

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 350. 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 46 corresponds to Litir 350.*

'S e facal inntinneach a th' ann am *mòd*, nach e? Seo na thathar ag ràdh anns an fhaclair Ghàidhlig *Brìgh nam Facal* airson “mòd”: 1. *Fèis far am bi co-fharpaisean ann an ceòl, seinn, dràma etc*, agus 2. (*aosta*) *cùirt*. Tha sin ceart, nach eil? Sin mar a tha am facal an-diugh.

Ach ma thèid sinn air ais mu cheud bliadhna gu faclair Dwelly, tha e gu math eadar-dealaichte. Seo na th' aig Dwelly fo “mòd”: 1. *Court, court of justice*, 2. *Assembly, meeting*, 3. *Petty court*, 4. *Baron baillie court*, 5. *Court at which presides the agent of landed proprietors, to adjust differences among tenants, and to take cognizance of all abuses of any portion of his employees' property*. An uair sin sìos aig àireamh 6: *Annual competition held in Gaelic literature and music etc, under the auspices of An Comunn Gàidhealach*. Nach eil sin a' dearbhadh mar a dh'atharraicheas cànan ann an ceud bliadhna?!

'S ann às an t-Seann Lochlannais a thàinig am facal *mòd*. Bha *mót* a' ciallachadh coinneamh no *cùirt* – an ìre mhath a' chiall a bh' air an fhacal ann an Gàidhlig mus d' fhuair an Comunn Gàidhealach grèim air aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug. Nuair a bha an Comunn a' taghadh ainm airson na fèise ciùil aca, bha cuid an aghaidh “mòd” leis gur e facal a bh' ann aig nach robh seann fhreumh Ceilteach. Co-dhiù, 's e “mòd” a chaidh a thaghadh, agus 's e *Mòd* a' Chomuinn a' phrìomh chiall air an fhacal an-diugh.

Ach, às dèidh dhomh sin a ràdh, tha e inntinneach mar a nochdas am facal ann an seanfhaclan. Mar eisimpleir: ***Chan ann a h-uile là a bhios mòd aig Mac an Tòisich.*** Chan ann a h-uile là a bhios mòd aig Mac an Tòisich. Tha mòd an seo a' ciallachadh “court”.

'S e a bh' ann am Mac an Tòisich fear a bha na bhàillidh do Iarla Pheairt. Bha fearann aige ann am Magh Bhàrd ann an Srath Èireann. 'S e duine cruaidh a bh' ann. Bhiodh e a' feuchainn ri aon eucoireach a chrochadh gach là a bha e a' cumail *cùirt*, airson eagal a chur air eucoirich eile, agus airson e fhèin a dhèanamh ainmeil. Is math nach robh *cùirt* – no mòd – aige a h-uile là.

Seo an seanfhacal eile a lorg mi le “mòd” ann: ***Is truimid am màl am mòd.*** Tha sin a' ciallachadh, “The rent is all the heavier because of the food-rent.” Is truimid am màl am mòd. B' e sin ciall eile air “mòd”. Bha e a' ciallachadh na dh'fheumadh màladair a thoirt don uachdaran aige ann am biadh. Bha sin a bharrachd air na dh'fheumadh e a thoirt don uachdaran ann an airgead. Bha meudachd, no luach, a' mhòid a rèir meudachd an fhearainn.

Mar eisimpleir, tràth san naoidheamh linn deug, bha aig tuathanach air Oighreachd a' Bharra Challtainn ri dusan dusan ugh agus dusan cearc a thoirt seachad gach bliadhna

mar mhòd. Bha toll ann an dreasair sa chidsin ann an taigh an uachdarain agus, nan robh na h-uighean a bha e a' faighinn beag gu leòr 's gun d' rachadh iad troimhe, cha ghabhadh an t-uachdaran riutha mar phàirt dhen mhòd.

Sin am facal *mòd*, ma-thà – co-dhiù leth-cheud bliadhna mus do thòisich Mòd a' Chomuinn, mar a tha sinn eòlach air an-diugh. Nach math, ge-tà, nach eil na seann mhòdan ann am bith tuilleadh – is gu bheil iad air an cuimhneachadh a-mhàin ann an seanfhaclan.

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Faclan na Litreach: Seann Lochlannais: *Old Norse*.

Abairtean na Litreach: seo na thathar ag ràdh: *here's what is said*; mar a dh'atharraicheas cànan: *how a language changes*; an ìre mhath a' chiall a bh' air an fhacal: *pretty much what the word meant*; airson na fèise ciùil aca: *for their music festival*; aig nach robh seann fhreumh Ceilteach: *which didn't have an old Celtic root*; 's e "mòd" a chaidh a thaghadh: *it's "mod" that was chosen*; a bha na bhàillidh do Iarla Pheairt: *who was a baillie/chamberlain to the Earl of Perth*; Magh Bhàrd ann an Srath Èireann: *Monyvaird in Strath Earn*; 's e duine cruaidh a bh' ann: *he was a hard man*; bhiodh e a' feuchainn ri aon eucoireach a chrochadh gach là: *he would try to hang one criminal every day*; airson e fhèin a dhèanamh ainmeil: *to make himself famous*; is math nach robh mòd aige: *it's as well he didn't have a court*; na dh'fheumadh màladair a thoirt don uachdaran aige: *what a rent-payer had to pay his landlord*; a rèir meudachd an fhearainn: *according to the size of the land[holding]*; Oighreachd a' Bharra Chaltainn: *Barcaldine Estate*; dusan dusan ugh: *twelve dozen eggs*; bha toll ann an dreasair sa chidsin: *there was a hole in a dresser in the kitchen*; beag gu leòr 's gun d' rachadh iad troimhe: *small enough that they would go through*; cha ghabhadh an t-uachdaran riutha: *the landlord would not accept them*; nach eil na seann mhòdan ann am bith tuilleadh: *that the old mods no longer exist*; gu bheil iad air an cuimhneachadh a-mhàin ann an seanfhaclan: *that they are only remembered in proverbs*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Is truimid am màl am mòd:** *the rent is all the heavier because of the food-rent. Truimid is the second comparative form of the adjective trom. It is formed by the adding of an –[i]d to the first comparative, truime, "heavier". I considered the "third comparative" in Litir 167 and will not cover that ground again here. There is no direct grammatical equivalent in English to the second comparative – it is not a superlative, as the superlative is represented by the article as and the first comparative (eg 's e Dòmhnall as motha). It is generally today found only in slightly archaic forms (such as in proverbs) and always in this format: is truimid e sin (it is the heavier for that); is daoirid e sin (it is the dearer because of that). However, it is still relatively common colloquially in two irregular comparatives – those of math (first comparative feàrr) and dona (first comparative miosa): eg Is fheàrrde e sin (he is the better for that); Cha mhiste tu sin (you're not the worse for that).*

Seanfhacal na Litreach: Chan ann a h-uile là a bhios mòd aig Mac an Tòisich: *it's not every day that Mackintosh holds a court.*

* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig.