

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 519. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 215 corresponds to Litir 519.

Thàinig leabhar beag a-mach o chionn glè ghoirid a tha a’ toirt fiosrachadh seachad air dualchainnt air a’ Ghàidhealtachd a tha an ìre mhath air a dhol à bith. Tha dìreach dithis air fhàgail a tha fileanta innte. Agus dè an dualchainnt a th’ ann? A bheil mi a-mach air dualchainnt Ghàidhlig ann am badeigin air tìr-mòr?

Uill, gu h-inntinneach, chan eil mi a’ bruidhinn air a’ Ghàidhlig idir. Tha mi a-mach air dualchainnt na h-Albais a bhuineas do bhaile beag Chrombaidh anns an Eilean Dubh. Canar “Dualchainnt Iasgairean Chrombaidh” rithe. Ged a tha beagan dhen chainnt sin aig feadhainn anns a’ bhaile fhathast, chan eil ach dithis air fhàgail a tha fileanta. Is iad sin na bràithrean Bobby agus Gordon Hogg.

Tha Beurla de sheòrs’ air choreigin air a bhith ann an grunn bhailtean san Eilean Dubh fad ceudan bhliadhnaichean. Ged a bha iad air an cuairteachadh le Gàidhlig, bha Beurla Ghallta air a labhairt ann an Abhach, a’ Chananaich, Ros Mhaircnidh agus Cromba. Agus cha robh an dualchainnt anns gach baile buileach co-ionann ris an tè san ath bhaile.

Chan eil fios le cinnt cuin a nochd a’ chainnt sin an toiseach anns an Eilean Dubh oir tha na h-ainmean-àite ag innse dhuinn gun robh a’ Ghàidhlig ann mus robh a’ Bheurla ann. Ach ’s urrainn do na Hoggs an sinnsireachd a dhearbhadh ann an Cromba air ais gu sia ceud deug, naochad ’s a h-ochd (1698) co-dhiù. Agus ’s iongantach mura robh luchd na Beurla ann nuair a chaidh inbhe Baile Rìoghail a bhuileachadh air Cromba anns an treas linn deug.

Thathar ag ràdh gun robh uaireigin trì dualchainntean eadar-dhealaichte de dh’Albais ann an sgìre Chrombaidh – dualchainnt nan iasgairean, dualchainnt muinntir a’ bhaile agus cainnt nan tuathanach. Bhuineadh na tuathanaich don Ghàidhealtachd agus bha Gàidhlig aca no aig an sinnsirean. Cha leigeadh tu leas dhol fada a-mach à Cromba airson Gàidhlig a chluinntinn agus, anns an ochdamh linn deug, chaidh mòran Ghàidheal a-steach don bhaile airson obair fhaighinn. Chaidh eaglais shònraichte a thogail dhaibh – tè ris an canar **an Caibeal Gàidhlig**. Gu mì-fhortanach tha an togalach an-diugh ann am fìor dhroch staid.

Bha buinteanas aig muinntir a’ bhaile – an fheadhainn a bha an sàs ann am malairt no a bha nam maraichean – don Ghàidhealtachd agus do Mhoireibh. Bha

cainnt eadar-dhealaichte acasan bho na tuathanaich is na h-iasgairean. Ach 's e cainnt nan iasgairean a mhair chun an latha an-diugh.

Chan eil fios le cinnt cò às a thàinig sinnsirean nan iasgairean. Ach, a rèir beul-aithris ionadail, thàinig iad à timcheall Linne Foirthe nuair a bha Seumas IV **air an rìgh-chathair** – aig deireadh a' chòigeamh no toiseach an t-siathamh linn deug. Agus thathar dhen bheachd gun robh sinnsirean aca às an Òlaind no à Lochlann.

Ciamar a tha dualchainnt nan iasgairean eadar-dhealaichte bho dhualchainntean eile? Uill, gu tric, bidh “h” air a cur ann, no air a leigeil às, an aghaidh chleachdaidhean “àbhaisteach”. Canar “oos” airson *hoose* agus “am” airson *ham*; agus canar “haypel” airson *apple* agus “heggs” airson *eggs*.

Agus airson *Ciamar a tha thu?*, canaidh iad *Oo thee keepan?* Thathar a' cleachdadh – chun an latha an-diugh – faclan sean-fhasanta mar *thou*, *thee* agus *thy*. Thathar ag ràdh gur e sin buaidh a' Bhìobaill orra, oir bha iad gu math cràbhach.

Agus, leis gun robh iad air an cuairteachadh leis a' Ghàidhlig fad ceudan bhliadhnaichean, saoil a bheil faclan aca a bhuineas don Ghàidhlig bho thùs? Bheir sinn sùil air sin an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: dualchainnt: *dialect*; Albais: *Scots Language*; Cromba, Baile Chrombaidh: *Cromarty*; cràbhach: *pious, religious*.

Abairtean na Litreach: tha dìreach dithis air fhàgail: *there are only two people left*; ann am badeigin air tìr-mòr: *in some place on the mainland*; de sheòrs' air choreigin: *of some sort*; ann an grunn bhailtean san Eilean Dubh: *in several villages on the Black Isle*; air an cuairteachadh le Gàidhlig: *surrounded by Gaelic*; Beurla Ghallta air a labhairt ann an Abhach, a' Chananaich, Ros Mhaircnidh agus Cromba: *a Scots dialect was spoken in Avoch, Fortrose, Rosemarkie and Cromarty*; buileach co-ionann ris an tè san ath bhaile: *identical to the one in the next village*; 's urrainn do na Hoggs an sinnsireachd a dhearbhadh: *the Hoggs can verify their ancestry*; 's iongantach mura robh luchd na Beurla ann nuair a chaidh inbhe Baile Rìoghail a bhuileachadh air X: *it's likely there were English speakers there when X was granted the status of a Royal Burgh*; cha leigeadh tu leas dhol fada a-mach à: *you wouldn't need to go far out of*; no a bha nam maraichean: *or who were seamen*; a mhair chun an latha an-diugh: *which survived to the present day*; à timcheall Linne Foirthe: *from around the Firth of Forth*; às an Òlaind no à Lochlann: *from Holland or Scandinavia*; Canar “X” airson Y: *“X” is said for Y*; buaidh a' Bhìobaill: *the influence of the Bible*; fad ceudan bhliadhnaichean: *for hundreds of years*; a bhuineas don Ghàidhlig bho thùs: *which originally belong to Gaelic*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: an Caibeal Gàidhlig. *The Gaelic Chapel. To be honest, I've derived my Gaelic name for the substantial ruined church on the hill above the old part of Cromarty from the common English term “Gaelic Chapel”,*

even though I harbour doubts that the Gaelic speakers in Cromarty would have referred to it as a “chapel”. Two terms are used in Gaelic for “chapel” – caibeal (derived from the Latin capella) and seipeal, possibly derived from Old French chapele, through Middle English. I suspect the Gaels might simply have referred to their Cromarty church as an “eaglais” but if any reader has information on this, I’d be pleased to hear from them. The “chapel” was built in 1783 by the local landowner, George Ross, and is now in a poor state of repair.

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: air an rìgh-chathair: on the throne.

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