

# 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 at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \* This is Litir 311. Note that Roddy also broadcasts a simplified version – An Litir Bheag – on Monday evenings at 7.00 pm. This is also available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 7 corresponds to Litir 311.*

An cuala sibh a-riamh an seanfhacal “Sgoltaidh farmad na creagan”? Sgoltaidh farmad na creagan. Anns an leabhar *The Gaelic Otherworld*, tha Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul ag innse dhuinn mu thachartas a tha a’ dearbhadh an t-seanfhaicail. Bha fear ann a bha gu math dìcheallach. Bhiodh e a’ dèanamh is a’ reic barrachd càise na duine sam bith eile anns a’ choimhearsnachd. ’S ann tric a bhiodh e a’ coiseachd seachad air taighean a nàbaidhean air an rathad gu margaidh, le càbag ann am poca air a dhruim. ’S e càbag cnap mòr cruinn càise. Bhiodh na nàbaidhean làn farmaid, a rèir choltais, oir cha robh càbagan mar sin acasan.

Là a bha seo, bha fear na càbaig a’ coiseachd seachad air taighean a nàbaidhean. Ach an àite càbag, bha clach-mhuilinn ann am poca air a dhruim. Bha na nàbaidhean a’ coimhead air le farmad, agus iad a’ smaoinichadh gu robh càbag eile aige. Cha robh fios acasan gur e clach, seach càise, a bha anns a’ phoca.

Nuair a ràinig an duine a’ mhargaidh, dh’fhosgail e am poca. Ach dè lorg e? Bha a’ chlach-mhuilinn air a briseadh ann an dà phìos. Bha i air a sgoltadh. A rèir a’ Chaimbeulaich, bha sin a’ dearbhadh na fìrinne anns an t-seanfhaicail. *Sgoltaidh farmad na creagan.*

Ged a rugadh Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul anns an Apainn, bha e na mhinistear ann an Tìriodh, agus ’s ann anns an eilean sin a fhuair e cuid mhath dhen bheul-aithris a chruinnich e. Bha e anns an eilean nuair a bha muinntir na Gàidhealtachd an sàs ann an strì airson còraichean fearainn agus cha robh cùisean buileach sìtheil. Eadhon nuair a bha Achd na Croitearachd air a cur an gnìomh, bha cuid mì-thoilichte. B’ iad sin na coitearan – na daoine aig nach robh còraichean air an fhearann.

Nuair a chuala coitearan Thìriodh gun d’ fhuair croitear tuathanas math air màl, bha iad feargach. Chuir iad stad air a’ chroitear bho bhith a’ cur stoc air an fhearann. Chuir na h-ùghdarrasan feachd bheag de phoilis gu ruige Tìriodh, ach chuir muinntir an àite stad orra.

An dèidh sin, chaidh feachd mhòr de cheithir cheud duine a chur ann, feuch na coitearan a chur an grèim. Am measg sin bha dà cheud gu leth saighdear-mara. Chuir na pàipearan-naidheachd luchd-aithris don eilean cuideachd. Air an là mu dheireadh dhen Iuchar – ’s e Disathairne a bh’ ann – choisich na saighdearan timcheall an eilein, ach cha robh muinntir an àite deònach innse dhaibh cò na daoine a bha a’ briseadh an lagh. Thuirt fear-aithris *an Scotsman* ris an luchd-aithris eile gum bu chòir dhaibh uile fuireach gu Diluain airson an aithrisean a chur gu tìr-mòr. Cha bu chòir dhaibh an t-Sàbaid a bhriseadh.

Ach gu h-os ìosal, chuir e fhèin calman gu tìr-mòr le aithris sgrìobhte mun a h-uile dad a thachair. Ach cha d' fhuair an calman fada. Chuir sgaoth de dh'fhaoileagan stad air agus thill e a Thiriodh. Bha duilleagan fear *an Scotsman* air an sgaoileadh air feadh an eilein, agus tha e coltach gun do chòrd sin gu mòr ri muinntir an àite.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Faclan na seachdaine:** Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul: *John Gregorson Campbell*; dìcheallach: *diligent*; càise: *cheese*; coitearan: *cottars (who had no crofting rights)*; beartach: *wealthy*; an t-Iuchar: *July*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** mu thachartas a tha a' dearbhadh an t-seanfhaicail: *about an event that proves the proverb*; 's ann tric a bhiodh e a' coiseachd seachad air taighean a nàbaidhean: *it is often he would walk past his neighbours' houses*; air an rathad gu margaidh: *on the road to [the] market*; 's e càbag cnap mòr cruinn càise: *a càbag (kebbock) is a large round piece of cheese*; an àite càbag, bha clach-mhuilinn air a dhruim: *instead of a kebbock, he had a millstone on his back*; bha a' chlach-mhuilinn air a briseadh ann an dà phìos: *the millstone was broken in two pieces*; anns an Apainn: *in Appin*; 's ann anns an eilean sin a fhuair e cuid mhath dhen bheul-aithris a chruinnich e: *it is on that island that he got a good part of the oral tradition he collected*; an sàs ann an strì airson còraichean fearainn: *involved in a struggle for land rights*; nuair a bha Achd na Croitearachd air a cur an gnìomh: *when the Crofting Act was put into practice*; gun d' fhuair croitear tuathanas math air màl: *that a crofter got a good farm for rent*; feuch na coitearan a chur an grèim: *to try to arrest the cottars*; air an là mu dheireadh dhen Iuchar – 's e Disathairne a bh' ann: *on the last day of July – it was a Saturday*; cha robh muinntir an àite deònach innse dhaibh: *the local people weren't willing to tell them*; cha bu chòir dhaibh an t-Sàbaid a bhriseadh: *they shouldn't break the Sabbath*; gu h-os ìosal, chuir e calman gu tìr-mòr: *surreptitiously, he sent a [carrier] pigeon to the mainland*; chuir sgaoth de dh'fhaoileagan stad air: *a flock of seagulls stopped it*; air an sgaoileadh air feadh an eilein: *scattered throughout the island*.

**Puing-chànain na seachdaine:** Am measg sin bha dà cheud gu leth saighdear-mara: *among them [that] were two hundred and fifty marines. It is worth making the point here that, instead of saying dà cheud is leth-cheud or dà cheud is caogad for 250, it is perfectly acceptable, and more natural, to say dà cheud gu leth (lit. "two hundreds and half a hundred"). Similarly 550 is còig ceud gu leth, 2,500 is dà mhìle gu leth and 3,500,000 is trì millean gu leth. But note that the gu leth (the gu was originally co meaning "with") refers back to the noun which immediately precedes it. Thus if you said dà cheud saighdear gu leth instead of dà cheud gu leth saighdear (and I have heard such a mistake, even on the radio) you would mean "two hundred soldiers and half a soldier". Outside an active battle zone, this is clearly an unlikely scenario. How would you say in Gaelic "150 years has gone past since the event"?*

**Seanfhacal na seachdaine:** Sgoltaidh farmad na creagan: *envy will split the rocks*.

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