

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 372. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 68 corresponds to Litir 372.

Tha leabhar iongantach air mo bheulaibh an-dràsta. Uill, chan eil sin buileach fìor. **Tha e rim thaobh.** Oir tha sgàilean a’ choimpiutair air mo bheulaibh. Ach tha am buadhair a chleachd mi mun leabhar ceart – oir tha e iongantach. Gu mì-fhortanach, chan ann leamsa a tha e. Tha e le caraid dhomh, agus tha e agam dìreach air iasad.

’S e an tiotal a th’ air *Gràmar Dùbailt: Beurla is Gàidhlig, anns a bheil Stèidhean na Dà Chainnt Mìnichte gu Soilleir*. Ann am Beurla: *A Double Grammar of English and Gaelic, in which the Principles of Both Languages are Clearly Explained*. B’ e an t-ùghdar Iain Foirbeis, Maighstir-sgoile Chille Chuimein. Chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an ochd ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a trì (1843) agus chosg e ceithir tastain.

Tha fhios nach dèanadh cuid gairdeachas mu sheann leabhar gràmair a bhith aca! Ach tha mi fhìn rudeigin measail air gràmar, feumaidh mi aideachadh. Anns an Ro-ràdh aige, tha Iain Foirbeis ag ainmeachadh briathran sgoilear Gàidhlig: “Mar as eòlaiche a chinneas sibh air maise, air milsead agus snasmhorachd na Gàidhlig, ’s ann as taitniche a bhitheas i leibh.” Agus faodar maise, milsead is snasmhorachd fhaicinn tro bhith a’ sgrùdadh a’ chànain fhèin. Chì daoine bòidhchead ann an coille. Ach chithear cuideachd bòidhchead anns na lusan a tha a’ dèanamh coille is mar a tha iad suidhichte còmhla.

Bidh daoine a’ gearain uaireannan mu na h-atharrachaidhean a thàinig air a’ Ghàidhlig anns a’ cheud gu leth bliadhna a chaidh seachad. Ach, bho bhith a’ leughadh a’ Ghràmair Dhùbailt, tha e follaiseach gu bheil mòran ann nach do dh’atharraich. Bha ainmear aige airson *noun*, buadhar airson *adjective* and *gniomhar* airson verb – an ìre mhath mar a th’ againn an-diugh. Air an làimh eile, seo faclan a bh’ aig Foirbeis: *cubadh*, an àite *litreachadh*, airson *spelling*, *pungar*, an àite *alt*, airson *article* agus *car*, an àite *tuisseal*, airson *case*.

Sin am briathrachas, no beagan dheth. Ach dè mu dheidhinn nan riaghailtean gràmair? A bheil iad sin air atharrachadh? Uill, èistibh ri seo. Thug Foirbeis eisimpleirean de “mhì-chleachdadh” an roimheir *air*. Sgrìobh e gu bheil *Tha e air pòsadh* a’ ciallachadh *he is at or on a marriage, or present at the ceremony*. Ma tha thu a’ ciallachadh *he has married* bu chòir dhut a ràdh, no a sgrìobhadh, *Tha e iar pòsadh*. Bha *iar* a’ ciallachadh “after” – mar a tha e a’ ciallachadh ann am *west*. Tha an taobh an iar air cùlaibh duine a bhios a’ coimhead a dh’ionnsaigh na h-àird an ear, far an èirich a’ ghrian.

Thug Foirbeis eisimpleir eile: *Bha Seumas air trusadh nan caorach* – *James was at the gathering of the sheep*. Agus *Bha Seumas iar trusadh nan caorach* – *James had*

gathered the sheep. Nise, tha a h-uile càil a tha sin air atharrachadh. Tha *iar* air a dhol à bith anns an t-seagh sin. 'S e *air* a chanas daoine anns a h-uile suidheachadh sin an-diugh.

Is toigh leam an earrann bheag dhen leabhar anns a bheil liosta de chlisgearan. 'S e *clisgear*, a rèir Foirbeis, “facal a nochdas mothachadh geur no gluasad grad na h-inntinn”. Rudan mar *bi falbh!*, *mo thruaighe!* agus *puth!* Agus – dà abairt dhuibh airson an Litir a thoirt gu crìch: airson *alas, alas!* – ***och is ochan nan och èire!*** Agus dhaibhsan a tha mì-riaraichte lem beatha: ***a shaoghail bhreugaich, bu tu 'n carraiche!***

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Faclan na Litreach: iongantach: *wonderful*; sgàilean: *screen*; buadhair: *wonderful*; Iain Foirbeis: *John Forbes*; Cille Chuimein: *Fort Augustus*; tastan: *shilling*; ro-ràdh: *foreword*; briathrachas: *vocabulary*; mì-chleachdadh: *misuse*; clisgear: *interjection*.

Abairtean na Litreach: air mo bheulaibh: *in front of me*; chan ann leamsa a tha e: *it is not mine*; air iasad: *on loan*; chaidh fhoillseachadh: *it was published*; nach dèanadh cuid gàirdeachas: *some wouldn't express pleasure*; mar as eòlaiche a chinneas sibh air maise, air milsead agus snasmhorachd: *the more knowledgeable you grow about the beauty, sweetness and elegance*; 's ann as taitniche a bhitheas i leibh: *the more attractive it [fem] will be to you*; chithear bòidhchead anns na lusan a tha a' dèanamh coille: *beauty is [can be] seen in the plants which make a forest*; a' gearain uaireannan mu na h-atharrachaidhean: *sometimes complaining about the changes*; gu bheil mòran ann nach do dh'atharraich: *that there is much that has not changed*; an ìre mhath mar a th' againn an-diugh: *pretty much as we have today*; èistibh ri seo: *listen [pl.] to this*; bu chòir dhut a ràdh: *you should say*; a dh'ionnsaigh na h-àird an ear: *towards the east*; far an èirich a' ghrian: *there where the sun rises*; anns an t-seagh sin: *in that sense*; facal a nochdas mothachadh geur no gluasad grad na h-inntinn: *a word which demonstrates a quick feeling or a sudden emotion*; bi falbh!: *begone!*; mo thruaighe!: *alack!*; puth!: *pshaw!*; dhaibhsan a tha mì-riaraichte lem beatha: *for those who are dissatisfied with their lives*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: ***tha e rim thaobh***: *it is next to me*. Rim thaobh is a contracted form of ri mo thaobh (at my side). GOC II has confirmed that it is quite acceptable for prepositional phrases to be written in this way (although the full form is obviously better in official reports and the like). Here are some examples so you can see how the contraction works – and remember that it is always the possessive article contained within the phrase (mo, do a etc) which determines the lenition or non-lenition of the noun. Fod chasan (under your [sing.] feet); for casan (under our feet); fur casan (under your [pl.] feet); fon casan (under their feet). Rid thaobh (beside you); rin taobh (beside them). Led cead (with your [sing.] permission); ler cead (with our permission); lur cead (with your [pl.] permission); len cead (with their permission).

Gnàthsan-cainnt na Litreach: ***och is ochan nan och èire!***: *alas! pity me!*; ***a shaoghail bhreugaich, bu tu 'n carraiche!***: *o deceitful world, you are a cheat!*

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