

# 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 323. 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 19 corresponds to Litir 323.*

An cuala sibh a-riamh an t-seann sgeulachd, *Bàillidh Thronairnis agus a’ Bhana-bhuidseach?* Cha chuala? A uill, carson nach dèan sibh suidhe gu cofhurtail airson còig mionaidean...

Tràth anns an t-siathamh linn deug chuir Rìgh na h-Alba air leth màl dà bhaile ann an Trondairnis ann an ceann a tuath an Eilein Sgitheanaich. Bha an t-airgead a’ dol gu aon duine – fear Coinneach Mac Uilleim ’ic Sheumais. Carson? Uill, bha Coinneach a’ dol a chleachdadh an airgid airson ’s gum faigheadh e foghlam anns an lagh.

Dh’obraich sin airson ùine ach thachair e gu robh cùisean truagh anns an Eilean Sgitheanach mun àm sin. Bha fìor dhroch shìde ann. Fhuair muinntir an àite air dheireadh le bhith a’ pàigheadh am màil. Earrach a bha seo, chaidh Coinneach fhèin don sgìre mar bhàillidh – airson am màl a thogail ann an ainm an Rìgh mar chis.

Bha droch gheamhradh air a bhith ann. Bha droch earrach ann cuideachd. Bha airgead gann. Chaill mòran daoine an cuid sprèidh le cion a’ bhìdh. Bha boireannach ann a bha uabhasach bochd. Chaill i an duine aice agus an dithis mhac ann an dà thubaist mhara anns a’ gheamhradh sin. Agus chaill i an sprèidh gu lèir aice, ach aona bhò.

Thàinig Coinneach air muin eich. Bha maor còmhlais ris. Cha robh dad de dh’airgead aig a’ bhoireannach airson a thoirt dha. Ach mas ann cruaidh a bha an Rìgh, bha am bàillidh na bu chruaidhe buileach. Cha robh co-fhaireachdainn sam bith aige don bhantraich. Thug e leis a’ bhò – an aon rud luachmhor a bh’ aig a’ bhoireannach. Bha ise troimh-chèile ach bha esan coma.

Dh’fhalbh e sìos an rathad leis a’ bhoin. Chuir Coinneach agus am maor a’ bhò agus an t-each còmhlais ann am buaile ann an Dùn Tuilm. Chaidh iad an uair sin gu biadh ann an taigh a’ mhaoir.

Fhad ’s a bha iad air falbh, a’ gabhail am bìdh, thàinig còmhlais de ghillean cruinn. Sheas iad air cùl creige faisg air a’ bhuaile, a’ seachas a’ ghnòthaich. Bha iad feargach. Bha iad a’ càineadh a’ bhàillidh agus a’ mhaoir a thaobh droch dhìol na bantraich. “Nach biodh e math,” thuirt fear dhiubh ri càch, “a’ bhò aiseag gu Eilean Thuilm mus till am bàillidh is am maor.” Tha an t-eilean sin pìos beag far cladach an Eilein Sgitheanaich. Dh’aontaich càch ris a’ phlana air ball.

Thachair gu robh bàta ann an geòdha faisg air làimh. Bha i deiseil airson crodh aiseag an làrna-mhàireach. Mar sin bha i deiseil airson bò agus each a thoirt gu Eilean Thuilm. Chuir na gillean a' bhò don bhàta.

“Nach cuir sinn an t-each innte cuideachd,” thuirt fear de na gillean. Cha bu luaithe thuirt na rinn. Chaidh an t-each a chur air bòrd còmhla ris a' bhoin, agus a-mach leotha don eilean.

Dh'fhàg na gillean a' bhò agus an t-each anns an eilean. Bha iad air ais air cùl na creige an ceann ùine ghoirid. Dh'fhuirich iad an sin gus an tilleadh am bàillidh agus am maor. An ceann beagan ùine thàinig an dithis. Ghabh iad air an socair a dh'ionnsaigh a' bhuaile. Ach, mo chreach, nuair a ràinig iad am buaile, cha robh sgeul air each no bò ann.

Nise aig toiseach gnothaich, dh'innis mi dhuibh gur e tìotal na sgeulachd seo *Bàillidh Thronairnis agus a' Bhana-bhuidseach*. Thuige seo cha robh sgeul air bana-bhuidseach. Ach na gabhaibh dragh. Bidh i còmhla rinn an ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** bàillidh: *factor*; màl: *rent*; cìs: *tax*; maor: *ground officer*; luachmhor: *valuable*; buaile: *cattle fold*; a' càineadh: *criticising*; càch: *the others*; air ball: *immediately*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** carson nach dèan sibh suidhe gu cofhurtail: *why don't you sit comfortably*; tràth anns an t-siathamh linn deug: *early in the 16th Century*; chuir Rìgh na h-Alba air leth màl dà bhaile ann an Trondairnis: *the King of Scotland set aside the rent of two townships in Trotternish*; airson 's gum faigheadh e foghlam anns an lagh: *so that he could get an education in law*; thachair e gu robh cùisean truagh: *it happened that conditions were bad*; air dheireadh le bhith a' pàigheadh am màil: *behind with paying their rents*; chaill mòran daoine an cuid sprèidh le cion a' bhìdh: *many people lost their livestock through lack of food*; dà thubaist mhara: *two maritime accidents*; thàinig Coinneach air muin eich: *Kenneth came on horseback*; mas ann cruaidh a bha an Rìgh, bha am bàillidh na bu chruaidhe buileach: *if the King was hard [cruel], the factor was even harder*; cha robh co-fhaireachdainn sam bith aige don bhantraich: *he had no sympathy for the widow*; thug e leis a' bhò: *he took the cow with him*; sìos an rathad leis a' bhoin: *down the road with the cow*; a' seachas a' gnothaich: *discussing the matter*; droch dhìol na bantraich: *the bad treatment of the widow*; nach biodh e math a' bhò aiseag: *wouldn't it be good to ferry the cow*; thachair gu robh bàta ann an geòdha faisg air làimh: *it happened that there was a boat in a creek nearby*; airson crodh aiseag an làrna-mhàireach: *to ferry cattle the next day*; ghabh iad air an socair a dh'ionnsaigh a' bhuaile: *they made their way slowly towards the cattlefold*; cha robh sgeul air each no bò: *there was no sign of a horse or cow*; na gabhaibh dragh: *don't worry*.

**Puing-chànain na seachdaine:** a-mach leotha don eilean: *off they went to the island. You will notice that there is no verb in this Gaelic phrase – it is literally “out [off] with them to the island”. This device is sometimes used in storytelling and in conversation, although not in formal language or official reports. I used it recently in Litir 312 (June 24) – Sìos don chladach leotha far an do*

rinn iad long deiseil (*“they went down to the shore where they made a ship ready” but literally “down to the shore with them...”*). It allows a variation in phraseology (avoiding the usual initial verb) which is a means of maintaining the attention of a listener.

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** Cha bu luaithe thuir na rinn: *no sooner said than done.*

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