

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 308. 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 4 corresponds to Litir 308.*

Anns an Litir mu dheireadh, dh’fhaighnich mi an robh fios agaibh mar a dh’èirich dà ainm-àite ann an sgìre Gheàrrloch. Dà ainm baile anns a’ bheil “Mellon”? ’S iad na bailtean sin *Mellon Charles* agus *Mellon Udrigle*, agus tha fios agaibh nach eil ceangal aca do mheasan tropaigeach! Thàinig Mellon Charles bhon Ghàidhlig *Meallan Theàrlaich*. Tha sin a’ ciallachadh “am Meall Beag aig Teàrlach” - *Charles’s Little Hill*. Meallan Theàrlaich.

Ach cò bh’ ann an Teàrlach? Bha mi a’ bruidhinn ri fear às an sgìre sin an là eile. Agus thuirt esan gur e leth-bhràthair do dh’uachdaran Gheàrrloch a bh’ ann an Teàrlach. Bha seo o chionn ùine mhòr. Fhuair an leth-bhràthair fearann faisg air a’ chladach – ann am Meallan Theàrlaich – agus fhuair an leth-bhràthair eile fearann eile.

Agus *Mellon Udrigle*? ’S e sin *Meallan Udraigil*. Tha Udraigil a’ tighinn bhon Lochlannais, a’ ciallachadh “clais air an oir”. Agus tha Meallan a’ ciallachadh “meall beag”, nach eil? *The Little Hill of Udrigle*. Uill, ’s dòcha. Ach ma choimheadas sibh air a’ mhap, chì sibh gu bheil cnoc ann air a bheil “Meallan Udrigill”. Tha baile ann cuideachd air a bheil “Mellon Udrigle”. Ach tha an cnoc agus am baile dà mhìle air falbh o chèile. Ciamar a thachair sin?

Uill, air ais gu mo charaid anns an sgìre. Seo mar a mhìnich esan e: “Dh’innis bodach dhomh nach e *Meallan* a bh’ ann an ainm a’ bhaile idir, ach *Mealbhan*. ’S e sin facal às an sgìre seo a tha a’ ciallachadh ‘*sand dunes*’.” Tha am facal ann an faclair Dwelly. Mar sin, ’s e ainm tùsail a’ bhaile ann an Gàidhlig – *Mealbhan Udraigil*.

A-nise gu cuspair eile. Leisgeul. Tha mi an dòchas gun gabh sibh mo leisgeul. Rinn mi mearachd ann an Litir air a’ mhìos sa chaidh. Chuir mi crìoch air tè trì cheud ’s a dhà (302) air a’ chòigeamh là deug dhen Ghiblean le bhith ag ràdh gun innsinn dhuibh mar a rinn an t-amadan a’ chùis air a’ mhèirleach ann an Coille Tharbhaidh. Ach, an uair sin, bhris an coimpiutair agam agus bha mi troimh-chèile airson greis. Tha mi duilich mu dheidhinn sin. Co-dhiù, innsidh mi dhuibh an-dràsta mar a thachair:

Bha dà phoca aig an amadan – fear dhiubh làn airgid, is am fear eile làn sligean maoraich. Bha iad am falach fo chleòca. Bha an t-amadan a’ marcachd air seann làir. Nuair a ràinig e Coille Tharbhaidh, thachair am mèirleach ris. Thug am mèirleach gunna a-mach agus dh’iarr e air an amadan an t-airgead aige a thoirt seachad. Thug an t-amadan fear de na pocannan a-mach. Thilg e sìos bruach chas e. Thuirt e nach canadh duine mu dheidhinn gun tug e seachad airgead a mhaighstir do mhèirleach.

Leum am mèirleach far eich agus ruith e sìos a' bhruach airson am poca a thogail. Fhad 's a bha e a' dèanamh sin, leum an t-amadan far na seann làire. Leum e gu sgiobalta air each a' mhèirlich. 'S e each math luath a bh' ann. Rinn an t-amadan air falbh aig astar. Cha robh aig a' mhèirleach ach an t-seann làir. Cha robh ise luath gu leòr airson an t-amadan a ghlacadh.

Tuigidh sibh nach do lorg am mèirleach dad ach sligean sa phoca. A bharrachd air sin, chaill e airgead eile a ghoid e – a bh' ann am pocannan ceangailte ri each. Rinn an t-amadan a' chùis air gu dubh.

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Faclan na seachdaine: fearann: *land*; clais: *cleft, gully*; tùsail: *original*; Coille Tharbhaidh: *Tarvie Wood*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: dh'fhaighnich mi an robh fios agaibh: *I asked you if you knew*; mar a dh'èirich dà ainm-àite: *how two place names arose*; nach eil ceangal aca do mheasan tropaigeach: *that they are not connected to tropical fruits*; aig a bheil deagh Ghàidhlig: *who has [speaks] excellent Gaelic*; gur e leth-bhràthair do dh'uachdaran Gheàrrloch a bh' ann an Teàrlach: *that Charles was a half-brother of the laird of Gairloch*; ma choimheadas sibh air a' mhap: *if you look at [on] the map*; chì sibh gu bheil cnoc ann: *you will see there is a hill*; dà mhìle air falbh o chèile: *two miles away from each other*; seo mar a mhìnich esan e: *this is how he explained it*; tha mi an dòchas gun gabh sibh mo leisgeul: *I hope you will accept my apology*; gun innsinn dhuibh: *that I would tell you*; làn sligean maoraich: *full of sea shells*; bha iad am falach fo chleòca: *they were hidden under his cloak*; bha X a' marcachd air seann làir: *X was riding [on] an old mare*; thilg e sìos bruach chas e: *he threw it down a steep slope*; nach canadh duine mu dheidhinn gun tug e seachad airgead a mhaighstir: *that no man would say of him that he gave away his master's money*; 's e each luath a bh' ann: *it was a fast horse*; rinn X air falbh aig astar: *X left at speed*; a bh' ann am pocannan ceangailte ri each: *which was in bags tied to his horse*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: Leum am mèirleach far eich: *the robber leapt from his horse*. In *Litir 66 (25.08.00)* we looked at a similar example: thuit fear far an eich a bha e a' marcachd (*a man fell from the horse he was riding*). In the earlier example the article was present and, as I explained, far (originally de bhàrr) is a compound preposition and therefore takes the genitive. But in the current example there is no article. In fact, there is a hidden possessive – the masculine singular “a” (ie far a eich). In this circumstance the noun (each) goes in the genitive (eich). In the absence of any form of article (possessive or definite), however, we would most commonly not employ the genitive today ie “he leapt from a horse” would be leum e far each.

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Rinn an t-amadan a' chùis air gu dubh: *the fool defeated him soundly/got the better of him big-time*. Gu dubh (lit. “blackly”) is a strengthener.

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