

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## An t-Urr. Alasdair Stiùbhart

*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 1,098. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 794 corresponds to Litir 1,098.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Urr. Alasdair Stiùbhart a sgrìobh an leabhar ‘*Elements of Gaelic Grammar*’. Rugadh e sa mhansa ann am Blàr Athall ann an seachd ceud deug, seasgad ’s a ceithir (1764). Aig aois trì-deug, chaidh e a dh’Oilthigh Chill Rìmhinn. Aig aois ochd-deug, thòisich e mar oileanach Diadhachd.

Ann an seachd ceud deug, ochdad ’s a còig (1785), nochd cothrom a bhith na mhinistear ann am Maoilinn, faisg air Baile Chloichridh, ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. Chòrd e ris gu mòr a bhith air ais air a’ Ghàidhealtachd. Shaoil e gun robh na coilltean beithe timcheall a’ mhansa air leth brèagha. Agus ghabh an coitheanal ris mar mhinistear. Bha e dìreach fichead ’s a dhà bliadhna a dh’aois.

Ged a bha Gàidhlig aige mar chànan, shaoil e gun robh stiùireadh a dhìth air a thaobh gràmair, gu h-àraidh nuair a bha e a’ sgrìobhadh shearmonan. Aon bhliadhna, **bha e meadhanach** thairis air a’ gheamhradh. Thug sin ùine dha airson an leabhar-gràmair aige a sgrìobhadh. Chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an ochd ceud deug ’s a h-aon (1801).

Ged a bha Mgr Stiùbhart na mhinistear, bha rudeigin a dhìth air gu spioradail, dha rèir fhèin. Fhuair e dùsgadh thairis air dà latha anns an Ògmhios seachd ceud deug, naochad ’s a sia (1796). Thàinig an soisgeulaiche Sasannach, Teàrlach Simeon, à Cambridge, a dh’fhuireach sa mhansa ann am Maoilinn. Bha Mgr Stiùbhart dhen bheachd gun robh Dia air Teàrlach Simeon a chur thuige mar theachdaire. Bho sin a-mach, bha taobh soisgeulach aig Alasdair Stiùbhart nach robh air a bhith aige roimhe.

Nuair a bha an t-Urr. Simeon còmhla ris, bha bean Alasdair, Louisa, bochd le tinneas sgamhain. Dà bhliadhna gu leth an dèidh sin, chaochail i. A rèir na sgrìobh e fhèin, bha an dùsgadh spioradail aige na chuideachadh **ann a bhith a’ dèiligeadh ri bàs a mhnà**.

Bha Alasdair a-nise a’ fàs ainmeil. Trì bliadhna an dèidh bàs a mhnà, fhuair e cuireadh bho ghrunn mhinistearan a dhol a Shiorrachd Rois. Bha e a’ fuireach aig ministear anns an Eilean Dubh, an t-Urr. Teàrlach Calder. An ceann greis, phòs e an nighean a bu shine aig Mgr Calder. Ann an ochd ceud deug ’s a còig (1805), fhuair e litir bhon a h-uile comhairliche air Comhairle Baile Inbhir Pheofharain, a’ toirt cuireadh dha a bhith na mhinistear an sin.

Ann an ochd ceud ’s a dhà-dheug (1812), thàinig an dàrna eagan dhen leabhar-ghràmar aige a-mach. Bha Alasdair Stiùbhart a-nise cliùiteach mar sgoilear Gàidhlig. Dh’iarr an t-Urr. Iain Stiùbhart ann an Lus air Alasdair a bheachdan a thoirt seachad air ath-nuadhachadh a’ Bhìobaill Ghàidhlig. Agus dh’iarr Comunn

Gàidhealach na h-Alba air faclair Gàidhlig a chur ri chèile. Ach dhiùlt e, oir bha e ro thrang mar mhinistear.

Cha robh e toilichte ann an Inbhir Pheofharain, ge-tà, agus dh'fhuiling e call dòchais, no eadhon tinneas-inntinn air choreigin. Ghluais e a Dhùn Èideann, far an robh e na mhinistear aig a' Chanongate, agus chaochail e an sin anns a' Chèitean ochd ceud deug, fichead 's a h-aon (1821). Bidh mòran ga chuimhneachadh mar mhinistear. Bidh gu leòr eile ga chuimhneachadh mar fhear de phrìomh sgoilearan Gàidhlig a linne. Sàr-Pheairteach am measg sàr-Pheairtich eile a thug cliù do ar cànan prìseil.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** An t-Urr. Alasdair Stiùbhart: *The Rev. Alexander Stewart*; Oilthigh Chill Rìmhinn: *St Andrews University*; Diadhachd: *Divinity*; Maoilinn: *Moulin*; Baile Chloichridh: *Pitlochry*; soisgeulaiche: *evangelical, evangelist*; eagan: *edition*; Comunn Gàidhealach na h-Alba: *The Highland Society of Scotland*; dhiùlt e: *he refused*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Rugadh e sa mhansa ann am Blàr Athall: *he was born in the manse in Blair Atholl*; bha rudeigin a dhìth air gu spioradail, dha rèir fhèin: *he lacked something spiritually, according to [his own account]*; gun robh Dia air Teàrlach Simeon a chur thuige mar theachdaire: *that God had sent Charles Simeon to him as a messenger*; cuireadh bho ghrunn mhinistearan a dhol a Shiorrachd Rois: *an invitation from a group of ministers to go to Ross-shire*; phòs e an nighean a bu shine aig X: *he married X's eldest daughter*; a h-uile comhairliche air Comhairle Baile Inbhir Pheofharain: *every councillor on the Dingwall Town Council*; dh'iarr an t-Urr. Iain Stiùbhart ann an Lus air Alasdair a bheachdan a thoirt seachad air ath-nuadhachadh a' Bhìobaill Ghàidhlig: *the Rev. John Stewart in Luss asked Alexander to give his opinions on the revision of the Gaelic Bible*; dh'fhuiling e call dòchais, no eadhon tinneas-inntinn air choreigin: *a he suffered a loss of confidence, or even some sort of mental illness*; ghluais e a Dhùn Èideann: *he moved to Edinburgh*; bidh gu leòr eile ga chuimhneachadh mar fhear de phrìomh sgoilearan Gàidhlig a linne: *many others will remember him as one of the prime Gaelic scholars of his day*; Sàr-Pheairteach am measg sàr-Pheairtich eile a thug cliù do ar cànan prìseil: *a great Perthshire man among other great Perthshire folk who gave status to our beloved language*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** bha an dùsgadh spioradail aige na chuideachadh **ann a bhith a' dèiligeadh ri bàs a mhnà**: *his spiritual awakening was a help in dealing with the death of his wife*. Bean 'wife' is an irregular feminine noun which is becoming an 'awkward customer' because many modern speakers of the language are not comfortable with its traditional inflection for case. The traditional genitive singular of a' bhean is na mnà. It is here a mhnà 'of his wife', lenited under the influence of the third person singular possessive pronoun. To me, a bhean means 'his wife', not 'of his wife' so I am very uncomfortable with bàs a bhean for 'the death of his wife'. Call me a 'traditionalist', if you will!

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** bha e meadhanach thairis air a' gheamhradh: *he was in indifferent health over the winter*.

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