

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Gobhair agus a' Chraobh-theaghlaich

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 679. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 375 corresponds to Litir 679.

O chionn dà bhliadhna gu leth, ann an Litrichean còig ceud, trithead 's a h-ochd (538) agus còig ceud, trithead 's a naoi (539), thug mi sùil air seanfhaclan co-cheangailte ri gobhair – no goibhrean, no goibhricean mas e sin as fheàrr leibh. Uill, lorg mi fear eile o chionn ghoirid, agus seo e: **Mas dubh, mas odhar, mas donn, is toigh leis a' ghobhair a meann.**

Tha gobhair gu math sòisealta. Tha iad a' cumail gu dlùth ri chèile. Chan eil e gu diofar dè an coltas a th' air meann no àl a' mhinn, bidh an t-seann fheadhainn measail orra. Chan eil e gu diofar dè an dath a th' air meann, bidh a mhàthair ga thomhas mar brèagha. Nach eil sin fìor mu dhaoine cuideachd? Mas dubh, mas odhar, mas donn, is toigh leis a' ghobhair a meann.

Anns an leabhar aige *In The Shadow of Cairngorm*, tha an t-Oll. Urr. Uilleam Fearsithe ag ràdh gum biodh teaghlaichean de ghobhair gan rangachadh fhèin anns a' bhuaile airson cadal air an oidhche. Gu h-àrd, bhiodh a' mhàthair, an uair sin an Nighean, an uair sin an t-Ogha. Às dèidh sin, bhiodh am Fionn-ogha, "*the great-grandchild*", agus an Dubh-ogha, "*the great grandson's grandson*".

Nise, chan eil mi buileach cinnteach am biodh a h-uile duine ag aontachadh gur e fionn-ogha "*great grandchild*" no gur e dubh-ogha "*great great great-grandchild*". Tha dà ghinealach eadar na dhà a tha sin, agus cha chreid mi nach cuala mi daoine ag ràdh gur e dubh-ogha "*great great-grandchild*", sin "*the grandchild of a grandchild*".

'S dòcha gum bi beachd agaibh fhèin air seo, agus bhithinn toilichte cluinntinn bhuaibh. Ach seo mar a tha Dwelly ga aithris anns an fhaclair aige. Seo na ginealaich sreath chèile: athair, mac, ogha, iar-ogha, fionn-ogha agus dubh-ogha.

Nam biomaid a' dèanamh eadar-theangachadh gu Beurla, chanamaid mar a leanas: ogha, *grandson*; iar-ogha, *great-grandson*, fionn-ogha, *great-great-grandson*; agus dubh-ogha, *great-great-great-grandson*. Agus, nam biodh sibh ag iarraidh a dhol na b' fhaide na sin, chanadh sibh: *iar-dubh-ogha* is *iar-iar-dubh-ogha* agus 's dòcha an uair sin dìreach *fear no tè de shliochd an duine!*

Mas ann air nigheanan a bhiodh sibh a' bruidhinn, bhiodh e ag obair mar seo: ban-ogha, *granddaughter*; iar-bhan-ogha, *great-granddaughter*. Cha cuala mi *fionn* no *dubh* air an cleachdadh le ban-ogha. Ach ma tha sibh fhèin gan cleachdadh, bu mhath leam cluinntinn bhuaibh.

Ma tha sinn ag obair an rathad eile – suas na ginealaich – tha e a' dol mar seo: athair, *father*; seanair, *grandfather*; sinn-seanair, *great-grandfather*; sinn-sinn-seanair,

great-great-grandfather is mar sin air adhart. 'S dòcha, an dèidh *sinn-sinn-seanair* gun canadh sibh dìreach "*sinnsear*"!

Le boireannaich, tha e ag obair ann an dòigh choltach: màthair, *mother*; seanmhair, *grandmother*, sinn-seanmhair, *great-grandmother*, sinn-sinn-seanmhair, *great-great-grandmother*.

Nise, seo tòimhseachan dhuibh: Is mise iar-ogha mo shinn-seanar. Cò mi? Is mise iar-ogha mo shinn-seanar. Cò mi? Uill, 's e am fuasgladh – mise! Ach bhiodh sibh ceart cuideachd le bhith ag ràdh "mo bhràthair" no "mo phiuthar" no "mo cho-ogha". Uill, tha mi air a dhol fada bho na gobhair, ach sin mar a tha. 'S dòcha gun till mi thuca anns an ath Litir.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: sòisealta: *sociable*; an t-Oll. Urr. Uilleam Fearsithe: *Rev. Dr. William Forsyth*; tòimhseachan: *puzzle*; piuthar: *sister*; co-ogha: [*first*] *cousin*.

Abairtean na Litreach: O chionn dà bhliadhna gu leth: *two and a half years ago*; thug mi sùil air seanfhaclan co-cheangailte ri gobhair: *I took a look at proverbs connected to goats*; tha iad a' cumail gu dlùth ri chèile: *they keep close to each other; do you understand it?*; chan eil e gu diofar dè an coltas a th' air meann no àl a' mhinn: *the appearance of a kid goat, or the kid's offspring, doesn't matter*; bidh an t-seann fheadhainn measail orra: *the old ones will like them*; bidh a mhàthair ga thomhas mar brèagha: *its mother will reckon it's beautiful*; nach eil sin fìor mu dhaoine cuideachd?: *isn't that also true of people?*; gan rangachadh fhèin anns a' bhuaile: *ranking themselves in the fold*; airson cadal air an oidhche: *for sleeping at night*; cha chreid mi nach cuala mi daoine ag ràdh: *I think I've heard people say*; bhithinn toilichte cluinntinn bhuaibh: *I would be pleased to hear from you*; nam biomaid a' dèanamh eadar-theangachadh gu Beurla: *if we were translating into English*; nam biodh sibh ag iarraidh a dhol na b' fhaide: *if you were wanting to go further*; fear no tè de shliochd an duine: *one of the man's offspring*; suas na ginealaich: *up the generations*; is mise iar-ogha mo shinn-seanar: *I am the great-grandson of my great-grandfather*; cò mi?: *who am I?*; 's e am fuasgladh – mise: *the solution is – me*; tha mi air a dhol fada bho na gobhair: *I've gone a long way from the goats*; sin mar a tha: *that's how it is*; 's dòcha gun till mi thuca: *perhaps I'll return to them*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *Here, for the record, are the Gaelic equivalents of the various generational relationships given in the Litir above, using masculine examples (sometimes females are represented by feminine forms, but not always) – and note that sinn can be replaced dialectally by the developed form sìr: sinn-sinn-seanair (great-great-grandfather), sinn-seanair (great-grandfather), seanair (grandfather), athair (father), mac (son), ogha (grandson), iar-ogha (great-grandson), fionn-ogha (great-great-grandson), dubh-ogha (great-great-great-grandson). If your own usage differs from that, I'd be really pleased to hear from you on roddy.macleam@bbc.co.uk.*

Seanfhacal na Litreach: *Mas dubh, mas odhar, mas donn, is toigh leis a' ghobhair a meann: whether it be black, dun or brown, the goat likes her kid. A mother always loves her child, whatever its appearance.*

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA