

# 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 [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \* This is Litir 303.*

Fhuair mi preusant an là eile bho bhoireannach anns an Eilean Sgitheanach agus bha mi air leth toilichte fhaighinn. 'S e seann leabhar Gàidhlig a th' ann, a chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an naoi ceud deug, trithead 's a seachd (1937). 'S e an tìotal a th' air “Duanagan agus Sgeulachdan Beaga”.

Bha fios aig a' bhoireannach a thug an leabhar dhomh gu robh mi a' fuireach ann an Astràilia ùine mhòir. Agus tha cuid de na duanagan is sgeulachdan à Astràilia, oir bha am fear a sgrìobh an leabhar, Iain MacIllInnein, a' fuireach thall an sin. An-diugh, agus ann an Litir no dhà eile a leanas air an tè seo, bu mhath leam blasad a thoirt dhuibh dhen sgrìobhadh aig Iain.

Bhuineadh Iain do Gheàrrloch agus b' e an sloinneadh aige Iain Dubh Mac Dhòmhnail 'ic Iain. Nuair a chaidh e air bòrd na luinge a bha a' dol ga thoirt a dh' Astràilia (bha seo ann am Plymouth), cò eile a bha air bòrd ach fear às an sgìre aige fhèin – bodach air an robh Alasdair Choinnich mar ainm. Bha am mac a bu shine aig Alasdair thall ann an Astràilia cheana. Agus bha a mhac a b' òige a' siubhal còmhla ris. 'S e Cailean an t-ainm a bh' airsan.

Cha robh Alasdair uabhasach dèidheil air seòladh aig muir. Agus bha cleachdadh aige aig an taigh ris nach b' urrainn dha cumail air bòrd. B' e sin gum biodh e a' faighinn boinne uisge-bheatha gach madainn. Cha robh sin ceadach air bòrd na luinge.

Ach dh' iarr Alasdair air Cailean dhol don dotair a bh' air bòrd, a dh' innse dha nach robh Alasdair gu math. Bha aig Cailean ri iarraidh air an dotair cuibhreann beag de dh' uisge-beatha a thoirt dha airson athair. Ach cha robh an dotair deònach dad a thoirt dha.

Madainn a bha seo, chaidh Alasdair gu Iain Dubh, a' guidhe air dhol don dotair air a shon, is deoch-làidir iarraidh. Bha Cailean a' diùltadh a dhol ann a-muigh no mach, agus cha robh Beurla gu leòr aig a' bhodach airson an gnothach a choileanadh dha fhèin.

Chaidh Iain don dotair agus thuir e ris, “tha duine bochd agad an siud air bòrd, agus mura toir thu dha rudeigin a nì feum dha, cha bhi e beò nuair a ruigeas sinn tìr.”

“Mura bi,” ars' an dotair, “tha mise coma. Chan eil ann ach trustar Èireannach!”

“Trustar Èireannach!” ars' Iain, 's e a' dùnadh a dhùirn agus ga togail suas ri aodann. “Càite an gabhadh tu ort a leithid a ràdh mu dheidhinn duine uasal Gàidhealach?” Mhaoidh Iain air an dotair, mura toireadh e deoch-làidir don bhodach gun dèanadh e cinnteach gun cailleadh e a dhreuchd nuair a ruigeadh iad tìr. Maoidheadh ann no às, bhithinn an dòchas an là an-diugh gum biodh Gàidheal Albannach a' dìon cliù nan Èireannach, seach a bhith a' dèanamh sgaradh eadar an dà

shluagh Gàidhealach. Ach cha b' ann mar sin a bha e, gu mì-fhortanach, faisg air ceud bliadhna air ais.

Dh'atharraich an dotair a bheachd. Seo na thuirt e, a rèir Iain: “Tha mi ag iarraidh maitheanas. Nan robh fios agam gum b' e Gàidheal a bha anns an duine chòir, bhiodh a chuid uisge-bheatha aige a h-uile là bho thàinig e air bòrd. Cuir suas an seo e agus gheibh e làn na glainne a h-uile madainn.”

Fhuair Alasdair air tìr gu slàn fallain, taing don uisge-bheatha agus don dotair. Chuir e seachad bliadhnaichean ann an Astràilia ach, a dh'aindeoin aois, thill e mu dheireadh a dh'Alba, cuide ri bhean is am mac a b' òige.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** preusant: *present*; duanagan: *ditties*; MacIllInnein: *MacLennan*; blasad: *a little taste*; cheana: *already*; ceadaichte: *permitted*; maitheanas: *forgiveness*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** bha mi air leth toilichte fhaighinn: *I was really pleased to get it*; a leanas air an tè seo: *which will follow on this one [fem.]*; bhuineadh Iain do Gheàrrloch: *John belonged to Gairloch*; nuair a chaidh e air bòrd na luinge: *when he went on board the ship*; am mac a bu shine: *the eldest son*; bha a mhac a b' òige a' siubhal còmhla ris: *his youngest son was travelling with him*; bha cleachdadh aige aig an taigh: *he had a custom at home*; ris nach b' urrainn dha cumail air bòrd: *to which he could not adhere [while] on board*; gum biodh e a' faighinn boinne uisge-bheatha gach madainn: *that he would have a drop of whisky every morning*; cha robh an dotair deònach dad a thoirt dha: *the doctor was not willing to give him anything*; a' guidhe air dhol don dotair air a shon: *beseeking him to go the doctor on his behalf*; airson an gnothach a choileanadh dha fhèin: *to bring the matter to a [successful] conclusion by himself*; cha bhi e beò nuair a ruigeas sinn tìr: *he will not be alive when we reach land*; tha mise coma: *I couldn't care less*; chan eil ann ach trustar Èireannach: *he's only an Irish scoundrel*; 's e a' dùnadh a dhùirn agus ga togail suas ri aodann: *closing his fist and raising it to his [the doctor's] face*; càite an gabhadh tu ort a leithid a ràdh: *[idiom] how dare you presume to say that*; bhithinn an dòchas an là an-diugh: *I would hope today*; nan robh fios agam: *if I had known*; bhiodh a chuid uisge-bheatha aige a h-uile là bho thàinig e air bòrd: *he would have had his portion of whisky every day since he came on board*; cuide ri bhean is am mac a b' òige: *along with his wife and their youngest son*.

**Puing-chànain na seachdaine:** b' e an sloinneadh a bh' aige Iain Dubh Mac Dhòmhnail 'ic Iain: *his patronymic was Black John son of Donald, son of John*. How would you respond to the question “dè an sloinneadh a th' agad?”? *Is the questioner meaning your patronymic or your surname? It is more likely to be the latter in casual conversation with a stranger, although some might use cinneadh instead of sloinneadh to mean “surname”. But if you are of Highland ancestry and the questioner knows your people or the community to which they did or do belong, he might indeed be meaning “what is your patronymic?” You should learn how to respond in both ways to the question, if that is relevant to your situation.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** Bha Cailean a' diùltadh a dhol ann a-muigh no mach: *Colin was absolutely refusing to go*. Cha dèan mi sin a-muigh no mach!: *There's no way on Earth I'll do that!*

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