

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 roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 307. 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 3 corresponds to Litir 307.*

Anns na beagan seachdainean a dh’fhalbh tha mi air a bhith ag innse dhuibh mun sgrìobhadair, Iain Dubh Mac Dhòmhnail ’ic Iain, no Iain MacIllInnein. Bha Iain a’ fuireach ann an Astràilia. Bha e na bhàrd don Chomunn Ghàidhealach ann am Brisbane. Rugadh e ann an Geàrrloch agus ’s e Gàidhlig a bh’ aige mar chiad chànan. Agus bha e a-riamh gu math measail air a’ chànan aige.

Ged a bha Iain math air sgrìobhadh, cha robh e na sgoilear. Ach, ged nach robh Iain na sgoilear, bha e fìor mhath air duanagan is òrain bheaga a sgrìobhadh. Bu toigh leam crìoch a chur air na Litrichean mu dheidhinn le òran eile aige. Agus saoilidh mi gu bheil am pìos seo gu math iomchaidh do luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig. ’S e an tìotal a th’ air “A’ Labhairt na Gàidhlig Rium Fhìn”.

Nise, tha mi air a bhith ag ràdh ri luchd-ionnsachaidh airson bliadhnaichean gum bu chòir dhaibh Gàidhlig a labhairt riutha fhèin cho tric ’s as urrainn. A’ gabhail fras, anns a’ chàr, a’ coiseachd a’ mhonaidh, air beulaibh sgàthan... àite sam bith sa bheil cothrom aca.

Agus chan e labhairt a-mhàin. Dh’fhaodadh iad seinn. Tha e math do dhuine sam bith òrain ionnsachadh, eadhon mura h-eil iad math air seinn. Seo a-nise sèist an òrain seo:

*Seinn, seinn, seinnidh mise a’ Ghàidhlig
Seinn, seinn, seinnidh mi dhomh fhìn,
Bho nach cluinn mi nise fuaim aig a’ mhuinntir tha mun cuairt,
Seinn, seinn, seinnidh mi dhomh fhìn.*

Carson a sgrìobh Iain an t-òran seo? Uill, bha e a’ fuireach ann an àite far nach robh Gàidhlig aig mòran. Agus chum an cànan ceangal na inntinn don dùthaich dham buineadh e. Seo a’ chiad rann dhen òran:

*Nuair a labhras mi rium fhìn anns a’ Ghàidhlig laghach, ghrinn,
Bidh mi ann am bruadar anns na glinn,
Chì mi Ruairidh Mòr MacLeòid is a nighean ghasta, chòir,
Seinn sa chànan sheòghn gu ceòlmhor binn.*

Agus seo agaibh dà rann eile:

*Ged a chaidh mi fad' thar chuan, cha do thilg mi Ghàidhlig uam,
'S tric a thog i m' aigne suas air muir is tìr,
Dlùth ri glùn mo mhàthar chaomh, nam leanaban tùsail maoth,
'S i Ghàidhlig mhodhail chiùin a dh'ionnsaich mi.*

*Tha i nise mòran aois, 's i bh' aig Adhamh measg nan craobh,
Fhuair i urram àrd an iomadh tìr,
A' tighinn tarsainn na Roinn-Eòrp', chùm na Gàidheil ise beò,
'S i bh' aig Calum còir an Eilean I.*

Uill, sin e a thaobh bàrdachd Iain Duibh. Ach tha ceist agam dhuibh mun sgìre anns an do thogadh Iain – Geàrrloch. Dh'fhaighnich fear dhìom turas (bha e a' bruidhinn ann am Beurla), an robh mi eòlach air sgìre Gheàrrloch. Thuir mi gu robh, rud beag co-dhiù. Uill, dh'fhaighnich e, “ciamar a tha measan tropaigeach a' fàs ann?”

“Measan tropaigeach?” thuir mi.

“Seadh,” fhreagair e, “tha dà *mhelon* ann.”

“Dà *mhelon*?!” thuir mise.

“Gu dearbh,” thuir am fear eile, “*Mellon Charles* agus *Mellon Udrigle*.”

Uill, 's e a' cheist a th' agam dhuibhse – carson a tha na “melons” seo air a' mhap? Dè tha iad a' ciallachadh? Innsidh mi dhuibh an ath-sheachdain.

* * * * *

Faclan na seachdaine: fras: *shower*; sgàthan: *mirror*; laghach: *nice*; grinn: *neat*; brúadar: *dream*; gasta: *splendid, really nice*; measan tropaigeach: *tropical fruits*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: na beagan seachdainean a dh'fhalbh: *the past few weeks*; cha robh e na sgoilear: *he wasn't a scholar*; A' Labhairt na Gàidhlig Rium Fhìn: *Speaking Gaelic to Myself*; gum bu chòir dhaibh Gàidhlig a labhairt riutha fhèin: *that they should speak Gaelic to themselves*; cho tric 's as urrainn: *as often as possible*; àite sam bith sa bheil cothrom aca: *any place they have an opportunity*; chan e labhairt a-mhàin: *not only speaking*; seinnidh mi dhomh fhìn: *I will sing to myself*; bho nach cluinn mi nise fuaim: *since I won't now hear a noise*; aig a' mhuinntir [a] tha mun cuairt: *from [at] the people who are around*; chum e ceangal na inntinn don dùthaich dham buineadh e: *it maintained a link in his mind to the country to which he belonged*; seinn sa chànan sheòghn gu ceòlmhor binn: *singing melodiously in the superlative language*; cha do thilg mi Ghàidhlig uam: *I didn't throw Gaelic from me ie I didn't discard it*; glùn mo mhàthar chaomh: *my tender mother's knee*; nam leanaban tùsail maoth: *when I was a tiny soft baby*; fhuair i urram àrd an iomadh tìr: *she [Gàidhlig] was revered [got high respect] in many lands*; a' tighinn tarsainn na Roinn-Eòrp': *coming across Europe*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: 'S i [a] bh' aig Adhamh [am] measg nan craobh: *literally this means “she is what Adam had among the trees”*. *I hope*

*you weren't misled into wondering what Adam might have been up to in the Garden of Eden – he was merely speaking Gaelic! Although it might not be obvious to a learner that language was being referred to here, it would immediately be understood by a fluent speaker as referring to such (languages are largely conceptually feminine and we say tha cànan aig cuideigin). Later in the same verse of the song, we see 's i [a] bh' aig Calum còir [ann] an Eilean I which means “that is what nice Calum (ie Saint Columba) spoke on Iona”. If you say to an elderly Gaelic speaker, “A bheil Gàidhlig agaibh?”, he or she might respond, “Tha. 'S i as fheàrr a th' agam” (yes, it is her that I speak best). **Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** 'S tric a thog i m' aigne suas: *it is often she [a' Ghàidhlig] lifted my spirits.**

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