

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 501. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 197 corresponds to Litir 501.

An aithne dhuibh am facal *cutach*? Tha Dwelly a’ toirt seo dhuinn: *Cutach: short, diminutive, docked, shortened, bob-tailed, curtailed, concise*. Uaireannan bithear ga chluinntinn ann am far-ainm, leithid *Alasdair Cutach – short Alexander*.

Leugh mi am facal an latha eile co-cheangailte ri ar cànan – *Gàidhlig chutach*. Thuir cuideigin mun dualchainnt aca – *’S e Gàidhlig chutach a th’ againn*. Saoil dè bha e a’ ciallachadh?

Uill, a rèir choltais, bha e a’ ciallachadh *clipped Gaelic* – Gàidhlig anns am biodh fuaimreagan aig deireadh fhaclan, air nach eil cuideam ann an cainnt, a’ falbh às a’ chainnt uile-gu-lèir. Dè an dualchainnt a bh’ ann, saoil? Uill, bha i air tìr-mòr ann am badeigin. Ma chluinneas sibh daoine, can, à taobh an ear Chataibh a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig, canaidh iad *bail* airson *baile*, agus *duin* airson *duine*. Tha an “e” aig an deireadh a’ falbh.

Nise, a thaobh an fhacail *duine*, chaidh a chlàradh mar *duin* ann an suirbhidh nàiseanta ann an Siorrachd Obar Dheathain, Siorrachd Narann, Ros an Ear is Gallaibh, agus anns a’ chuid mhòir de Shiorrachdan Pheairt is Chataibh, a bharrachd air taobh sear Siorrachd Inbhir Nis.

Dh’fhaodamaid tuairisgeul a dhèanamh air mòran de na dualchainntean sin mar “fheadhainn chutach”, ’s dòcha. Ach bha an neach a chaidh a chlàradh a’ bruidhinn air dualchainnt Siorrachd Obar Dheathain. Tha e mì-fhortanach nach eil comas againn a leithid de dhualchainnt a chluinntinn is a chlàradh a-nise.

Bha mi a’ leughadh stòiridh beag ann an dualchainnt Obar Dheathain ann an cruinneachadh air a bheil *Caindel Alban – Fèill-sgrìobhainn do Dhòmhnall E Meek*, a chaidh fhoillseachadh le Oilthigh Obar Dheathain mar iris ceithir air fhichead (XXIV) de *Scottish Gaelic Studies*. Bha an stòiridh air a chlàradh air pàipear le Francis Diack ann am Bràigh Mhàrr anns na ficheadan dhen fhicheadamh linn (1920s). Chaidh a sgrùdadh leis an sgoilear, Seumas Grand.

Dè rudan eile a chì sinn ann an Gàidhlig Siorrachd Obar Dheathain? Seo agaibh rud no dhà. An toiseach, eisimpleir eile de chutadh: bhathar a’ leigeil às an *-adh* aig deireadh fhaclan; mar eisimpleir chanadh iad *tuill* airson *tuilleadh*. An àite *dol* chanadh iad *dul*. Tha sin cumanta air tìr-mòr. Bhiodh an *nn* air fhuaimneachadh mar *ng* ann am Beurla – mar eisimpleir, chanadh iad “shing” airson a’ *seinn* agus “s vating” airson *sa mhadainn*. Agus – rud eile a tha cumanta air tìr-mòr – chanadh iad “aki” airson *agaibh*, “shi” airson *sibh* agus “mu choinnyì” airson *mu choinneimh*.

’S dòcha gur e a’ phuing as inntinniche a thog Seumas Grand mun ghnothach cho coltach ’s a bha Gàidhlig Siorrachd Obar Dheathain agus dualchainnt Shrath Spè – air a

bheil Seumas gu math eòlach oir buinidh e do Rat Mhurchais. Shaoileadh tu, **air a' chiad shealladh**, gum biodh am Monadh Ruadh na chnap-starra anns an t-seann aimsir do chunbhalachd cainnt eadar an dà sgìre sin.

Tha Seumas a' cur air adhart dà smuain a thaobh sin. Cha robh na Gàidheil anns an t-seann aimsir a' coimhead air na beanntan sin mar chnap-starra dhaibh. Gu dearbh, bha tòrr gluasaid ann eadar Srath Spè is Bràigh Mhàrr – airson malairt agus gnothaichean sòisealta. Bha gu leòr de dhaoine a' coiseachd tron Làirig Ghrù, mar eisimpleir.

A bharrachd air sin, nuair a tha sinn a' coimhead air dualchainntean Gàidhlig, bu chòir dhuinn a bhith mothachail do dh'eachdraidh nam fineachan. Ri linn nam fineachan bha Bràigh Mhàrr fo smachd Clann 'ic Fhearchair. Agus dh'èirich iadsan bho na Seathaich ann an Rat Mhurchais. Mar sin, bha ceangal eachdraidheil ann eadar na daoine air gach taobh dhen Mhonadh Ruadh.

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Faclan na Litreach: suirbhidh: *survey*; Siorrachd Obar Dheathain: *Aberdeenshire*; Siorrachd Narann: *Nairnshire*; dualchainnt: *dialect*; Bràigh Mhàrr: *Braemar*.

Abairtean na Litreach: An aithne dhuibh?: *do you know/recognise?*; uaireannan bithear ga chluinntinn ann am far-ainm: *sometimes it's heard in a nickname*; Gàidhlig chutach: *clipped Gaelic*; saoil dè bha e a' ciallachadh?: *what do you think he was meaning?*; fuaimreagan aig deireadh fhaclan: *vowels at the end of words*; air nach eil cuideam ann an cainnt: *which are not stressed in speech*; a' falbh às a' chainnt uile-gu-lèir: *are omitted from speech entirely*; air tìr-mòr ann am badeigin: *on the mainland somewhere*; à taobh an ear Chataibh: *from east Sutherland*; dh'fhaodamaid tuairisgeul a dhèanamh air: *we could describe*; a chaidh fhoillseachadh le Oilthigh Obar Dheathain: *which was published by Aberdeen University*; chanadh iad: *they would say*; a' phuig as inntinniche: *the most interesting point*; cho coltach 's a bha X agus Y: *how similar X and Y were*; oir buinidh e do Rat Mhurchais: *because he belongs to Rothiemurchus*; gum biodh am Monadh Ruadh na chnap-starra anns an t-seann aimsir: *that the Cairngorms would have been a barrier in the old days*; cunbhalachd cainnt: *commonality of speech*; tòrr gluasaid: *much movement*; bu chòir dhuinn a bhith mothachail do dh'eachdraidh nam fineachan: *we should be cognisant of the history of the clans*; fo smachd Clann 'ic Fhearchair: *under the control of the Farquharsons*; dh'èirich iadsan bho na Seathaich: *they arose from the Shaws*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *The Litir this week concerns a story transcribed by Francis Diack (1867-1939), a librarian at Aberdeen University who learned Gaelic in the Braemar area when Aberdeenshire Gaelic was still a living community tongue. Diack spent much time collecting information on Gaelic in the eastern Highlands, including Banffshire and Aberdeenshire. The article discussed in the Litir concerns a story he collected in the Braemar area and which he transcribed phonetically, giving an indication of how words were pronounced in that dialect. The similarities between the Gaelic of Strathspey and that of Braemar, despite Scotland's highest mountain range, the Cairngorms (Am Monadh Ruadh) lying between the two areas, might, at first sight, be a little surprising. Clan links, and the willingness of people to travel through the mountain passes in olden times, bringing about regular social intercourse, may provide an explanation.*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: Shaoileadh tu, **air a' chiad shealladh**: *you'd think, at [lit. on the] first sight.*

** Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA*