

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Am facal ‘Rathad’

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 846. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 542 corresponds to Litir 846.

Tha am facal *rathad* inntinneach. Tha am faclair *Teach Yourself Gaelic* a’ toirt dhuinn na leanas mar chiall air an fhacal: *road, route, way*. Tha MacBheathain, anns an *Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* ag ràdh gun tàinig am facal bhon Bheurla Mheadhanaich *roade* – le ‘e’ aig an deireadh – a’ ciallachadh ‘*road*’. ’S dòcha gur e as coireach gun tugadh a-steach facal-iasaid bhon Bheurla gun deach rathaidean a leasachadh ann an dùthaich na Beurla mus deach an leasachadh ann an **Garbh-chrìochan** na h-Alba.

Tha ‘rathad mòr’ a’ ciallachadh *main road, trunk road, highway*. Aig aon àm bhiodh na Gàidheil a’ gabhail ‘rathad mòr an rìgh’ air na rathaidean as motha eadar sgìrean. A bharrachd air sin, ’s e ‘rathad-iarainn’ a bhathar a’ gabhail air *railway line*, ged as e ‘loidhne-rèile’ a chanas daoine mar as trice an-diugh.

Tha ‘rathad’ air a chleachdadh ann an grunn ghnàthasan-cainnt, gun a bhith a’ ciallachadh *road*. Mar eisimpleir, canaidh sinn *a-mach às mo rathad no teich às mo rathad* airson *get out of my way*. Ma tha cuideigin air bàs fhaighinn, dh’fhaodamaid a ràdh, ‘**Chaidh e às an rathad**’. Air an làimh eile, ma chanas sinn ‘Chan eil e às an rathad’, tha e a’ ciallachadh *it’s not too bad*.

Leis gu bheil rathad a’ ciallachadh *route, way*, a bharrachd air *road*, bidh sinn ga chleachdadh ann an Gàidhlig ann an dòigh eadar-dhealaichte bho *road* ann am Beurla. Anns an t-seann aimsir, ge-tà, bhiodh daoine ag eadar-theangachadh *rathad* gu *road* nam biodh iad a’ bruidhinn ri luchd na Beurla.

Nam biodh iad, can, air ceum-coiseachd eadar dà bhaile bheag air a’ Ghàidhealtachd, bhiodh iad a’ gabhail ‘rathad’ air. B’ e an Làirig Dhrù, mar eisimpleir, an ‘rathad’ eadar Rat Mhurchais ann an Srath Spè agus Màrr. ’S e rathad-dròbhaidh a bh’ ann, a bharrachd air a bhith na phrìomh rathad coiseachd tron Mhonadh Ruadh. Eadhon an-diugh, cha chleachdadh tu am facal *road* ann am Beurla co-cheangailte ris an Làirig Dhrù. *Walking track* no *walkers’ route* ’s dòcha. Ach chan e *road*.

Carson a tha mi a’ beachdachadh air *road* agus *rathad*? Uill, bha mi a’ leughadh mu dheidhinn turas a rinn an Caipitean Edmund Burt air a’ Ghàidhealtachd anns an ochdamh linn deug. Bha Burt na mhaor don t-Seanalair Wade a thog mòran rathaidean air a’ Ghàidhealtachd. Rathaidean ceart. Agus sgrìobh Burt rudan inntinneach mun Ghàidhealtachd.

Dh'fhalbh e air chuairt le eich – fear-paca agus fear a bha e fhèin a' marcachd. 'S iomadh rud a bha a' cur dragh air mu a thuras. Cha robh mòran àiteachan far am faigheadh e biadh. Bha aige ri a dhol tro bhoglaichean, agus bha na h-eich Shasannach aige ro throm. Chaidh iad an sàs gu domhainn anns na boglaichean. Cha robh cùisean cho dona, ge-tà, do na gearrain Ghàidhealach. Agus bha e duilich do Bhurt a rathad fhèin – agus sin agaibh am facal a-rithist – a dhèanamh tro na boglaichean anns na bòtannan mòr' aige.

Ach an rud a bu mhotha a chuir dragh air – b' e sin gun robh a luchd-iùil a' gabhail *road* air na frith-rathaidean air an robh iad a' coiseachd. Bha iad ag eadar-theangachadh 'rathad' gu *road*. Agus do dh'Edmund Burt, chan e *roads* a bh' annta! Dh'fheumte feitheamh ris an t-Seanalair Wade gus am biodh a leithid ann air a' Ghàidhealtachd!

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: MacBheathain: *MacBain*; Làirig Dhrù: *Lairig Ghru*; Rat Mhurchais: *Rothiemurchus*; Srath Spè: *Strathspey*; rathaidean ceart: *proper roads*.
Abairtean na Litreach: gun tàinig am facal bhon Bheurla Mheadhanaich: *that the word came from Middle English*; 's dòcha gur e as coireach gun tugadh a-steach facal-iasaid bhon Bheurla: *perhaps the reason that a loanword was taken from English*; bidh sinn ga chleachdadh ann an dòigh eadar-dhealaichte: *we use it in a different way*; anns an t-seann aimsir: *in olden times*; nam biodh iad, can, air ceum-coiseachd eadar dà bhaile bheag: *if they were, say, on a walking track between two small settlements*; 's e rathad-dròbhaidh a bh' ann: *it was a droving route*; a bharrachd air a bhith na phrìomh rathad coiseachd tron Mhonadh Ruadh: *in addition to being a main walking route through the Cairngorms*; bha Burt na mhaor don t-Seanalair Wade: *Burt was an agent for General Wade*; dh'fhalbh e air chuairt le eich – fear-paca agus fear a bha e fhèin a' marcachd: *he went on a journey with horses – a packhorse and one he was riding himself*; 's iomadh rud a bha a' cur dragh air mu a thuras: *many things annoyed him about his journey*; far am faigheadh e biadh: *where he could get food*; bha na h-eich Shasannach aige ro throm: *his English horses were too heavy*; chaidh iad an sàs anns na boglaichean: *they got stuck in the bogs*; na gearrain Ghàidhealach: *the Highland ponies [of his companions]*; bha e duilich do Bhurt a rathad fhèin a dhèanamh tro na boglaichean anns na bòtannan mòr' aige: *it was difficult for Burt to make his way through the bogs in his big boots*; an rud a bu mhotha a chuir dragh air: *the thing that most annoyed him*; gun robh a luchd-iùil a' gabhail *road* air na frith-rathaidean: *that his guides were calling the hill tracks 'road'*; dh'fheumte feitheamh ris an t-Seanalair Wade gus am biodh a leithid ann air a' Ghàidhealtachd: *one would have to wait for General Wade until such things existed in the Highlands*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: mus deach an leasachadh ann an **Garbh-chrìochan** na h-Alba: *before they were developed in the wild lands/Highlands of Scotland. Before the 'retreat' of Gaelic into the Highlands, that mountainous part of the country was known in Gaelic as Na Garbh-chrìochan 'the rough lands'. The phrase is generally used today to refer to the area around Moidart and Knoydart in the West Highlands.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Chaidh e às an rathad: *He perished.*

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