

AG27: Agallamh le Griogair MacThòmais: Ag Ionnsachadh Gàidhlig

Interview with Greg Thomson: Learning Gaelic

Presenter: Seumas Dòmhnallach (James MacDonald)



SEUMAS:

Còmhla rium an-dràsta tha Greg MacThòmais, a rugadh agus a thogadh ann am Bruaich Chluaidh, ach a tha an-diugh a' fuireach agus ag obair anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Greg, ciamar a thòisich thu fhèin leis a' Ghàidhlig?

GRIOGAIR:

Thug tòrr diofar rudan orm Gàidhlig ionnsachadh. Bha ùidh agam ann an ceòl, ann an eachdraidh na h-Alba, ann an ainmean-àite. Nuair a bha sinn glè òg, bhitheamaid a' dol air saor-làithean do Earra-Ghàidheal agus àiteachan mar sin cuide ris an teaghlach agam, agus bha a h-uile rud mar sin a' toirt orm smaoineachadh air a' Ghàidhlig a bha timcheall oirnn, ach nach robh timcheall oirnn tuilleadh.

SEUMAS:

Agus dè an aois aig an robh thu nuair a thuirt thu riut fhèin gun toireadh tu ceum nas fhaide agus gun ionnsaichadh tu Gàidhlig?

GRIOGAIR:

'S dòcha aig toiseach na h-àrd-sgoil, agus bha mi caran a' smaoineachadh, "Carson nach eil dad mar seo ... "Carson nach eil sinn a' faighinn dad mar seo anns an sgoil? " Agus bha mi a' smaoineachadh air rudan mar sin, gu h-àraidh nuair a bha ùidh agam ann an rudan agus cùisean Albannach agus cha robh sinn a' faighinn mòran dheth anns an sgoil, 's bha sin a' toirt orm smaoineachadh air.

SEUMAS:

Cha robh e comasach dhut Gàidhlig fhaighinn mar chuspair anns an sgoil. Ciamar a chaidh thu timcheall air Gàidhlig ionnsachadh dhut fhèin?

JAMES:

With me now is Greg Thomson, who was born and raised in Clydebank, but who now lives and works on the Isle of Skye. Greg, how were you first introduced to Gaelic?

GREG:

A lot of different factors encouraged me to learn Gaelic. I was interested in music, in the history of Scotland, in place-names. When we were very young, we used to go on holiday to Argyll and to places like that along with our family, and things like that made me think about the Gaelic that had been around us, but which was no longer around us.

JAMES:

And how old were you when you said to yourself that you would take another step and begin to learn Gaelic?

GREG:

Perhaps when I started in secondary school and I kind of thought to myself, "Why isn't there anything ... "Why aren't we getting anything like this in school? " And I was thinking about things like that, especially as I was interested in all things Scottish and Scottish affairs and we didn't get much of those in school and that made me think about it.

JAMES:

It wasn't possible for you to study Gaelic as a subject in school. How did you go about learning Gaelic for yourself?

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GRIOGAIR:

An toiseach, le bhith a' leughadh leabhraichean. Bhitheamaid a' falbh cuide ri m' athair a h-uile deireadh seachdain agus bhithinn fhèin a' dol dha na bùithtean, bùithtean nan leabhraichean, agus cheannaich mi leabhar Gàidhlig no dhà airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh.

SEUMAS:

Dè na dùbhlain a thug e dhut a bhith ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig leat fhèin?

GRIOGAIR:

Bha e gu math doirbh aig an toiseach, agus ged a bha mi ag ionnsachadh beagan agus bha mi ... Uill, bha mi ceart gu leòr air leughadh agus èisteachd cuideachd le bhith ag èisteachd ri teipichean agus a h-uile rud mar sin, ach cha b' ann gus an do rinn mi cùrsa ceart, foirmeil ann an Colaiste Bhruach Chluaidh a chuir mi a h-uile rud mar sin còmhla airson còmhraidh a chumail.

SEUMAS:

Dè an ìre de dh'fhileantachd a ràinig thu le bhith gad ionnsachadh fhèin mus deach thu air adhart gu cùrsa foirmeil?

GRIOGAIR:

Ràinig mi gu ìre a bha math gu leòr 's dòcha airson còmhraidh gu math sìmplidh a chumail, ach, mar a thuirt mi, cha b' ann gus an do rinn mi cùrsa foirmeil a chuir mi a h-uile rud còmhla.

SEUMAS:

Agus dè an ath cheum a ghabh thu?

GREG:

At first, by reading books. We would go with my father every weekend and I would go to the shops, the bookshops, and I bought a couple of Gaelic books to learn Gaelic.

JAMES:

What challenges did you face learning Gaelic on your own?

GREG:

It was quite difficult at first, and although I was learning a little and I was ... Well, I was OK when it came to reading and also to listening through listening to tapes and things like that, but it wasn't until I did a proper, formal course at Clydebank College that I managed to combine all of that to be able to hold a conversation.

JAMES:

What level of fluency did you achieve through teaching yourself before you went on to do a formal course?

GREG:

I reached a level that was perhaps good enough to hold a fairly simple conversation, but, as I said, it wasn't until I did a formal course that I was able to combine everything.

JAMES:

And what was the next step you took?

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GRIOGAIR:

A bhith a' dèanamh an cùrsa sin ann am Bruach Chluaidh. Rinn mi sin fad bliadhna. Bha sin a' tachairt a h-uile madainn, agus an uair sin, fhad 's a bha mi ann, fhuair sinn cothroman gu leòr. Fhuair sinn cothroman a dhol dhan Eilean Sgitheanach agus bha mi an sàs ann am Pàrlamaid nan Oileanach ann an Doire ann an Èirinn, agus nuair a bha mi ann, thachair mi ri daoine a bha aig an t-Sabhail Mhòir agus tha mi a' smaointinn, mun àm sin, bha mi air cur a-steach dhan an t-Sabhail Mhòir airson a' Chùrsa Comais a tha seo agus fhuair mi a-mach barrachd bho nah-oileanaich a bha ann an Doire aig an àm sin.

SEUMAS:

Ciamar a thug a bhith aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig agus a' dèanamh a' Chùrsa Comais piseach air a' Ghàidhlig agad?

GRIOGAIR:

Cha mhòr nach robh mi a' dèanamh an aon chùrsa a rinn mi ann am Bruach Chluaidh agus chanainn gu robh sin uabhasach math, uabhasach math dhomh airson na structaran gràmair fhaighinn ceart nam inntinn, na mo cheann, agus dìreach a' toirt dhomh cothrom a bhith a' fàs beagan nas fileanta.

SEUMAS:

Tha thu a-nise ag obair aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Dè an seòrsa cothrom a tha sin a' toirt dhut a bhith fhathast ag ionnsachadh 's a' leasachadh do Ghàidhlig?

GREG:

Doing that course at Clydebank. I did that for a whole year. That happened every morning, and then, while I was there, we had plenty of opportunities. We got opportunities to go to the Isle of Skye and I was involved in the Student Parliament in Derry in Ireland, and while I was there, I met with people who were at Sabhal Mòr and I think that around that time, I had applied to Sabhal Mòr to take the Cùrsa Comais (Introduction to Gaelic) course and I learnt more from the students who were in Derry at that time.

JAMES:

How did coming to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and taking the Cùrsa Comais improve your Gaelic?

GREG:

It was almost the same as the course I had done in Clydebank, and I'd say that was very good, very good for me to get the grammatical structures right in my mind, in my head, and it just gave me the opportunity to become more fluent.

JAMES:

You now work at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. What sorts of opportunities does that give you to continue learning and improving your Gaelic?

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GRIOGAIR:

Tha mi ag ionnsachadh tòrr bho dhaoine a tha a' tighinn a-steach dhan an leabharlann a h-uile latha, eadar oileanaich agus daoine bhon taobh a-muigh cuideachd a tha a' tighinn a-steach, Gàidheil agus daoine a dh'ionnsaich na Gàidhlig cuideachd, agus tha clasaichean ann don luchd-obrach cuideachd, cuide ri fileantaich far a bheil thu a' faighinn diofar gnathasan cainnte agus rudan mar sin, agus tha sin air leth cuideachail.

SEUMAS:

'S an canadh tu gu bheil thu a' sìor-leasachadh do Ghàidhlig? An e obair a th' ann, mar gum bitheadh, a tha fhathast a' dol air adhart?

GRIOGAIR:

Tha, agus bithidh gu bràth tuilleadh, tha mi cinnteach.

SEUMAS:

Greg, tapadh leatsa an-dràsta.

GRIOGAIR:

Tapadh leat.

GREG:

I'm learning a lot from people who come into the library every day, from students to people who are coming in from outside, native Gaelic speakers and also people who have learnt Gaelic, and there are classes for the staff too, along with fluent speakers where you learn various idioms and things like that, and that is extremely helpful.

JAMES:

And would you say you are continuing to improve your Gaelic? Is it, as it were, a work in progress?

GREG:

Yes, and I'm sure it will be for ever more.

JAMES:

Greg, thank you for now.

GREG:

Thank you.