

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 rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 360. 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 56 corresponds to Litir 360.*

Ann an dà Litir mu dheireadh dh’innis mi dhuibh mu dhaoine air a’ Ghàidhealtachd a chaidh a thoirt am bruid le maraichean. Tha mi a’ leantainn leis a’ chuspair sin an t-seachdain seo, agus stòiridh agam à Dùthaich MhicAoidh.

Ann an seachd ceud deug, ochdad ’s a sia (1786) bha Dòmhnall MacAoidh dusan bliadhna a dh’aois. Thogadh e ann an Armadal. Cha robh foghlam aige ach bha e comasach air obair croite is obair na mara, agus **’s e gille dòigheil a bh’ ann**. Bhiodh e ri buachailleachd as t-samhradh.

Latha samhraidh a bha seo, ge-tà, cha robh e ri buachailleachd. Bha e air tastan a thoirt do dh’fhear airson sgian-phòcaid a cheannach dha ann an Inbhir Theòrsa. Is bha e a’ feitheamh ris an duine. Fhad ’s a bha e a’ feitheamh, chunnaic e dithis a’ tighinn ga ionnsaigh. ’S e iasgairean a bh’ annta à Eilean Leòdhais. Bha iad ag obair do chompanaidh Leòdhasach. Chaidh am bàta aca air na creagan agus bha iad a’ dèanamh air Loch Eurabol, far an robh soitheach eile aig an aon chompanaidh.

Bhruidhinn iad ri Dòmhnall ann an Gàidhlig. **Dh’iarr iad air a’ ghille seòladh a thoirt dhaibh airson faighinn a Loch Eurabol**. Fhad ’s a bha e a’ bruidhinn mhothaich e don dithis a’ coimhead air gu dlùth. Bhruidhinn na h-iasgairean ri chèile ann an cànan nach do thuig Dòmhnall – ’s dòcha gur e a’ Bheurla a bh’ ann.

Thabhann na h-iasgairean dà thastan dha airson a dhol air an rathad còmhla riutha gu ruige am Blàran Odhar. ’S e airgead mòr a bh’ ann, agus dh’aontaich e. Nuair a ràinig iad am Blàran Odhar, thabhann na h-iasgairean dà thastan a bharrachd do Dhòmhnall airson cumail a dol cuide riutha. Aig a’ cheann thall ràinig iad Loch Eurabol agus chaidh Dòmhnall air bòrd an t-soithich. Ann an sin chaidh deoch làidir a thoirt dha. Agus mus robh fios aige dè bha a’ dol, bha an soitheach aig muir.

Dh’iarr Dòmhnall air na h-iasgairean a chur air ais air tìr, ach dhiùlt iad. Cha do rinn iad droch-dhiol air a’ ghille. Ach bha e a-nise mar phàirt dhen chriutha. Agus, ged a fhuair a phàrantan a-mach mun t-soitheach ann an Loch Eurabol, cha robh fios aig duine dè an t-ainm a bh’ oirre no dè am port dham buineadh i.

Uill, ’s e Steòrnabhagh am port dham buineadh i ach cha robh i ann an Steòrnabhagh gu tric. Bhiodh i a’ seòladh eadar Rotterdam, Liverpool, Copenhagen, Baile Atha Cliath, Bristol is iomadh port eatarra. Bhiodh i a’ toirt bathar eadar na puirt. Agus, ged a chaidh a thoirt am bruid anns a’ chiad dol a-mach, bha a bheatha air bòrd an t-soithich a’ còrdadh math gu leòr ri Dòmhnall. Bha i na b’ inntinniche dha na obair croite.

Dà bhliadhna às dèidh gun deach a thoirt am bruid, bha Dòmhnall ann an Steòrnabhagh. Cha robh comas sgrìobhaidh aige ach lorg e fear aig an robh an sgil sin. Chuir esan litir gu pàrantan Dhòmhnail, ag innse dhaibh gu robh an gille beò is gu robh e ag obair aig muir. Ach cha tuirt e gu robh Dòmhnall airson teicheadh dhachaigh.

Nuair a bha e gu bhith sia bliadhna deug a dh'aois, chuala a phàrantan mu dheidhinn a-rithist – an dàrna turas ann an ceithir bliadhna. Thachair sin faisg air Inbhir Theòrsa, nuair a bha Dòmhnall agus feadhainn eile ann an geòla, a' dèanamh air a' chladach airson uisge. Innsidh mi dhuibh mu dheidhinn – agus na thachair do Dhòmhnall aig a' cheann thall – an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Dùthaich MhicAoidh: *The Mackay Country [N Sutherland]*; Armadal: *Armadale*; Inbhir Theòrsa: *Thurso*; bathar: *goods*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a chaidh a thoirt am bruid le maraichean: *who were kidnapped by seamen*; bhiodh e ri buachailleachd as t-samhradh: *he would be involved in herding cattle in the summer*; bha e air tastan a thoirt: *he had given a shilling*; fhad 's a bha e a' feitheamh: *while he was waiting*; chunnaic e dithis a' tighinn ga ionnsaigh: *he saw two people coming towards him*; far an robh soitheach eile aig an aon chompanaidh: *where the same company had a vessel*; mhothaich e don dithis a' coimhead air gu dlùth: *he noticed the two men examining him*; thabhann na h-iasgairan dà thastan dha: *the fishermen offered him two shillings*; gu ruige am Blàran Odhar: *to Bettyhill*; cuide riutha: *along with them*; cha do rinn iad droch-dhìol air a' ghille: *they didn't treat the boy badly*; dè am port dham buineadh i: *to which port she belonged*; anns a' chiad dol a-mach: *in the first instance*; bha a bheatha a' còrdadh math gu leòr ri Dòmhnall: *Donald was enjoying his life well enough*; bha i na b' inntinniche dha na obair croite: *it was more interesting to him than crofting work*; cha tuirt e gu robh Dòmhnall airson teicheadh dhachaigh: *he didn't say that Donald wanted to run home*; ann an geòla, a' dèanamh air a' chladach: *in a dinghy, making for the shore*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: dh'iarr iad air a' ghille seòladh a thoirt dhaibh airson faighinn a Loch Eurabol: *they asked the lad to give them directions to get to Loch Erribol. Did you understand that seòladh meant "directions" in this context and has nothing to do with sailing (also seòladh)? However, the two words probably share a common origin originating in seòl ("a sail"). Seòladh also means "the act of directing, teaching, pointing or showing" and it is in this context that it has come to mean "giving directions to a location". Traditionally, if you said to somebody, "Dè an seòladh a th' agad?" they might have thought you were asking for instructions to get to their house. Nowadays, the word has adopted the meaning of "address" as in 10 Rathad na h-Eaglaise, Inbhir Pheofharain, although you will still hear some native speakers saying, "Dè an address a th' agad?", using the English word, because they differentiate address from seòladh, the latter still meaning "directions to get to a location".*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: 's e gille dòigheil a bh' ann: *he was a good-natured lad.*

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