

# 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 by e-mail at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \* This is Litir 230.*

Halò a-rithist, a chàirdean. An t-seachdain sa chaidh, bha mi ag innse dhuibh gun tigeadh dròbhairean cruinn ann an Coire Bhran mus rachadh iad còmhla thar Monadh Miongaig, agus iad a’ toirt an cuid cruaidh eadar Bàideanach agus Athall. ’S e as coireach gun do rinn iad sin gu robh na h-uachdarain agus na h-ùghdarrasan-stàite mì-thoilichte gu robh iad fhathast a’ gabhail slighe tro na beanntan. B’ fheàrr leothasan gun gabhadh na dròbhairean “Rathad an Rìgh” thairis air Druim Uachdair, oir bhiodh aca ri cìs a phàigheadh an uair sin ann an Dail na Ceàrdaich.

Anns an naoidheamh linn deug, bhiodh aig dròbhairean ri còig sgillinn a phàigheadh airson gach fichead beathach cruaidh, agus dà sgillinn airson gach fichead caora a bh’ aca nuair a ruigeadh iad Dail na Ceàrdaich. Bha sin an coimeas ri dà thastan airson carbad a bh’ air a tharraing le dà each – an seòrsa rud a bha a-mhàin aig daoine beartach. Ach do dhròbhairean ’s e cìs mhòr a bh’ ann agus, airson a seachnadh, ghabhadh iad an seann rathad eadar Ruadhainn agus Blàr Athall – thairis air Monadh Miongaig – a bha gan toirt seachad air Dail na Ceàrdaich saor an asgaidh.

Bha na h-uachdarain is na h-ùghdarrasan ag iarraidh stad a chur orra, agus ’s e sin a bu choireach gun rachadh na dròbhairean air an rathad còmhla. Aig àmanna chaidh iarraidh orra cìs a phàigheadh air an rathad sin agus, mar bu trice, bhiodh iad a’ diùltadh, ag ràdh gur e rathad poblach dualchasach a bh’ ann is gu robh làn-chead aca a chleachdadh. Is bha iad na bu làidire còmhla.

As t-Sultain ochd ceud deug is naoi ar fhichead (1829), chaidh faisg air sia ceud beathach cruaidh air rathad Monadh Miongaig ann an trì là. Agus leis an fhìrinn innse, bhiodh na dròbhairean a’ faighinn taic bho na geamairean is cìobairean a bha a’ fuireach anns na glinn. Gheibheadh iadsan buannachd às na dròbhairean, oir bhiodh iad a’ reic uisge-beatha dhaibh.

Lean an dòigh-beatha sin tron naoidheamh linn deug agus thàinig i gu crìch mu thoiseach an fhicheadamh linn. Agus, ged nach eil crodh is caoraich a’ falbh air an rathad sin tuilleadh, dh’fhàg na dròbhairean, agus muinntir na Gaidhealtachd a bhiodh ga choiseachd, dìleab dhuinn, leis gu bheil an t-slighe aithnichte mar chòir-slighe – ’s e sin rathad air a bheil làn-chòirichean aig an t-sluagh a choiseachd bho cheann gu ceann.

Uill sin mar a tha, ach thig an t-acras nas trice na aon uair. Agus aig deireadh an fhicheadamh linn dhiùlt uachdaran mòr Athall gabhail ri inbhe mar chòir-slighe dìreach mar a dhiùlt na sinnsearan aige. Anns na naochadan bha Monadh Miongaig na chuspair-còmhraidh ann an Taigh nan Cumantan, agus am Ball Pàrlamaid, Dennis Canavan, a’ cur gluasad air adhart, a’ càineadh Diùc Athall airson feuchainn ri stad a chur air daoine bho bhith a’ choiseachd air an rathad.

Gu fortanach chan eil a leithid de dhol a-mach ann an-diugh. Mus deach mi air an rathad, chuir mi fòn gu maoir-dhùthcha na h-oighreachd, aig a bheil oifis ann am Blàr Athall, airson faighinn a-mach an robhar a’ sealg nam fiadh far an robh mi ag iarraidh dhol. “Ca’ bheil sibh a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich am boireannach. “Rathad Monadh Miongaig,” fhreagair mi. “Rathad Monadh Miongaig?” thuirt i. “Tha sin fosgailte a h-uile là dhen bhliadhna.”

Seadh, uill, sin nuair a cheadaicheas sìde a' gheamhraidh! Co-dhiù, tha sinn an comainn nan daoine o shean a choisich rathaidean-monaidh na Gaidhealtachd, len cuid cruaidh agus às an aonais, agus a dh'fhàg na còirichean againn a bhith a' falbh orra mar a thogras sinn an-diugh.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** Monadh Miongaig: *The Minigaig*; Bàideanach: *Badenoch*; Athall: *Atholl*; Dail na Ceàrdaich: *Dalnacardoch*; Ruadhainn: *Ruthven*; as t-Sultain: *in September*; dìleab: *legacy*; Taigh nan Cumantan: *House of Commons*; Dennis O Ceannubhàin: *Dennis Canavan*; gluasad: *motion*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** 's e as coireach gun do rinn iad sin: *the reason they did that*; gu robh na h-uachdarain agus na h-ùghdarrasan-stàite mì-thoilichte: *that the landlords and the authorities of state were unhappy*; b' fheàrr leothasan gun ..: *I they would have preferred that..*; bhiodh aig dròbhairean ri: *drovers had to*; an coimeas ri dà thastan: *compared to two shillings*; mar bu trice bhiodh iad a' diùltadh: *usually they would refuse*; gur e rathad poblach dualchasach a bh' ann: *that it was a public road which was part of their heritage*; bho na geamairean is cìobairean a bha a' fuireach anns na glinn: *from the gamekeepers and shepherds who were living in the glens*; gheibheadh iadsan buannachd às na dròbhairean: *they would derive a benefit from the drovers*; gu bheil an t-slighe aithnichte mar chòir-slighe: *that the route is recognised as a right of way*; chuir mi fòn gu maoir-dhùthcha na h-oighreachd: *I phoned the estate's rangers*; an robhar a' sealg nam fiadh: *were (the) deer being hunted*; nuair a cheadaicheas sìde a' gheamhraidh: *when the winter weather permits*; tha sinn an comainn nan daoine: *we are indebted to the people*; às an aonais: *without them*; mar a thogras sinn: *as we wish*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine:** còig sgillinn ... airson gach fichead beathach cruaidh, agus dà sgillinn airson gach fichead caora: *five pence ... for every twenty cattle, and twopence for every twenty sheep. Can you explain why I used caora here but had to modify crodh to beathach cruaidh? The reason is that fichead takes a singular noun, which works fine with caora (cf fichead cù, fichead cat), but cannot with crodh because it is a collective noun which, while grammatically singular, is conceptually plural. So we cannot say fichead crodh. We have to use beathach to count (keeping it in the singular because fichead takes the singular), and we put crodh in the genitive (cruaidh). This is the same for ceud and you will see sia ceud beathach cruaidh also in the Litir. This principle applies to other collective nouns eg clann. We cannot say fichead clann – we have to say fichead duine cloinne, using the singular of duine and cloinne, the genitive of clann.*

**Seanfhacal na seachdaine:** thig an t-acras nas trice na aon uair: *hunger comes more than once. Things which are bound to repeat themselves do repeat themselves.*

\* “*Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh*” is funded by Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig