

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.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 502. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 198 corresponds to Litir 502.

A bheil fios agaibh dè tha am **facal fillte** “muir-thìreach” a’ ciallachadh? Muir-thìreach. Tha mi ga chleachdadh an-diugh mar ainmear, no *noun*. Ach nochd e anns an Litir dà bhliadhna air ais ann an riochd buadhair, no *adjective*.

Uill, ma dh’aithnicheas sibh gu bheil e air a dhèanamh dhen dà fhacal *muir* agus *tìr*, bidh e furasta gu leòr. Muir-thìreach – *something that lives both in the sea and on the land*. Nise, nuair a chleachd mi mu dheireadh e, bha mi a’ dèanamh tuairisgeul air an ròn.

Bha mi a’ dèanamh iomradh air argamaid eadar fear Pròstanach agus fear Caitligeach anns na h-Eileanan an Iar ri linn Mhartainn MhicIlleMhàrtainn. Bha na Caitligich ag ithe feòil an ròn aig àm a’ Charghais, no *Lent*. Bha am Pròstanach ag ràdh gun robhar a’ briseadh riaghailtean na h-Eaglaise Caitligich oir chan e ròn iasg. Thuirt an Caitligeach gun robh an ròn ag ithe iasg, gun robh e muir-thìreach agus gun robh e a’ dèanamh braidhmean – rud nach b’ urrainn iasg a dhèanamh!

Uill, chan urrainn dhomh dearbhadh a bheil sin fìor mu èisg ach co-dhiù, faodar a ràdh gu bheil ròn muir-thìreach. Ge-tà, mar ainmear tha muir-thìreach a’ ciallachadh “*amphibian*”. Agus, leis a’ chiall sin air an fhacal, chan e ròn muir-thìreach. ’S e ròn mamail.

Thàinig mi tarsainn air an fhacal *muir-thìreach* air an eadar-lìon an latha eile. Bha mi a’ coimhead air làrach-lìn ùr a chaidh a chruthachadh le Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba. Tha mòran eòlach air a’ bhuidhinn fo ainm ann am Beurla – *Scottish Natural Heritage* no SNH. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ air an làraich ùir Faclan Nàdair SNH.

Gheibhear lorg air aig www.snh.org.uk/gaelic/dictionary.

’S e an rud a tha sònraichte math mu fhaclairian air an eadar-lìon gun gabh rudan a lorg gu luath le bhith a’ cur lorgair an sàs. Chuir mi am facal Beurla *amphibian* don lorgair, bhrùth mi am putan agus fhuair mi *muir-thìreach*.

Nise, ma tha sibh gu math eòlach air nàdar, ’s dòcha gun can sibh – mmm – ’s e muir-thìreach a th’ anns an losgann ach, gu dearbh, cha bhi losgann sam bith a’ dol faisg air a’ mhuir. Dhèanadh an salann cron air. Bidh e a’ dol eadar uisge – sin fìor-uisge – agus tìr. Saoil nach e “uisge-thìreach” a bu chòir a bhith againn air *amphibian*, seach muir-thìreach?

Uill, dh’fhaodamaid an aon seòrsa gearain a dhèanamh mun fhacal *amphibian* ann am Beurla. Tha e a’ tighinn bho fhreumhaichean Greugach a tha a’ ciallachadh

“beatha dhùbailte” no *double life*. Tha sin ceart gu leòr, ach chan eil e a’ dèanamh iomradh air uisge is tìr.

Chan e faclair SNH an aon fhear ùr a nochd air an eadar-lìon o chionn ghoirid. Nochd an seann fhaclair aig Dwelly mar ghoireas eadar-lìn cuideachd – agus innsidh mi tuilleadh mu dheidhinn sin an ath-sheachdain. Co-dhiù, chaidh mi do làrach Dwelly, chuir mi am facal *amphibious* a-steach don lorgair, agus bhrùth mi am putan. Ach cha do nochd *muir-thìreach* idir.

Ri linn Dwelly – agus cuimhnichibh gu bheil am faclair sin ceud bliadhna a dh’aois – bhathar a’ cleachdadh airson *amphibious* am facal fillte *dà-bheathach*. *Dà-bheathach*. *Double life*. Coltach ris a’ Bheurla.

Dè chanamaid, ma-thà, ann an Gàidhlig, airson *amphibious vehicle*? Chanainn nach biodh *carbad dà-bheathach* cho ciallach ri *carbad muir-thìreach*. Ach dè mu dheidhinn *amphibiousness*? *Muir-thìreachas*? Uill, fàgaidh mi sin do latha eile.

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Faclan na Litreach: muir-thìreach: *amphibian, amphibious*; ròn: *seal*; argamaid: *argument*; Pròstanach: *Protestant*; Caitligeach: *Catholic*; na h-Eileanan an Iar: *the Western Isles*; braidhmean: *breaking of wind (pl.)*; mamail: *mammal*; eadar-lìon: *internet*; làrach-lìn: *website*; iolra: *plural*; dà-bheathach: *amphibian, amphibious*;

Abairtean na Litreach: ann an riochd buadhair: *in the form of an adjective*; ma dh’ aithnicheas sibh: *if you recognise*; a’ dèanamh tuairisgeul air: *describing*; ri linn Mhartainn MhicIlleMhàrtainn: *at the time of Martin Martin*; ag ithe feòil an ròn aig àm a’ Charghais: *eating seal meat during Lent*; gun robhar a’ briseadh riaghailtean: *that rules were being broken*; chan e ròn iasg: *a seal is not a fish*; rud nach b’ urrainn iasg a dhèanamh: *something a fish couldn’t do*; faodar a ràdh: *it can be said*; fo ainm ann am Beurla: *under its English name*; gun gabh rudan a lorg gu luath: *that things can be found quickly*; le bhith a’ cur lorgair an sàs: *by using a search engine*; bhrùth mi am putan: *I pressed the button*; ’s e muir-thìreach a th’ anns an losgann: *the frog is an amphibian*; dhèanadh an salann cron air: *the salt would harm it*; dh’fhaodamaid an aon seòrsa gearain a dhèanamh: *we could make the same sort of complaint*; goireas eadar-lìn: *internet facility*; dè chanamaid airson?: *what would we say for?*

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *facal fillte*: compound word. Faclan fillte (often ainmearan fillte or compound nouns) are relatively common in Gaelic. The noun *muir-thìreach* is a good example. Can you decline it satisfactorily according to case, with the article? Here it is: am *muir-thìreach* (nom. sing.), leis a’ *mhuir-thìreach* (dat. sing.), ceann a’ *mhuir-thìrich* (gen. sing.), na *muir-thìrich* (nom. pl.), leis na *muir-thìrich* (dat. pl.), cinn nam *muir-thìreach* (gen. pl.) You’ll see that it works very similarly to a simple noun like *bodach* which slenderises in the nominative plural (*bodaich*). If you prefer *dà-bheathach* for *amphibian*, it would work in the same way. I’ve ignored the vocative forms but if you really want to address your pet frog(s) as “*amphibian(s)!*” I guess you’d say “a *mhuir-thìrich!*” for one and “a *mhuir-thìreacha!*” for a group. If you genuinely find those vocatives useful in your daily life, perhaps you should get out a bit more!

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: *Gheibhear lorg air*: it will be found (it can be found).

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