chionn leth-cheud bliadhna bha an seann chleachdadh na chleachdadh fhathast.

Bha mi aig tiodhlacadh an là eile do sheann bhana-charaid dhomh. ’S e là duilich a bh’ ann, ach bha bràthair is peathraichean na tè a chaochail – aig aois mhòir – airson a bhith a’ cuimhneachadh air rudan matha na beatha, seach a bhith ro bhrònach. Thàinig an còmhradh gu làithean samhraidh air taobh an iar an Gàidhealtachd còrr is leth-cheud bliadhna air ais.

Thòisich bràthair na tè a chaochail air bruidhinn air turas a bh’ aige – e fhèin is a bhean – don Eilean Sgitheanach. ’S e an samhradh a bh’ ann agus bha i tioram is grianach airson beagan làithean. Bha iad a’ campachadh. Ach thàinig an t-uisge. Agus aig deireadh là garbh coiseachd sa mhonadh, agus iad bog fliuch, chaidh mo charaid is a bhean gu doras taigh-òsta mòr.

“Am faod sinn fuireach an seo airson na h-oidhche?” dh’fhaighnich iad. Thug an t-òstair sùil gheur neo-chathrannach orra. Bha iad fliuch is salach, is cha robh co-fhulangas sam bith aige dhaibh. “Chan fhaod,” thuirt e. Ged a bha beul na h-oidhche a’ dlùthachadh, b’ fheudar dhaibh falbh sìos an rathad.

Bha iad air an rathad, faisg air Stafainn, nuair a chunnaic croitear iad. “Cà’il sibh a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich e. Nuair a chuala e an sgeul aca, thuir e riutha, “Feumaidh sibh tighinn a dh’fhuireach anns an t-sabhal againn.” Ach nuair a ràinig iad an taigh bha bean a’ chroiteir air a nàrachadh. Chaidh i a-mach sa bhad agus thuir i ri mo charaid is a bhean, “Cha bhi sibh a’ cadal anns an t-sabhal. Thigibh a-steach agus gheibh sibh leabaidh cheart.” Ghluais iad a’ chlann aca timcheall airson seòmar a thoirt don dithis choigreach. B’ e sin aoi gheachd na Gàidhealtachd.

Agus am bainne. Bha cuimhne mhath aig mo charaid fhathast air a’ bhainne a fhuair iad airson òl. Agus air an làrna-mhàireach mar a fhuair iad deoch bainne ann an dà thaigh eile anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Cha tuirt e càil mu chuileag chearbach, ge-tà. ’S dòcha nach robh tè ann. No ’s dòcha gun deach a bàthadh!

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Faclan na seachdaine: samhlaidhean: *similes*; neach-tadhail: *visitor*; cuileag: *fly*; tiòdhacadh: *funeral*; Stafainn: *Staffin*; aoi gheachd: *hospitality*; an làrna-mhàireach: *the next day*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: cho reamhar ri ròn: *as fat as a seal*; ’s e X a thathar a’ gabhail air ann am Beurla: *it is X he is called in English*; cha d’ fhuair e uiread ’s a bha e an dùil: *he didn’t get as much as he [had] expected*; faodaidh teanga bàird a bhith gu math sgaiteach: *a bard’s tongue can be very caustic*; tubaist ort, a chreutair leibidich: *confound you, you bungling creature*; a’ dol gad bhàthadh far am faodadh tu grunnachadh: *going to drown where you could wade*; chan eil fhios agam nas mò: *neither do I know*; do shrainnsearan a nochdadh air an stairsnich: *to strangers who would appear on their doorstep*; bha an seann chleachdadh na chleachdadh fhathast: *the old custom was still a custom*; bràthair is peathraichean na tè a chaochail: *the brother and sisters of the woman who [had] died*; seach a bhith ro bhrònach: *rather than being too sad*; aig deireadh là garbh coiseachd sa mhonadh: *at the end of a rough day walking the hills*; thug an t-òstair sùil gheur neo-chathrannach orra: *the hotelier gave them an uncharitable examination*; cha robh co-fhulangas sam bith aige dhaibh: *he had no sympathy for them*; feumaidh sibh tighinn a dh’fhuireach anns an t-sabhal againn: *you must come and stay in our barn*; bha bean a’ chroiteir air a nàrachadh: *the crofter’s wife was ashamed*; gheibh sibh leabaidh cheart: *you will get a proper bed*; airson seòmar a thoirt don dithis choigreach: *to give the two strangers a room*; ’s dòcha gun deach a bàthadh: *perhaps it/she was [had been] drowned*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: Chaidh mo charaid is a bhean gu doras taigh-òsta mòr: *my friend and his wife went to the door of a big hotel. You will be aware that taigh-òsta mòr is in the genitive (possessive) singular case, but that it is indefinite, in that it has no article. Although the genitive of taigh is taighe, in the compound form there is no suffix on the first element. Thus the genitive singular of taigh-òsta is taigh-òsta not taighe-òsta. But if I had said “the door of the big hotel”, there would be inflexion of the adjective ie doras an taigh-òsta mhòir. Historically we would have said for “of a big hotel” taigh-òsta mhòir but this is now old-fashioned and more commonly, where there is an indefinite singular noun with adjective, there is no inflexion of either in the genitive singular. Thus, although “the wee*

boy's coat” is còta a’ bhalaich bhig and “*a boy's coat*” is còta balaich, “*a wee boy's coat*” would be còta balach beag.

Samhladh na seachdain: Cho cearbach ris a’ chuileig a chaidh ann am bainne Iain Mhic Fhearchair: *as clumsy as the fly which went into John MacCodrum's milk.*

* Tha “*Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh*” air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig