

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 rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 285.*

An do mhothaich sibh gu bheil diofar ann eadar aibidil Gàidhlig na h-Alba agus aibidil Gàidhlig na h-Èireann. Ma choimheadas sibh ann am faclair, chì sibh gu bheil barrachd litrichean ann an aibidil nan Èireannach na tha ann an aibidil nan Albannach.

Bidh fios agaibh gu bheil ochd litrichean deug anns an aibidil Ghàidhlig. 'S iad an fheadhainn a tha ann an aibidil na Beurla nach eil againne: *J, K, Q, V, W, X, Y* agus *Z*. Ach seallamaid mionaid air a' Ghearrfhoclóir Gaeilge-Béarla aig Ó Dónaill. Tha faclan aigesan a' tòiseachadh le *J* – mar eisimpleir, *jabaireacht* (airson *jobbing*) agus *jacaí* (airson *jockey*).

'S e a th' annta faclan a thàinig bhon Bheurla. Chan eil mòran dhiubh ann oir tha a' Ghaeilge air dèiligeadh ri faclan de a leithid mar as trice anns an aon dòigh san do dhèilig a' Ghàidhlig riutha. Uaireannan tha sinn a' cur *I* far am biodh an *J* ann am Beurla. Mar eisimpleir – am facal *jubilee*. Ann an Èirinn, 's e *iubhaile*; ann an Alba canaidh sinn *iubailidh*. Tillidh sinn don fhacal *iubailidh* ro dheireadh na Litreach.

Chan eil dad aig Ó Dónaill fo *K*, ach tha fo *Q* – dà rud – *quinín* (airson *quinine*) agus *quionól* (airson *quinol*). Tha dà dhuilleig aige de rudan fo *V*, leithid *verteabra* is *víreas*. Chanamaid ann an Alba *cnamh droma* agus *bhìoras*, le “bh” aig an toiseach, a' seasamh airson fuaim a' “v”. Fo *Y*, tha *Y-chrómosóm* aige; bidh sinne ag ràdh *cromosom Y*, agus tha rudan mar *zú* le “z” aige (airson *zoo*) – facal a tha sinne a' litreachadh le “s” – *sù*.

Cò chruthaich an siostam as fheàrr – na h-Èireannaich no na h-Albannaich? Uill, bidh a bheachd aig gach duine air sin. 'S dòcha gu bheil an siostam Èireannach nas onaraiche a thaobh fuaimneachadh. Air an làimh eile, 's dòcha gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig Albannach a' dèanamh glèidheadh a bharrachd air dualchas a' chàinain.

Ach bidh sibh a' mothachadh gun do leig mi às aon litir bhon aibidil – *X*. Oir tha facal Gàidhlig a' tòiseachadh le “x” – *x-ghath* airson *x-ray*. Tha an aon rud aig na h-Èireannaich. 'S dòcha gum bu chòir dhuinn aideachadh a-nise gu bheil naoi litrichean deug anns an aibidil againn!

Tha mi airson tilleadh don litir *V*. Ciamar a sgrìobhas sin *Victoria*? Uill, chithear an dà chuid bho linn na Bànrigh fhèin – le *V* no *Bh* aig an toiseach. Tha mi dìreach air leabhar a chur a-mach mu dhualchas Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis agus nuair a bha mi a' dèanamh rannsachadh air a shon, lorg mi dealbh a chaidh a thogail air an dàrna là fichead dhen Ògmhios, ochd ceud deug, naochad 's a seachd (1897). B' e sin Iubailidh Daoimein na Bànrigh agus bha bratach air Taigh a' Bhaile air an robh an

teachdaireachd: “Fhad ’s a mhaireas Clach na Cùdainn, mairidh cliù Victoria air chuimhne”. ’S e Clach na Cùdainn clach àrsaidh ainmeil ann an Inbhir Nis. Bha ainm na Bànrigh air a litreachadh le V.

Ach nuair a bha a’ Bhànrigh ann an Ros an Iar fichead bliadhna roimhe sin, chaidh a turas a chomharrachadh le snaigheadh air clach faisg air Taigh-òsta Loch Ma-Ruibhe. Bha e ann an Gàidhlig: “Air an dara latha-deug deth mhios meadhonach an fhoghair, 1877, thainig Ban-Rìgh Bhictoria a dh’fhaicinn Loch-Maruibhe, agus nan crìochan mu’n cuairt...” Bha ainm na Bànrigh air a litreachadh an sin le *Bh*. Bidh sibh a’ mothachadh nach eil an t-ainm a’ leantainn na riaghailt litreachaidh – “leathann ri leathann is caol ri caol”, ach ’s e ceist eile a tha sin!

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Faclan na seachdaine: aibidil: *alphabet*; chanamaid: *we would say*; aideachadh: *admit*; àrsaidh: *ancient*; Loch Ma-Ruibhe: *Loch Maree*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: ma choimheadas sibh ann am faclair: *if you look in dictionaries*; seallamaid mionaid air a’ Ghearrfhoclóir Gaeilge-Béarla: *let’s look a minute at the Concise Irish-English Dictionary*; anns an aon dòigh san do dhèilig a’ Ghàidhlig riutha: *in the same way Scottish Gaelic dealt with them*; cò chruthaich an siostam as fheàrr?: *who created the better/best system?*; nas onaraiche a thaobh fuaimneachadh: *more honest with regard to pronunciation*; gu bheil X a’ dèanamh glèidheadh a bharrachd air dualchas a’ chànain: *that X more faithfully retains the linguistic heritage*; gun do leig mi às aon litir: *that I left out one letter*; chithear an dà chuid: *both are seen*; an dàrna là fichead dhen Ògmhios: *22 June*; Iubailidh Daoimein na Bànrigh: *the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee*; Clach na Cùdainn: *Clachnacuddin [stone of the tub]*; chaidh a turas a chomharrachadh le snaigheadh air clach: *her journey was marked by an inscription on a stone*; mìos meadhanach an fhoghair: *the middle month of the autumn ie September – this terminology is still used in Ireland*; an riaghailt litreachaidh: *the spelling rule*; leathann ri leathann is caol ri caol: *broad to broad and slender to slender [Bhictoria breaks this because “i” is a slender vowel and “o” is a broad vowel; in the state of Victoria in Australia, some Gaelic speakers write Bhiictoria in order to obey the rule]*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: The Litir deals with an interesting point regarding the orthography of a minority language which comes under the influence of a more politically or commercially powerful tongue. For example, should Gaelic adopt the *v* of English loan words (which often originate in Latin) or should the *v* be replaced with a *bh*? There is no easy answer to that, although Scottish Gaelic has tended, in the case of *v*, to employ *bh*. But sometimes there are anomalies caused by the fact that the *bh* is thought of as a lenited *b*. There can be a process of reduction in which the loan word, which started its life with an English *v* adopts a Gaelic *b*. An example is the Gaelic for *volcano*. It is sometimes *bholcàno* but one also sees and hears *bolcàno*, with the “lenition” lost.

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: bidh a bheachd aig gach duine air sin: *every man will have his opinion on that*.

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