

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 441. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 137 corresponds to Litir 441.

Bha mi ann an Èirinn o chionn **beagan is** mìos. Fhuair mi cuireadh a dhol ann – airson seisean a ruith ann an Gàidhlig na h-Alba aig an fhèill mhòir Ghàidhealaich aca ris an canar Oireachtas na Samhna. Bha e, mar a bhiodh dùil, aig toiseach na Samhna. Is toigh leam Èirinn gu mòr agus cha b’ e ruith ach leum a bh’ ann dhomh nuair a fhuair mi an cuireadh.

Bha an t-Oireachtas ann an Cathair na Mart ann an Contae Mhaigh Eo air taobh an iar na dùthcha. ’S e baile beag brèagha a th’ ann, agus gu math goireasach airson a leithid de dh’fhèill. Agus bha an t-Oireachtas gu math tlachdmhor. Tha e car coltach ris a’ Mhòd againne ach chan eil e buileach cho foirmeil ris a’ Mhòd agus, gu dearbh, **cha mhòr gun cluinnear** facal Beurla ann bho toiseach gu deireadh. Agus cha chluinnear Beurla uair sam bith air an àrd-ùrlar.

Às dèidh an Oireachtais chaidh mi fhìn ’s a’ bhean agam air cuairt bheag airson beagan de Chontae Mhaigh Eo fhaicinn. Oir bha cuideigin ann an àrd-dhreuchd air an sgìre sin a mholadh dhomh mar an t-àite as brèagha ann an Èirinn. Cò? Uill, cò ach Màiri Robinson nuair a bha i na h-Uachtaràin – na Ceann-suidhe – aig Poblachd na h-Èireann. Rinn mi agallamh leatha – ann an Gàidhlig is Gaeilge – o chionn deich bliadhna nuair a bha i ann am Muile, a’ comharrachadh ceithir cheud deug bliadhna o chaochail Calum Cille. Nuair a bha mi a’ tomhas àirde a gutha aig an toiseach, dh’fhaighnich mi a’ cheist sin dhith – “Dè an t-àite as brèagha ann an Èirinn?” Agus fhreagair i gun dàil, “Contae Mhaigh Eo”. Uill, chan ann a h-uile latha a gheibh thu moladh airson do làithean-saora bho cheannard stàite!

Co-dhiù, chaidh mi fhìn ’s a’ bhean agam timcheall pàirtean de Chontae Mhaigh Eo nach fhaca sinn roimhe. Am measg sin bha rathad air an taobh an iar dheth, gu deas air baile ris an canar, ann am Beurla, Louisburgh. Tha mi a’ tuigsinn gun deach ainmeachadh airson fear de na h-uaislean a bha an sàs ann am batail ann an Canada anns an deach daingneach Fhrangach a ghabhail thairis. B’ e ainm na daingnich “Louisburgh”. Ann an Gaeilge, ’s e Cluain Cearbán a th’ air a’ bhaile. Ann an Gàidhlig na h-Alba, chanamaid fhèin Cluain Chearban – no Cluain Bhuidheagan – *buttercup meadow*. Nach eil sin nas snoige na Louisburgh?!

Co-dhiù, cha do stad sinn anns a’ bhaile. Lean sinn oirnn air an rathad gu deas. Tha an rathad a’ dol ri taobh beinn mhòr ris an canar am Maol Réidh agus ri taobh loch ris an canar an Dubh Loch. ’S e àite garbh, brèagha a th’ ann, car coltach ri pàirtean de thaobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd Albannaich. Dìreach mus do ràinig sinn an Dubh Loch chunnaic sinn carragh-cuimhne ri taobh an rathaid.

Stad sinn airson faicinn dè bh' ann. Sgrìobhte air an taobh dheth – ann am Beurla – bha seo: *To commemorate the hungry poor who walked here in 1849 and walk the third world today.* Bha an carragh a' cuimhneachadh earrann bho eachdraidh dhòrainneach na Gorta Mòire. Air taobh eile dheth bha seo sgrìobhte: *“In 1991 we walked AFRI's great famine walk at Doolough and soon afterwards we walked the road to freedom in South Africa”*: Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Chuir mi romham tuilleadh fhaighinn a-mach mu na thachair an sin faisg air an Dubh Loch. Tha e gu math inntinneach – agus truagh. Innsidh mi dhuibh mu dheidhinn an ath-sheachdain.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Cathair na Mart: *Westport*; Contae Mhaigh Eo: *County Mayo*; Maol Réidh: *Mweelrea*; An Dubh Loch: *Doo Lough*; carragh-cuimhne: *memorial (statue/stone)*. **Abairtean na Litreach:** fhuair mi cuireadh: *I received an invitation*; ris an canar: *which is called*; toiseach na Samhna: *the start of Samhain (November)*; cha b' e ruith ach leum a bh' ann dhomh: *I jumped at the chance*; gu math goireasach airson a leithid de dh'fhèill: *with good facilities for that type of festival*; tha e car coltach ris: *it's quite similar to*; cha chluinnear Beurla uair sam bith air an àrd-ùrlar: *English is never heard on the stage*; nuair a bha i na Ceann-suidhe aig Poblachd na h-Èireann: *when she was the President of the Irish Republic*; a' comharrachadh ceithir cheud deug bliadhna o chaochail Calum Cille: *commemorating 1400 years since St Columba died*; nuair a bha mi a' tomhas àirde a gutha: *when I was assessing her voice level*; fhreagair i gun dàil: *she replied without delay*; chan ann a h-uile latha a gheibh thu moladh airson do làithean-saora bho cheannard stàite: *it's not every day you get a recommendation for your holidays from a head of state*; nach fhaca sinn roimhe: *which we'd never seen*; gun deach ainmeachadh airson fear de na h-uaislean: *that it was named for one of the gentry*; anns an deach daingneach Fhrangach a ghabhail thairis: *in which a French fortress was captured*; lean sin oirnn: *we continued*; earrann bho eachdraidh dhòrainneach na Gorta Mòire: *a chapter from the anguished history of the Great Famine*; chuir mi romham tuilleadh fhaighinn a-mach: *I decided to find out more*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: cha mhòr gun cluinnear facal Beurla: *hardly a word of English is heard*. Cluinnear is the future passive verbal form, used here in a present habitual sense – ie it's an ongoing phenomenon. Remember that cha mhòr gu followed by a verb means “hardly, scarcely”, whereas cha mhòr nach means “almost”. Cha mhòr gun robh comas aige a thogail (*he could hardly lift it*), cha mhòr gum b' urrainn dhaibh a leughadh (*they could hardly read it*); cha mhòr nach eil mi deiseil (*I'm almost ready*), cha mhòr nach eil mi cinnteach (*I'm pretty certain*). A bheil thu deiseil? Cha mhòr nach eil (*Are you ready? Just about*).

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: o chionn beagan is mìos: *a bit over a month ago*. Bha iad ann beagan is bliadhna: *they were there a little over a year*.

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