

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 roddy.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 430. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 126 corresponds to Litir 430.

*Seo am fear a bhris an sabhal
Seo am fear a ghoid an t-arbhar
Seo am fear a sheas ag amharc
Seo am fear a theich air falbh
Seo am fear a dh’innis e, a dh’innis e, a dh’innis e.*

“Dè fon ghrèin air a bheil Ruairidh a-mach an t-seachdain seo?”, bidh sibh a’ faighneachd. Uill, innsidh mi dhuibh nas fhaide dhen Litir. Seo an rann a-rithist:

*Seo am fear a bhris an sabhal
Seo am fear a ghoid an t-arbhar
Seo am fear a sheas ag amharc
Seo am fear a theich air falbh
Seo am fear a dh’innis e, a dh’innis e, a dh’innis e.*

Bha còig loidhnichean ann. Bidh am fiosrachadh sin na chuideachadh dhuibh. Co-dhiù, cha chan mi an còrr air sin airson mionaid no dhà.

Uaireannan bidh daoine a’ faighneachd dhìom mu gheamannan a chluicheadh clann aig an robh Gàidhlig. Agus dh’fhaighnich cuideigin dhìom o chionn beagan mhìosan gu dè chanadh iad nuair a bha iad a’ cluich gèam, agus iad ag iarraidh a bhith saor bho riaghailtean a’ ghèam airson mionaid no dhà.

Far an do chuir mise seachad pàirt de m’ òige – ann am Broughty Ferry faisg air Dùn Deagh, ’s e “chaps” a chanadh a’ chlann ann am Beurla. Nam biodh tu a’ cluich gèam agus tu ag iarraidh fois airson tiotan, bhiodh tu a’ stad no a’ dol gu àite sònraichte. Chuireadh tu do làmh suas agus chanadh tu “chaps” agus cha chuireadh duine dragh ort. Ri linn mo phàrantan ann an Glaschu, ’s e “keys” a chanadh iad. Dh’obraich e anns an aon dòigh ri “chaps”.

Chan eil mi cinnteach dè dìreach a chanadh clann ann an diofar phàirtean dhen Ghàidhealtachd, agus bu mhath leam cluinntinn bho dhuine sam bith aig a bheil cuimhne air a leithid. ’S fhada o nach robh geamannan mar sin air an cluich. Agus an fheadhainn às na h-eileanan aig a bheil cuimhne, gu tric bhiodh iad a’ cluich nan geamannan aca le clann bho na bailtean mòra a bh’ air a dhol a dh’fhuireach anns na h-eileanan **tùde a’ chogaidh**. ’S dòcha nach robh na geamannan buileach cho Gàidhealach bho sin a-mach.

Anns an fhìor sheann aimsir, ge-tà, bhathar a’ cleachdadh na h-abairt *deis-dè*. Deis-dè. A rèir Dwelly, tha e a’ ciallachadh “girth, sanctuary, place of safety, spot in game ‘tig’ where the player within is secure and cannot be touched”. Tha e coltach gu bheil *deis-dè* a’ seasamh airson

“aig làimh dheis Dhè” – a’ ciallachadh “*at God’s right hand*”. Cha bhiodh àite na bu shàbhailte na sin! Bhiodh clann ag èigheachd “deis-dè” nuair a bha iad ag iarraidh a bhith a-mach às a’ ghèam.

Agus bhiodh daoine a’ cleachdadh na h-abairt ann an dòigh eile cuideachd. Chanadh iad rudan mar, “Thachair e mus robh cothrom agad ‘deis-dè’ a ràdh!”, a’ ciallachadh gun do thachair e ann am fìor chabhaig. Ann am Beurla bhiodh daoine ag ràdh mun aon seòrsa rud, “*It happened before you could say ‘Jack Robinson’!*”

Nise, air ais do na còig “fir”. ’S e rann a th’ ann a bhiodh pàrantan a’ gabhail ri leanaban, a’ comharrachadh an corragan, tè às dèidh a chèile:

Seo am fear a bhris an sabhal

Seo am fear a ghoid an t-arbhar

Seo am fear a sheas ag amharc

Seo am fear a theich air falbh

Seo am fear a dh’innis e, a dh’innis e, a dh’innis e.

Uill, sin agaibh e bhuamsa an t-seachdain seo. Tha mi a’ dol a theicheadh ann an cabhaig – gu dearbh, mus bi ùine agaibh “deis-dè” a ràdh...

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Faclan na Litreach: Dùn Deagh: *Dundee*; cuimhne: *memory*; bailtean mòra: *cities*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Dè fon ghrèin air a bheil Ruairidh a-mach?: *what on Earth is Ruairidh on about?*; bidh am fiosrachadh sin na chuideachadh dhuibh: *that information will be of use to you*; cha chan mi an còrr: *I won’t say any more*; nam biodh tu a’ cluich gèam agus tu ag iarraidh fois airson tiotan: *if you were playing a game and you wanted a break for a moment*; ri linn mo phàrantan: *in my parents’ day*; ’s fhada o nach robh geamannan mar sin air an cluich: *it’s a long time since games like that were played*; bho sin a-mach: *from that time forwards*; anns an fhìor sheann aimsir: *in very olden times*; cha bhiodh àite na bu shàbhailte na sin: *there would be no place safer than that*; gun do thachair e ann am fìor chabhaig: *that it happened in a real hurry*; ’s e rann a th’ ann a bhiodh pàrantan a’ gabhail ri leanaban: *it’s a rhyme that parents would recite to babies/young children*; ann an cabhaig: *in a hurry*; mus bi ùine agaibh “deis-dè” a ràdh: *before you can say ‘Jack Robinson’*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Seo am fear a bhris an sabhal, seo am fear a ghoid an t-arbhar, seo am fear a sheas ag amharc, seo am fear a theich air falbh, seo am fear a dh’innis e, a dh’innis e, a dh’innis e. *To use this rhyme with your children, make sure you start at the thumb and work towards the little finger. There is a clear commonality here with English/Scots rhymes – with only the final line differing in substance; the rhymes suggest that Gaelic is in this instance not the language of origin: “This is the man that broke the barn, this is the man that stole the corn, this is the man that stood and saw, this is the man that ran awa’, this is the man that paid for a’.” This is supported by a version recorded in Arran in which the last line runs: Seo an tè bheag a b’ fheudar dhi a phàigheadh air fad (the last line of the version in the Litir means “this is the man that told it..”) Note that the Arran version has the fingers feminine, as is “standard”, although, of course, they can represent “men” who are masculine – so either fear or tè will do.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **tìde a’ chogaidh:** *at the time of the (Second World) war. Properly there should be a preposition before tìde (eg ri) but in speech it is regularly missed out.*

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