

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 rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 534. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 230 corresponds to Litir 534.

Ghluais Eric MacLeòid is a theaghlach gu ruige Cearachar, air cladach Loch a’ Chàirn Bhàin ann an Asainte, ann an naoi ceud deug, seachdad ’s a sia (1976). Cha robh an seann taigh – a bhuineadh do a theaghlach – ann an staid math gu leòr airson fuireach ann an toiseach. Mar sin, bha iad airson carabhan a ghluasad sìos an loch a Cearachar. Cha robh rathad a’ dol a dh’ionnsaigh an àite.

Thog Eric ràth mòr le fiodh agus seann bharraillean. Fhuair e taic bho iasgair a bha a’ fuireach sa Chaolas Chumhang. Tharraing an t-iasgair an ràth gu ruige Cearachar leis an eathar aige.

Bidh cuid agaibh eòlach air an iasgair sin. Is esan Ruairidh MacLeòid a bhuineas do Sgalpaigh Na Hearadh. Tha Ruairidh air mòran bliadhnaichean a chur seachad ann an Asainte agus Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Tha e air obair mhòr a dhèanamh air adhbhar na Gàidhlig anns an dà sgìre sin. Bidh e fhathast a’ teagasg na Gàidhlig do dhaoine ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh – **co-dhiù tha iad sean no òg**.

Anns an leabhar a sgrìobh e mu na bliadhnaichean aige ann an Cearachar – *The Kerracher Man* – tha Eric MacLeòid ag ainmeachadh Ruairidh MhicLeòid gu tric. Tha e ga mholadh mar dhuine toiniseil le deagh eòlas practaigeach air a’ mhuir. Co-dhiù, chaidh aca air an carabhan a thoirt a Cearachar, agus bha dachaigh ann don teaghlach fhad ’s a rinn iad obair-càraidh air an taigh.

Cha b’ urrainn do dh’Eric cumail a dol mar chunntasair ann an Cearachar – anns a’ chiad dol a-mach co-dhiù. Dh’fheuch e iasgach agus thug Ruairidh obair dha air an eathar-iasgaich aige – a’ togail chliabh. Cha do mhair Eric fada, ge-tà. Bha cur na mara air gu dona. Cha b’ urrainn dha sguir a dhìobhairt. Thug Ruairidh comhairle dha. “Chan eil ann ach aon leigheas airson cur na mara,” thuirt e.

“Dè th’ ann?” dh’fhaighnich Eric.

“A bhith nad sheasamh fo chraobh!” thuirt Ruairidh. Agus thàinig dreuchd Eric mar iasgair gu crìch taobh a-staigh aon mhadainn.

Ach bha Eric is a theaghlach soirbheachail ann an iomadach dòigh eile. Rinn iad grunn rudan airson bith-beò a bhith aca – gruagaireachd, dràibheadh bus na sgoile, croitearachd, a bhith nan tuathanaich-èisg – agus cunntasaireachd. Bha cearcan aca is poll-mònach. Bhiodh iad a’ sealg nam fiadh. Bha caoraich is eich aca. Ged a fhuair iad comhairle bho iomadh duine gun a dhol a dh’fhuireach ann, shoirbhich leotha. Tha an cunntas a tha an t-ùghdar a’ dèanamh dhen bheatha aca, **thar nan sia bliadhn’ deug a dh’fhuirich iad ann**, gu math inntinneach is laghach.

Mar a bhiodh dùil, bha stoirmean mòra aca aig amannan. Aon turas thàinig stoirm aig àm an reothairt. Nuair a bha an làn ann, agus e dorch, fhuair an teaghlach a-mach gun robh am fiodh a bh' aca airson an taigh a chàradh, a' flodadh a-mach gu muir.

“Bi taingeil nach eil rathad a-mach à seo,” thuir Eric ri a bhean nuair a fhuair e gu leabaidh.

“Dè tha thu a' ciallachadh?” thuir a bhean.

“Cha bhiodh tusa is a' chlann-nighean anns an leabaidh a-nise. Bhiodh sibh anns an Land Rover cuide rium – a' falbh don cheann a deas.”

Bha cùisean doirbh aig amannan. Ach bha tlachd mhòr am measg nan duilgheadasan. Aig a' cheann thall, ghluais feadhainn ùra a-steach don àite sin – ach, air sgàth an leabhair, tha dìleab Clann MhicLeòid Chearachair sàbhailte.

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Faclan na Litreach: Cearachar: *Kerracher*; Asainte: *Assynt*; ràth: *raft*; An Caolas Cumhang: *Kylesku*; eathar: *boat*; Dùthaich MhicAoidh: *The Mackay Country (of N Sutherland)*; cunntasair: *accountant*; cur na mara: *seasickness*; gruagaireachd: *hairdressing*; poll-mònach: *peat bank*; ùghdar: *author*; an reothairt: *time of the spring tides*; taingeil: *thankful*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a bhuineadh do a theaghlach: *which belonged to his family*; ann an staid math gu leòr: *in a good enough condition*; a bhuineas do Sgalpaigh Na Hearadh: *who belongs to Scalpay Harris*; air adhbhar na Gàidhlig: *for the Gaelic cause*; tha e ga mholadh mar dhuine toiniseil le deagh eòlas practaigeach air a' mhuir: *he praises him as a sensible man with a good practical knowledge of the sea*; fhad 's a rinn iad obair-càraidh air an taigh: *while they repaired the house*; anns a' chiad dol a-mach co-dhiù: *in the first instance at least*; air an eathar-iasgaich aige – a' togail chliabh: *on his fishing boat – lifting creels*; cha b' urrainn dha sguir a dhìobhairt: *he couldn't stop vomiting*; chan eil ann ach aon leigheas: *there's only one cure*; a bhith nad sheasamh fo chraobh: *to stand under a tree*; gu crìch taobh a-staigh aon mhadainn: *to an end within one morning*; rinn iad grunn rudan airson bith-beò a bhith aca: *they did several things to make a living*; air sgàth an leabhair: *because of the book*; tha dìleab Clann MhicLeòid Chearachair sàbhailte: *the legacy of the MacLeods of Kerracher is safe*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **thar nan sia bliadhn' deug a dh'fhuirich iad ann:** *over the sixteen years they lived there. The reason for the nan here is that the preposition thar takes the genitive case. So (na) sia bliadhn' deug is actually a genitive phrase. It is a genitive plural because we are talking about a plural number of years so the article must be nan. Because it's a plural you might expect me to say thar nan sia bliadhnaichean deug, but that would not be natural. We don't put bliadhna in its plural form when using it as part of a numeral, even where the grammatical rules might seem to demand it. Latha (day) works similarly – we say còig latha fichead not còig làithean fichead for “25 days”.*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: **co-dhiù tha iad sean no òg:** *whether they are young or old.*

Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA