

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

‘Gaelic Idioms and Expressions’

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 799. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 495 corresponds to Litir 799.

O chionn bhliadhnaichean cheannaich mi leabhar beag grinn a th’ air a bhith air leth feumail dhomh. ’S e *Gaelic Idioms and Expressions – with Free Translations* tiotal an leabhair. Chaidh a chur ri chèile le fear Donnchadh Dòmhnallach a bha na mhaighstir-sgoile ann am Bun-sgoil Sandwickhill ann an Steòrnabhagh.

Chaidh an leabhar fhoillseachadh ann an Glaschu ann an naoi ceud deug, trithead ’s a dhà (1932) leis a’ Chomunn Ghàidhealach. Ach fhuair mi a-mach gum b’ e sin an dàrna iris dheth. Thàinig a’ chiad eagan a-mach còig bliadhna roimhe sin ann an Steòrnabhagh. Tha e na thobar às an tarraing sinn eisimpleirean de dheagh Ghàidhlig nàdarrach.

’S e an duilgheadas a bh’ ann nach b’ urrainn dhomh an leabhar a mholadh do dhaoine eile. Cha robh e ri fhaighinn ann an àite sam bith ach tro luchd-reic sheann leabhraichean. Ach tha sin air atharrachadh o chionn ghoirid. Tha foillsichear ann an Alba Nuaidh air an leabhar a thoirt a-mach às ùr. ’S esan Trueman MacMhathain aig Sìol Cultural Enterprises. **Deagh charaid don Ghàidhlig a th’ ann.**

Chan eil an leabhar buileach mar a bha e. Tha rudan a bharrachd ann. Tha faclan, abairtean is gnàthasan-cainnt ann a chaidh a chruinneachadh ann an Alba Nuaidh. Mar eisimpleir, *tha e mar a bhiodh ugh air aran* ‘he is fidgety, unsettled’ agus *spìonagan* ‘little snowflakes when a fine, light snow is falling.’

Anns an iris thùsail, bha ‘key words’ ann ach cha robh iad ann an òrdugh na h-aibideil. Cha robh iad furasta a lorg ann an cabhaig. A-nise, tha Trueman air gach facal iuchrach a chur fa leth ann an òrdugh na h-aibideil, a’ tòiseachadh le *aghaidh* agus a’ crìochnachadh le *ùr*. Tha earrann ann de sheantansan goirid agus abairtean, agus earrann eile de ghnàthasan-cainnt.

Anns a’ chiad earrainn, fo *ceann*, tha abairtean ann mar *air ceann-turais* ‘on business’, *air ceann a stocainnean* ‘in his stocking feet’, *ceann-adhart* ‘pillow end of bed’ agus *air a cheann fhèin* ‘on his own account’. Tuigidh sibh nach eil leabhar seach leabhar – an seann fhear no am fear ùr – a’ leantainn riaghailtean litreachaidh GhOC. Cha robh Gàidheil Chanada an sàs ann an GOC. Tha sinn car buailteach a bhith a’ diochuimhneachadh gu bheil slugh thar a’ chuain a’ cleachdadh ar cànan cuideachd.

Anns an dàrna earrainn, a-rithist a’ coimhead air *ceann*, tha gnàthasan-cainnt leithid – *carson nach eil thu ann an ceann an eich?* ‘why are you not leading the horse?’, *thug a’ bhanachag dhuinn gruth agus uachdar na cheann* ‘the milkmaid gave us crowdie mixed with cream’ agus *chan eil facal Beurla na cheann* ‘he cannot speak

or understand a word of English'. Ceart gu leòr, tha na h-eisimpleirean sin car seann-fhasanta!

Ach tha abairtean ann a bhios iomchaidh airson an latha an-diugh, leithid *tha e ro fhada na cheann* 'he is too stubborn', *thug e a cheann fodha* 'he disappeared' agus *tha iarrrtas gun cheann air clò mòr am-bliadhna* 'there is great demand for Harris Tweed this year' (rud a tha fìor, tha mi a' tuigsinn!) Mo bheannachd air Trueman còir airson an leabhar feumail seo a chur an clò.

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Faclan na Litreach: foillsichear: *publisher*; tùsail: *original*; facal-iuchrach: *keyword*; seann-fhasanta: *old-fashioned*; iomchaidh: *fitting, suitable*.

Abairtean na Litreach: leabhar beag grinn a th' air a bhith air leth feumail dhomh: *a nice wee book that has been very useful to me*; chaidh a chur ri chèile le: *it was put together by*; an dàrna iris dheth: *its second edition*; thàinig a' chiad eagraan a-mach còig bliadhna roimhe sin: *the first version/edition came out five years earlier*; tha e na thobar às an tarraing sinn eisimpleirean: *it is a well from which we draw examples*; de dheagh Ghàidhlig nàdarraich: *of good natural Gaelic*; tro luchd-reic sheann leabhraichean: *through second-hand book sellers*; cha robh iad ann an òrdugh na h-aibideil: *they weren't in alphabetical order*; furasta a lorg ann an cabhaig: *easy to find in a hurry*; tuigidh sibh nach eil leabhar seach leabhar a' leantainn riaghailtean litreachaidh GhOC: *you'll understand that neither book follows the spelling rules of the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions*; a' dìochuimhneachadh gu bheil slugh thar a' chuain a' cleachdadh ar cànan: *forgetting that there is a population across the sea that uses our language*; a bhios iomchaidh airson an latha an-diugh: *which is suitable for today's world*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *I can heartily recommend the newly published 'Gaelic Idioms and Expressions' (www.gaelicbooks.com; sales@gaelicbooks.com). It has material that can be really helpful to learners who are serious about developing good, fluent, natural use of the language. For example, in the section about dà/dhà, there are idioms like faodaidh dà chiall a bhith aig an fhacal sin 'that word may have a double meaning'; chan eil dà dhèanamh air a' chùis 'there are no two ways about it'; ach, eadar dà sgeul, ciamar a chaidh dhut? 'but, by the way, how did you get on?'*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **Deagh charaid don Ghàidhlig a th' ann:** *he is a good friend to Gaelic. The missing 'S e that ought to be at the start of the sentence is understood. It is often missed out in colloquial speech.*

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