

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*Each week the **West Highland Free Press** publishes the text for Roddy Maclean's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on **BBC Radio nan Gaidheal (103-105 FM)**. The programme is broadcast at 11.50 every Friday morning, and repeated at 7.00 pm the following Monday. It is also available on the internet at www.bbc.co.uk/alba **

Bidh mòran agaibh eòlach air Gleann Truim. 'S e sin an gleann anns a bheil an rathad mòr eadar Inbhir Nis is Peairt, an A9, faisg air Dail Chuinnidh. Tha Abhainn Truim a' ruith sìos bhon Druim Uachdair gu ruige Abhainn Spè, no Uisge Spè mar a chanas muinntir an àite, faisg air Bail' Ùr an t-Slèibh.

Fada mus robh guth air an A9 bha rathad tron ghleann. Tha fhios gu robh daoine a' coiseachd air thairis air ceudan bhliadhnaichean, a' toirt crodh gu margaidh air a' Mhachair Ghallda. Agus thog an Seanailear Wade rathad ceart ann san ochdamh linn deug. Tha pàirt dheth sin comasach air carbadan a ghabhail fhathast.

Ann am badeigin air an rathad sin, faisg air seann drochaid, bha craobh-chaorainn ann uaireigin. Bha i ainmeil airson seilleanan agus rachadh muinntir an àite ga h-ionnsaigh airson mil. Dh'fhalbh a' chraobh o chionn fhada air sàilleamh seann aois. Faodaidh mi a bhith cinnteach às a sin, oir cha bhiodh na Gaidheil a' leigeal craobh-chaorainn uair sam bith. Canaidh feadhainn gur e dìreach saobh-chràbhadh a th' ann a sin, ach tha mòran ann a chumas ris fhathast.

A rèir beul-aithris, bha droch fhaireachdainn co-cheangailte ris an drochaid. Nuair a bhiodh a' ghealach làn, cha d'rachadh muinntir an àite tarsainn oirre. Rachadh iad sìos an abhainn agus bhiodh iad a' lorg ath airson a dhol a-null. Dhèanadh na h-eich aca an dearbh rud! Agus bhiodh coin a chunnaic an drochaid a' comhartaich. Chitheadh iad rudeigin nach fhaiceadh daoine. No a' chuid a bu mhò de dhaoine, oir bha feadhainn ann a chanadh gum fac' iad pearsa air choreigin ann an aodach geal faisg air clach mhòr ri taobh na drochaid.

Uill, oidhche a bha seo, thug fear de mhuinntir an àite geall gun d'rachadh aige air a dhol a-null, thar na drochaid, gun dragh sam bith, air an oidhche. 'S dòcha nach robh misneachd gu leòr aige, ge-tà, oir dh'òl e uiread de dh'uisge-beatha ro làimh. Chuir sin misneachd na chuislean!

Co-dhiù, chaidh e a dh'ionnsaigh na drochaid air muin-eich. Ach cha robh an t-each air mhisg agus dhiùlt esan a-muigh no mach dhol ro fhaisg air an drochaid. Mar sin, dh'fhàg ar caraidean an t-each faisg air a' chraobh-chaorainn, agus chum e a dol leis fhèin, air cois, a dh'ionnsaigh na drochaid. Agus ann a sin, aig bonn na cloiche mòire, tha e coltach gun do dh'èirich boireannach geal mu a choinneimh. No 's e sin a bha muinntir an àite a' cumail a-mach as dèidh làimh, oir chan fhaca duine aca gu dè a thachair.

Air an làrna-mhàireach, leis nach do nochd an duine, chaidh feadhainn a-mach, ann an solas an là, airson a lorg. Fhuair iad e ann an dìg ri taobh an rathaid, mu chairteal mhìle air falbh bhon drochaid agus aodann ann an glumag. Bha e marbh. Bha an t-each aige ag ionaltradh gu sìtheil faisg air làimh.

Chuir sin eagal air a' mhòr-shluagh agus cha d'rachadh gin aca faisg air an drochaid air an oidhche bho sin a-mach. Ach a-mhàin aon duine. Chaidh esan a-mach gu sàmhach agus chum e am falach faisg air an drochaid. As dèidh greis, dh'èirich solas brèagha geal air cùl na cloiche mòire agus, na chois, boireannach geal le a gàirdeanan air an sìneadh a-mach. Bha eagal a bheatha air, ach choimhead e air a' bhoireannach airson còig mionaidean mus do dh'fhalbh i agus an solas leatha. Rinn e air an taigh aige agus dh'innis e mu na chunnaic e. Is tha a naidheachd againn fhathast an-diugh ged nach fhacas am boireannach geal airson ùine mhòir.

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Faclan na seachdaine: Dail Chuinnidh: *Dalwhinnie*; Druim Uachdair: *Drumochter*; Bail' Ùr an t-Slèibh: *Newtonmore*; saobh-chràbhadh: *superstition*; rachadh iad: *they would go*; coin: *dogs*; a' comhartaich: *barking*; air cois: *on foot*; an làrna-mhàireach: *the morrow, next day*; dìg: *ditch*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: fada mus robh guth air an A9: *long before the A9 was in existence*; a' toirt crodh gu margaidh air a' Mhachair Ghallda: *taking cattle to market in the Lowlands*; tha pàirt dheth sin comasach air carbadan a ghabhail fhathast: *part of that is still able to carry vehicles*; ann am badeigin air an rathad, bha craobh-chaorainn ann uaireigin: *somewhere on the road, there was at one time a rowan tree*; tha mòran ann a chumas ris fhathast: *there are many who adhere to it yet*; bhiodh iad a' lorg ath airson a dhol a-null: *they would look for a ford to go over*; dhèanadh na h-eich aca an dearbh rud: *their horses would do the very same thing*; chitheadh iad rudeigin nach fhaiceadh daoine: *they would see something that people would not see*; thug X geall gun d'rachadh aige air a dhol a-null: *X bet that he would manage to get across*; chuir sin misneachd na chuislean: *that put courage in his veins*; cha robh an t-each air mhisg: *the horse was not drunk*; dhiùlt esan a-muigh no mach: *he absolutely refused*; aig bonn na cloiche mòire: *at the base of the big stone*; agus aodann ann an glumag: *with his face in a puddle, pool*; ach a-mhàin aon duine: *except for one man*; chum e am falach: *he hid*; air cùl na cloiche mòire: *behind the big stone*; ged nach fhacas am boireannach geal airson ùine mhòir: *although the white woman has not been seen for a long time..*

Puing-ghràmail na seachdaine: Chaidh e a dh'ionnsaigh na drochaid air muin-eich. *He went towards the bridge on horseback. Do you understand why it is a dh'ionnsaigh na drochaid and not a dh'ionnsaigh an drochaid? A dh'ionnsaigh is a compound preposition so it commands nouns in the genitive case. Drochaid is a feminine noun so it is unlenited and has the article "na" in the genitive singular. Ri taobh na drochaid is exactly the same type of construction as is thar na drochaid, even though thar looks like a simple preposition. Note that traditionally "of the bridge" would have been na drochaide with a terminal "e". In modern Gaelic the terminal "e" in the genitive singular of feminine words is tending to disappear and can be considered optional by a learner. Can you think of a place name in the Highlands which should remind Gaelic learners of the genitive of drochaid? Close to Loch Ness is Drumnadrochit, in Gaelic Druim na Drochaid. There is a ridge there and a bridge – the name does not only sounds nice, it makes perfect sense.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Faodaidh mi a bhith cinnteach às a sin: *I can be certain of that.*

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