

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 305.*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Iain Dubh Mac Dhòmhnail 'ic Iain ann am Brisbane, agus mar a fhuair e lorg air lethbhreac de *Theachdaire an t-Sluaigh* ann am bùth sa bhaile sin. Uill, oidhche bha seo, bha Iain aig cèilidh ann am Brisbane agus dh'iarr fear an taighe air a h-uile duine a bha an làthair rann no òran a ghabhail, no sgeulachd innse, air peanas bonn airgid a phàigheadh. Cha robh bonn sam bith aig Iain na phòcaid agus cha b' urrainn dha seinn, no sgeulachd innse, ach ann an Gàidhlig. Is cha robh e an dùil gu robh aon duine an làthair aig an robh Gàidhlig.

Cha ghabhadh fear an taighe ri leisgeul agus cha robh dol-às aige. Thàinig rann beag do chuimhne – rudeigin a leugh e ann an *Teachdaire an t-Sluaigh*. Agus seo e:

*Bha bodach am Bail' Obair Pheallaidh
'S a thaigh air a thughadh le bealaidh,
Ach dh'èirich gaoth gheur,
'S bha an tughadh san speur,
'S thuir a' chailleach 'ho-rè', dèan taigh-geal dheth'!*

Tha mi an dòchas gu bheil sibh ga thuigs'. Leis gun do dh'fhalbh an tughadh, b' fheudar don bhodach, tha mi cinnteach, sglèatan a chur air mullach an taighe, is taigh-geal a dhèanamh de thaigh-dubh.

*Bha bodach am Bail' Obair Pheallaidh
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Ach dh'èirich gaoth gheur,
'S bha an tughadh san speur,
'S thuir a' chailleach 'ho-rè', dèan taigh-geal dheth'!*

Mar a thachair, bha duine san èisteachd aig an robh beagan Gàidhlig – fear aig an robh pàrantan às an Eilean Sgitheanach. Aig an àm ud, bha mòran ann an Astràilia aig an robh an cànan, gu seachd àraidh sna puirt-mhara, agus air bòrd nan long a bha a' seòladh a' chuain.

Nuair a bha Iain agus a bhean suas ann am bliadhnaichean, roghnaich iad turas dhachaigh a ghabhail a dh'Alba air bòrd luinge. Fhuair Iain a-mach gu sgiobalta gu robh grunnan dhen chriubha aig an robh Gàidhlig – triùir às an

Eilean Sgitheanach, còignear à eileanan eile agus fear à Àrasaig. Bha fear-riaghlaidh a' phuirt ann an Hobart (dhan deach iad an toiseach) à Geàrrloch, agus thachair Iain ri feadhainn ann am Melbourne aig an robh Gàidhlig cuideachd. Cha do ghabh e sùim sam bith de dh' Adelaide, ge-tà, oir cha b' aithne dha aon duine anns a' bhaile sin a bhruidhneadh ris na chànan fhèin!

Nuair a bha iad ann an sgìre Gheàrrloch bha iad a' fuireach ann am Poll Iùbh. Bha mòran air atharrachadh anns a' bhaile thairis air an ùine a bha Iain air a bhith ann an Astràilia. Bha na bàtaichean-smùid air sgur de bhith a' tadhal air, agus cha robh muileann ann tuilleadh. Ach bha aon rud math ann. B' e sin a' bhan-lighiche, Miss Rees, air an robh na daoine uabhasach measail. Rinn i leigheas air tinneas a bha a' bualadh air Iain fhèin, agus sgrìobh e òran dhi. Seo trè rannan dheth:

*Thàinig lighiche beag don taobh tuath,
Tha anabarrach sgileil mun t-sluagh,
Chan eil tinneas no galar nach teich às a' bhaile
Nuair a chithear a faileas mun cuairt.*

*Nach fhaic sibh na bodaich à Blàir,
Iain Mollach 's an 'Ram' is càch,
Chan eil siataig nan casan no pian anns an stamaig,
Bhon a thàinig a' chaileag don àite.*

*Ged a bhiodh an là fliuch agus fuar,
Bidh an lèigh gach madainn mun cuairt,
Cur iocshlaintean fallain an creuchdan nan cailleach,
Gan cumail air ais às an uaigh!*

Sin e bhuamsa an t-seachdain seo. Beannachd leibh.

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Faclan na seachdaine: Teachdaire an t-Sluaigh: *The People's Journal*; dol-às: *escape*; Obar Pheallaidh: *Aberfeldy*; sglèatan: *slates*; puirt-mhara: *seaports*; roghnaich: *chose*; Àrasaig: *Arisaig*; Poll Iùbh: *Poolewe*; siataig: *sciatica*; lèigh: *physician, doctor*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: cha b' urrainn dha seinn ach ann an Gàidhlig: *he could only sing in Gaelic*; cha robh e an dùil gu robh aon duine an làthair: *he didn't think there was anybody present*; thàinig rann beag do chuimhne: *a short verse came to [his]mind*; air a thughadh le bealaidh: *thatched with broom*; dèan taigh-geal dheth: *make it into a white house [ie non-thatched]*; suas ann am bliadhnaichean: *at a good age*; cha do ghabh e sùim sam bith de X: *he didn't think much of X*; cha b' aithne dha aon duine: *he didn't know one person*; bha na bàtaichean-smùid air sgur de bhith a' tadhal air: *the steamboats had stopped calling there*; [a'] cur iocshlaintean fallain an creuchdan nan cailleach: *putting healthy remedies in the old women's wounds*; gan cumail air ais às an uaigh: *keeping them out of the grave*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: Ach dh'èirich gaoth gheur,'s bha an tughadh san speur: *but a sharp wind arose and the thatch was [blown] in the sky. You might have been tempted to pronounce geur "gee-uhr" and speur "spayr" which, of course, would limit the effectiveness of the rhyme. Two things need to be said: firstly, there is always poetic licence in such matters which led me to pronounce geur "gayr". But secondly, there has been a historical change in which the eu diphthong has tended to change, in the northern Gàidhealtachd, to an "ia" sound in many words. In the south (eg Argyll), the original "ay" sound is largely retained. This is why feur (grass) is pronounced "fee-uhr" in the north but "fayr" in places like Islay. Speur, however, is, as far as I am aware, pronounced "spayr" throughout the country.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: air peanas bonn airgid a phàigheadh: *or they would be punished by having to pay a silver coin ("on pain of paying ...").*

* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig