

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Tòmas Garnett (1)

*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.maclea@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 666. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 362 corresponds to Litir 666.*

Nuair a bha mi a’ dèanamh rannsachadh airson leabhar beag a dh’fhoillsich mi air ainmean-àite is dualchas Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis, thàinig mi tarsainn air na sgrìobhaidhean aig Tòmas Garnett. Bha Garnett air a’ Ghàidhealtachd dà bhliadhna ro dheireadh an ochdamh linn deug, agus sgrìobh e leabhar mu dheidhinn a thurais air an robh *Observations on a Tour Through the Highlands and Part of the Western Isles of Scotland*.

Bha mi airson faighinn a-mach na chuala e fhèin de Ghàidhlig ann an Inbhir Nis. Sgrìobh e: *English and Gaelic are spoken here promiscuously, though the language of the country people is Gaelic; the English is spoken with great purity, both with respect to pronunciation and grammar.* Bha e ag ràdh gur e a bu choireach gun robh an cuid Beurla cho math – nach robh i na cànan màthaireil dhaibh, gun robh saighdearan Chrombail air buaidh a thoirt air cainnt an àite, agus gun robh glè bheag de chonaltradh ann eadar Inbhir Nis agus na sgìrean far an robh a’ Bheurla Ghallta ga bruidhinn.

’S dòcha gun cuireadh cuid teagamh air na co-dhùnidhean aige, ach chuir an cunntas aige ris an argamaid a bha mi a’ dèanamh gun robh Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn gu mòr ann an Inbhir Nis, eadhon aig deireadh an ochdamh linn deug. Bha feadhainn a’ cumail a-mach nach robh Gàidhlig riamh air a bruidhinn ann an Inbhir Nis!

Ach carson a bha mi a’ smaoinichadh air Tòmas Garnett? Uill, a chionn ’s gun do dh’fhoillsich e cunntasan dhen dearbh rud air an robh mi a’ bruidhinn an t-seachdain sa chaidh – *seiches*. Bha aon chunntas air a dhèanamh anns an t-Sultain, seachd ceud deug, ochdad ’s a ceithir (1784) mun Cheannmhor aig ceann an ear Loch Tatha. ’S e am ministear anns a’ Cheannmhor a rinn an cunntas. Bha an gluasad-uisge cho mòr ’s gun do dh’fhàg e am bàgh anns a’ Cheannmhor tioram **suas ri** ceud slat a-mach bhon chladach mus do thill an t-uisge a-rithist le neart.

Leis gu bheil mi a-mach air Tòmas Garnett, bu mhath leam sùil a thoirt air an duine agus air na sgrìobh e mun Ghàidhealtachd. Rugadh e ann an seachd ceud deug, seasgad ’s a sia (1766) ann am Westmoreland ann an Sasainn. Fhuair e cothrom ionnsachadh bhon lighiche agus fear-matamataig ainmeil, John Dawson. Bha e gu math dìcheallach agus tha e coltach nach robh beatha shòisealta aige idir.

Cheumnaich e mar dhotair ann an seachd ceud deug, ochdad ’s a h-ochd (1788). Cha do dh’obraich e a-mhàin mar lighiche, ge-tà. Bha e cuideachd a’ dèanamh rannsachadh saidheansail air uisge mèinneir agus eòlas aimsire.

Phòs e ann an seachd ceud deug, naochad 's a còig (1795). Bha e air a chur roimhe eilthireachd a dhèanamh a dh'Ameireagaidh. Nuair a bha e ann an Liverpool, feuch na planaichean sin adhartachadh, fhuair e cuireadh òraidean a dhèanamh air feallsanachd nàdarrach. Dh'atharraich sin a bheatha. Cha deach e **a-null thairis**.

An àite sin, fhuair e obair mar àrd-ollamh ann an Ionad MhicAnndrais ann an Glaschu. 'S ann nuair a bha e ann an Glaschu a roghnaich e fhèin is a charaid, an neach-ealain W H Watts, cuairt a ghabhail air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air a' chuairt sin an-ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** màthaireil: *mother (adjective)*; conaltradh: *communication*; dìcheallach: *conscientious*; cheumnaich: *graduated*; roghnaich: *chose*; neach-ealain: *artist*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** a dh'fhoillsich mi: *that I published*; thàinig mi tarsainn air na sgrìobhaidhean aig: *I came across the writings of*; ro dheireadh an ochdamh linn deug: *before the end of the eighteenth century*; na chuala e fhèin de: *what he himself heard of*; gur e a bu choireach gun robh an cuid Beurla cho math: *that what was responsible for their English being so good*; gun robh saighdearan Chrombail air buaidh a thoirt air cainnt an àite: *that Cromwell's soldiers had affected the speech of the place*; far an robh a' Bheurla Ghallta ga bruidhinn: *where Scots/the Lowland speech was spoken*; gun cuireadh cuid teagamh air: *that some would doubt*; cunntasan dhen dearbh rud air an robh mi a' bruidhinn: *accounts of the very thing I was talking about*; mun Cheannmhor aig ceann an ear Loch Tatha: *about Kenmore at the eastern end of Loch Tay*; mus do thill an t-uisge a-rithist le neart: *before the water returned again with force*; cothrom ionnsachadh bhon lighiche agus fear-matamataig ainmeil: *an opportunity to learn from the famous physician and mathematician*; rannsachadh saidheansail air uisge mèinneir agus eòlas aimsire: *scientific research on mineral water and meteorology*; air a chur roimhe eilthireachd a dhèanamh: *had decided to emigrate*; feuch na planaichean sin adhartachadh: *in an attempt to advance the plans*; fhuair e cuireadh òraidean a dhèanamh: *he received an invitation to give lectures*; mar àrd-ollamh ann an Ionad MhicAnndrais: *as a professor in Anderson's Institution*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** suas ri ceud slat a-mach bhon chladach: *up to a hundred yards out from the shore*. Suas ri is a good translation of the English "up to" meaning "up to a number or measure". Here are some other examples: bha suas ri dusan neach a' feitheamh ris (*there were up to a dozen people waiting for him*); chaill mi suas ri ochd ceud not le bhith a' cur geall (*I lost up to eight hundred pounds by gambling*). But note the use of suas gu in the following examples, where there is an actual increase of the number under consideration: chaidh an àireamh chluicheadairean ann an sgioba suas gu dusan (*the number of players in a team went up to twelve*); tha na th' ann de mhairbh air a dhol suas gu fichead (*the number of dead has gone up to twenty*).

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Cha deach e **a-null thairis**: *he didn't go overseas (expression used with motion)*.

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