

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Gobhair air a' Ghàidhealtachd

*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](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 680. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 376 corresponds to Litir 680.*

Bha mi a' bruidhinn air gobhair agus mun chraoibh-theaghlaich an t-seachdain sa chaidh. Fàgaidh mi a' chraobh-theaghlaich an dàrna taobh an t-seachdain seo. Ach bheir mi sùil a bharrachd air gobhair. Air mo bheulaibh, tha leabhar beag snog mu mhamailean a tha beò air a' Ghàidhealtachd, agus tha mi a' leughadh seo ann: *Feral Goat: unlikely to be confused with any other British mammal.*

Uill, chanainn gu bheil sin fìor. Tha gobhair eadar-dhealaichte bho chaoraich. Agus tha iad eadar-dhealaichte bho earbaichean agus fèidh. Ach, do fheadhainn nach eil eòlach air a' Ghàidhealtachd, 's dòcha nach eil e cho furasta sin dhaibh. Anns an leabhar aige *In The Shadow of Cairngorm*, tha an t-Oll. Urr. Uilleam Fearsithe a' dèanamh aithris air mar a bha sealgairean Sasannach dhen bheachd gun robh iad air earb no fiadh a mharbhadh. Ach fhuair iad a-mach an ceann greis gur e gobhar a bh' ann.

Tha mi cinnteach, uaireannan, gun deach cleas a dhèanamh air sealgairean "ùra", agus an fheadhainn eile ag innse dhaibh gun robh boc-earba mòr is spaideil ann an leithid seo de dh'àite. Bhiodh iad ga shealg airson greis **gu dùrachdach** gus am faigheadh iad a-mach nach robh ann ach boc-gobhair!

Tha am facal *gobhar* cumanta ann an ainmean-àite air mapaichean na Gàidhealtachd. Lorg mi ceud 's a sia eisimpleirean air na mapaichean Landranger aig an t-Suirbhìdh Òrdanais. An coimeas ri sin, cha do lorg mi ach caogad 's a h-aon eisimpleirean dhen fhacal *fiadh*. Bha gobhair na bu chudromaiche aig aon àm na tha iad air a bhith thairis air a' cheud gu leth bliadhna a dh'fhalbh. Tha eòlaichean dhen bheachd gu bheil nas lugha dhiubh ann a-nise na th' air a bhith ann dhiubh fad ceudan mòra bhliadhnaichean.

Tha gobhair dùthchasach bho thùs don Ear-mheadhanach. Thathar a' smaoinichadh gun tàinig iad a Bhreatainn leis na ciad tuathanaich, ann an Nua-Linn na Cloiche. Agus chaidh iad timcheall leis na daoine oir bhuineadh iad do na daoine. An uair sin, dh'fhalbh feadhainn a-mach agus dh'fhuirich iad leotha fhèin anns a' mhonadh. Bha na daoine gan sealg airson an cuid feòla, bainne, bèin agus adharcan. Bha na seann Ghàidheil gan tomhas mar luachmhor. Bha e nàdarrach dhaibh àiteachan ainmeachadh air an son far am biodh na gobhair a' fuireach no air an sealg.

Agus cha tàinig iad a-steach a Bhreatainn dìreach aon turas. Tha aithrisean ann, mar eisimpleir, gun deach gobhair a thoirt a-steach a cheann a tuath na Gàidhealtachd à Èirinn anns an ochdamh linn deug.

Ràinig iad an àireamh a bu mhotha dhiubh aig deireadh an ochdamh linn deug. Bha còrr is mìle gobhar fiadhaich ann an cuid de sgìrean. An uair sin, dh'islich an àireamh dhiubh. Bha cuid de dh' uachdarain ag iarraidh faighinn cuidhteas iad, agus fhuair. Bha diofar adhbharan airson sin.

'S ann airson coilltean ùra a dh'ion a bha e, agus cuideachd a chionn 's gu bheil feadhainn dhen bheachd gun sgaoil gobhair gartain a nì cron air a' chirc-fhraoich – eun a tha cudromach airson sealg agus eaconamaidh cuid de dh' oighreachdan air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Agus bha mòran ghobhar air am marbhadh airson biadh anns an dà chogadh mhòr anns an fhicheadamh linn.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** mamailean: *mammals*; caoraich: *sheep*; An t-Oll. Urr. Uilleam Fearsithe: *The Rev. Dr. William Forsyth*; sealgairean: *hunters*; boc-gobhair: *billy goat*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** a' bruidhinn air gobhair agus mun chraoibh-theaghlaich: *speaking about goats and about the family tree*; fàgaidh mi X an dàrna taobh: *I'll leave X aside*; eadar-dhealaichte bho earbaichean agus fèidh: *different from roe deer and [red] deer*; nach eil e cho furasta sin dhaibh: *that it's not as easy as [all] that for them*; an ceann greis: *after a while*; gun deach cleas a dhèanamh air X: *that X was tricked*; ann an leithid seo de dh' àite: *in such and such a place*; na bu chudromaiche aig aon àm: *more important at one time*; na tha iad air a bhith thairis air a' cheud gu leth bliadhna a dh' fhalbh: *as they have been over the last 150 years*; gu bheil nas lugha dhiubh ann: *that there are fewer of them*; dùthchasach don Ear-mheadhanach: *native to the Middle East*; Nua-Linn na Cloiche: *The Neolithic Era*; dh' fhuirich iad leotha fhèin anns a' mhonadh: *they lived by themselves in the hills*; an cuid feòla, bainne, bèin agus adharcan: *their meat, milk, hide and horns*; dh' islich an àireamh dhiubh: *the number of them fell*; gartain a nì cron air a' chirc-fhraoich: *ticks that cause harm to grouse*; cudromach airson sealg agus eaconamaidh cuid de dh' oighreachdan air a' Ghàidhealtachd: *important for hunting and the economy of some estates in the Highlands*; bha mòran ghobhar air am marbhadh; *many goats were killed*; airson biadh anns an dà chogadh mhòr anns an fhicheadamh linn: *for food in the two great wars in the twentieth century*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *Goats have disappeared from many localities, often by being deliberately shot out. It would be interesting to map all the "goat" names in Scotland, particularly in the Highlands, and to see which of them represents a current population of wild/feral animals in addition to a historic one. Why not do it for your own "patch"? The survey would have to include anglicised forms like Arinagour, Clashgour and Ardgour, where the "gour" represents gobhar. The 106 occurrences I found on Landranger maps included the gabhar spelling – and, of course, all the inflections – ie gobhar, ghobhair, gobhar, ghobhar, gabhar, ghabhair, gabhair, and ghabhar. I didn't include boc or meann names which might represent goats and I didn't include damh, agh, eilid, laogh (which would more commonly represent young cattle) or ruadhag forms in my quick count of deer names (totalling 51). But an inclusion of all these forms would probably still leave more "goat" names than "deer" names on our Gaelic landscape, which is an interesting phenomenon.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Bhiodh iad ga shealg airson greis **gu dùrachdach**: *they would hunt it for a while diligently*.

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