

AG19: Agallamh le Donnchadh Scott: Ag Ionnsachadh Gàidhlig

Interview with Duncan Scott: Learning Gaelic

Presenter: Derek MacAoidh (Derek Mackay)



DEREK:

Tha mi an seo còmhla ri Donnchadh Scott, a tha an-diugh a' teagasg Gàidhlig. A Dhonnchaidh, cò às a tha sibh?

DONNCHADH:

'S ann à Inbhir Ùraidh ann an Siorrachd Obar Dheathain a tha mi.

DEREK:

Chan e sgìre làn Gàidhlig a tha sin. An robh Gàidhlig agaibh anns an teaghlach?

DONNCHADH:

Cha robh idir. Cha robh guth Gàidhlig againn anns an teaghlach. Cha robh duine a b' aithne dhomh ann an Inbhir Ùraidh aig an robh i aig an àm sin co-dhiù. Ach bhitheamaid a' dol air làithean-saora chun a' chosta an iar gach bliadhna, agus bha an uair sin, bha mi a' cluinntinn Gàidhlig an uair sin.

DEREK:

Agus an ann mar sin a thog sibh ùidh anns a' chànan?

DONNCHADH:

Chan eil fhios agam dè a thog ùidh annam sa Ghàidhlig, ach tha fhios agam gu robh ùidh agam nuair a bha mi òg. Bhitheamaid a' dol a chèilidh air daoine. Tha cuimhn' 'am smaoinichadh, "O, tha cànan eile acasan," 's bha ùidh agam, dìreach mu ... gu math òg, ceithir bliadhna a dh' aois, no còig no rudeigin mar sin.

DEREK:

Ciamar a thog sibh ùidh ann, ma-thà? An ann anns an sgoil a bha sin?

DEREK:

I am here with Duncan Scott, who nowadays teaches Gaelic. Duncan, where are you from?

DUNCAN:

I come from Inverurie in Aberdeenshire.

DEREK:

That isn't an area that's brimming with Gaelic. Did you speak Gaelic within the family?

DUNCAN:

No, we didn't. There was no Gaelic within the family. I didn't know anyone in Inverurie who spoke it at that time. But we used to go on holiday to the west coast every year, and I used to hear Gaelic at that time.

DEREK:

And is that how you became interested in the language?

DUNCAN:

I don't know what sparked my interest in Gaelic, but I know that I was interested in it when I was young. We used to go and visit people. I remember thinking, "Oh, they speak another language," and I was interested in it from ... a young age, about four years of age, or five or something like that.

DEREK:

How did you become interested in it, then? Was it through school?

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DONNCHADH:

Chan ann. Suas nam dheugaire, sia bliadhna deug, seachd bliadhna deug, fhuair mi leabhar - dà leabhar - à bùth seann leabhraichean ach cha do rinn iad ach suidhe air an sgeilp fad bliadhnaichean. 'S e seòrsa de sìol air choreigin a chur mi a bha gu math slaodach a' fàs, tha mi a' smaointinn.

DEREK:

Mar sin, cha do dh'ionnsaich sibh i nuair a bha sibh ceithir, cha do dh'ionnsaich sibh nuair a bha sibh nur deugaire ... Cuin a dh'ionnsaich agus carson an uairsin a thionndaidh sibh chun a' Ghàidhlig?

DONNCHADH:

Thòisich mi ri Gàidhlig gu dòigheil ionnsachadh nuair a bha mi nam thritheadan. Chaidh mi gu cùrsa bogaidh. Bha mi ag obair, ach bha mi a' dèanamh ... rinn mi an cùrsa bogaidh a bha sin. Bha mi ag obair ... Bha mi nam shaor, agus bha caraidean na b' òige na mise a bha uile aig an oilthigh, no a bha dìreach air crìoch a chur air colaiste no oilthigh. 'S e luchd-ciùil a bh' annta, agus bhitheamaid a' cluiche ciùil còmhla. 'S bha iad uile ag ràdh ... Bha mi car searbh dhen obair. 'S dòcha gum bithinn ag ràdh sin. Bhiodh iad uile a' moladh dhomh a dhol gu oilthigh: "Tha e glè mhath." "Thalla gu oilthigh no colaiste." Chanainn-sa gu robh iad ag ràdh sin fad bliadhna no dhà mus deach mi ann, ach, mar sin, chaidh mi gu oilthigh co-dhiù.

DEREK:

Agus roghnaich sibh a' Ghàidhlig. Carson?

DONNCHADH:

Uill, co-thuiteamas. Thug mi sùil air na leabhraichean beag aig na h-oilthighean, na "prospectuses" mar a th' aca orra, agus 's e sin an aon chùrsa a bha gam tharraing, leis an fhìrinn a ràdh.

DUNCAN:

No. When I was a teenager, sixteen or seventeen years old, I got a book - two books - from a second-hand bookshop but they did nothing besides sitting on a shelf for years. It was a type of seed that I planted which grew very slowly, I think.

DEREK:

So you didn't learn it when you were four, you didn't learn it as a teenager. When and why did you then turn to Gaelic?

DUNCAN:

I began to learn Gaelic properly when I was in my thirties. I took an immersion course. I was working, but I did ... I took that immersion course. I was working ... I was a joiner, and I had friends who were younger than myself who were all at university or who had just finished in college or university. They were musicians, and we played music together. And they were all saying ... I was sick of my job. Perhaps I used to say that. They all recommended that I go to university: "It's very good." "Go to university or to college." I'd say that they were saying that for a year or two before I went, but, in the end, I went to university anyway.

DEREK:

And you chose Gaelic. Why?

DUNCAN:

Well, coincidence. I looked at the booklets from the universities, the "prospectuses" as they call them, and that was the only course that appealed to me, to be honest.

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DEREK:

An robh e duilich tilleadh gu fòghlam aig an aois a bha sin?

DONNCHADH:

Cha robh mi idir cinnteach, ach chuir mi romham dìreach dol ann gu àm na Nollaig, agus mura robh e a' còrdadh rium, 's urrainn dhomh falbh, ach abair thusa gun do chòrd e rium!

DEREK:

Nuair a thòisich sibh anns an oilthigh, dè cho math 's a bha a' Ghàidhlig agaibh?

DONNCHADH:

Uill, bha mi fhìn dhen bheachd gu robh i meadhanach math co-dhiù, ach cha chreid mi gu robh. Tha cuimhn' 'am a' chiad clas a bh' againn. Bha mi am measg luchd-tòiseachaidh is chaidh mi suas dhan neach-teagaisg againn 's thuir mi rithe, "A bheil clas eadar-meadhanach agaibh? "Tha mi a' faireachdainn gu bheil seo ro bhunasach dhomh." Agus thuir i gu math modhail 's gu math socair ... Thuir i, "Tha mi den bheachd gu bheil thu sa chlas cheart, a Dhonnchaidh."

DEREK:

Agus dè cho duilich, no dè cho furasta 's a bha e a' Ghàidhlig a thogail aig an ìre sin?

DONNCHADH:

Bha tòrr obrach ann, ach chòrd e rium, so mar sin cha robh e doirbh.

DEREK:

Bha sibh ag ràdh gu robh sibh ag iarraidh a dhèanamh is thuir sibh cuideachd gu robh sibh a' cluiche ceòl. An ann bhon a' cheòl a thàinig an ùidh a bha sin?

DEREK:

Was it difficult to go back into education at that age?

DUNCAN:

I wasn't at all sure, but I decided to give it till Christmas, and if I wasn't enjoying it, I could leave, but, boy, did I enjoy it!

DEREK:

When you started university, how good was your Gaelic?

DUNCAN:

Well, at the time, I thought it was fairly good at least, but I don't believe it was. I remember our first class. I was in with the beginners and I went to our tutor and said to her, "Do you have an intermediate class? "I feel this is too basic for me." And she told me very politely and very gently ... She said, "I believe you are in the correct class, Duncan."

DEREK:

And how difficult or how easy was it to pick up Gaelic at that stage?

DUNCAN:

It was hard work, but I enjoyed it, so it wasn't too difficult.

DEREK:

You said you wanted to do it and you also said that you played music. Did you become interested in it because of the music?

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DONNCHADH:

Eadar an ceòl is na daoine ris an robh mi a' tachairt, tron cheòl mar gum bitheadh, agus cuideachd tro bhith a' coiseachd nam beann ann an Alba, far a bheil na h-ainmean uile anns a' Ghàidhlig. Agus cuideachd, tòrr de na puirt, tha ainmean Gàidhlig orra cuideachd agus cuid dhiubh nan òrain Gàidhealach, so bha mi caran a' suathadh leis a' chànan ann an dòigh caran air fiaradh ann an dòigh, air dàrna thaobh.

DEREK:

An d' fhuair sibh às a' Ghàidhlig na bha sibh ag iarraidh? An e fileantachd an ceann-uidhe a bh' agaibh, no an robh amas eile agaibh?

DONNCHADH:

Bha mi airson a bhith comasach dol a bhruidhinn ri daoine aig an robh i bho thùs. Agus thachair sin meadhanach tràth. Fhuair mi às na bha mi ag iarraidh. Chòrd e rium gu mòr. Bho cha mhòr a' chiad seachdain, bha e a' còrdadh rium, agus bha sin gu leòr airson mo chumail a' dol mar gum bitheadh.

DEREK:

Tha sibh an-diugh gu math fileanta agus tha blas gu math Gàidhealach air a Ghàidhlig agaibh. Cò às a thàinig am blas a tha sin?

DONNCHADH:

Taing. Eadar Uibhist a Tuath agus Barraigh, chanainn-sa. Sin measgachadh den dà chuid. Bha mi ag obair san dà àite sin greisean an siud 's an seo, agus 's ann a chanainn-sa gur e sin a thog mar gum biodh an dualchainnt no blas a th' agam.

DEREK:

An robh e na chuideachadh dhuibh a bhith a' fuireach ann an coimhearsnachdan eileanach mar sin ann a bhith ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig?

DUNCAN:

From the music and the people I met up with, through the music as it were, and also from walking in the hills of Scotland, where all the names are in Gaelic. And also, a lot of the tunes, they have Gaelic names too and some of the Gaelic songs, so I was coming up against the language from an angle in a way, from the other side.

DEREK:

Did you get what you wanted from Gaelic? Was fluency your ultimate goal, or did you have another aim?

DUNCAN:

I wanted to be able to go and talk to native speakers. And that happened quite early on. I got what I wanted from it. I really enjoyed it. Almost from the first week, I really enjoyed it, and that was enough to keep me going, as it were.

DEREK:

You are very fluent now and your Gaelic has a very authentic accent. Where does that accent come from?

DUNCAN:

Thank you. I'd say it's between North Uist and Barra. It's a blend of the two. I worked in both places for short spells here and there, and I'd say that's where I picked up my dialect or accent.

DEREK:

Was living in island communities helpful to you when it came to learning Gaelic?

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DONNCHADH:

Bha. Bha. Bha dha-rìreabh. Bha. Bha e a' faireachdainn dìreach nàdarra. Tha e doirbh nuair a tha thu nad neach-ionnsachaidh ... 'S e aon rud a bhith ag ionnsachadh a' chànain, structar agus gràmar agus a h-uile càil, agus 's e a chanainn-sa, dhòmhsa dheth co-dhiù, 's e sgil eile a bhith ga bruidhinn, ga cur gu feum, gu tur diofraichte. Chan ionnan iad idir. Tha sgeulachd no dhà agam. Chaidh iarraidh orm rudeigin a dhèanamh, agus cha robh diù agam. Cha robh sgot agam dè a bha iad ag ràdh, ach b' fheudar dhomh dìreach obrachadh a-mach, agus cho luath 's a tha thu a' dèanamh sin ann an dha-rìreabh, far a bheil feum agad rudeigin a dhèanamh, cha dìochuimhnich thu e. Rudan mar sin. Feumaidh tu cumail ... Feumaidh tu a bhith rudeigin làidir mar neach-ionnsachaidh nuair a thig e gu bruidhinn agus dìreach cumail ort agus ma thèid seòrsa de chàineadh ort, na gabh air an t-sròn e. Dìreach cum ort. An ath thuras, feuch a-rithist. Tha daoine gu math fialaidh, 's gu math taiceil ma chumas tu ort, ma tha thu a' sealltainn deòin cumail ort agus amadan a dhèanamh dhìot fhèin!

DEREK:

Cha chreid mi gur ann a' dèanamh amadan dhìot fhèin a tha thu idir, a Dhonnchaidh. Ceud mìle taing.

DONNCHADH:

'S e do bheatha. Mòran taing dhut fhèin.

DUNCAN:

Yes. Yes. Yes, definitely. Yes. It just felt natural. It is difficult when you are a learner ... It's one thing to learn a language, structure and grammar and all that, and I'd say, for myself anyway, that speaking it, using it, is a completely different skill. They're not the same. I have a couple of stories. I was asked to do something and I didn't have a clue what. I had no idea what they were saying, but I had to just work it out, and as soon as you do that for real, in a situation where you have to do something, you won't forget it. Things like that. You have to keep ... You have to be quite tough as a learner when it comes to speaking, and just keep going and if you are criticised in some way, don't take it on the nose. Just keep going. Next time, try again. People are very forgiving and very supportive if you persevere if you show that you're willing to keep going and make a fool of yourself!

DEREK:

I don't believe you're making a fool of yourself at all, Duncan. Thank you very much.

DUNCAN:

You're welcome. Thank you too.