

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Weem (3)

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 fios@learngaelic.scot. This is Litir 1,191. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 887 corresponds to Litir 1,191.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu *Weem* – no Uaimh – ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. Chan e sin an t-aon ainm-àite ann an Alba le *Weem*, no rudeigin coltach, ann – a’ ciallachadh àite far a bheil uamh no uamhan. Tha feadhainn eile ann agus tha mi airson sùil a thoirt orra.

Ann an Siorrachd Aonghais, tha grunn eisimpleirean againn de dh’àiteachan anns a bheil an eileamaid *Weem*. Aig ceann shuas Ghleann Chlàbhaidh, tha àite air a bheil *Hole of Weems*. A rèir Leabhar nan Ainmean aig an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais, is e seo an t-ainm a th’ air uamh mhòr. Tha i mòr gu leòr airson fasnachadh a thoirt do suas ri ochdnar.

Tha an Seann Chunntas Staitistigeach ag innse dhuinn mu *Weems Hole* faisg air Ceathramh Moire air Machair Aonghais. Tha an uamh sin gu math mòr agus fada. Chaidh cnàmhan daoine a lorg innte. Chaidh am facal *weem* a-steach don Bheurla – no Albais – anns an sgìre sin. Tha Leabhraichean nan Ainmean ag innse dhuinn mu ‘Cave or Weem’ ann an Siorrachd Aonghais, agus mu ‘Picts Houses or Weems’ ann an Siorrachd Obar Dheathain. Tha na faclair Albais ag innse dhuinn gu bheil *weem* a’ ciallachadh ‘uamh, toll no slochd anns an talamh, souterrain agus seilear’.

Thuige seo, tha sinn air sùil a thoirt air àiteachan far a bheil am facal sgrìobhte mar W-E-E-M ann am Beurla. Tha aonan eile agam dhuibh, far a bheil *weem* aig deireadh an ainm. ’S e sin *Pittenweem* ann am Fìobh. Ann an Gàidhlig an latha an-diugh, ’s e sin Peit no Baile na h-Uamha. Tha e a’ ciallachadh ‘*the farm of the cave*’. Agus, gu dearbh, tha uamh ainmeil ann – Uamh Fhaolain no *St Fillan’s Cave*. Thathar ag ràdh gun do dh’fhuirich an naomh ainmeil sin innte.

Tha cuid de dh’àiteachan ann far a bheil ‘Weems’ air a litreachadh W-E-M-Y-S-S. Tha fear faisg air Farfair air Machair Aonghais. Ann am Fìobh, faisg air Cathair Chaladain, tha *West Wemyss* agus *East Wemyss*. Tha iad ri taobh a’ chladaich. Ann an *East Wemyss* tha tòrr uamhan ann.

Tha àiteachan eile le *Wemyss* ann, mar *Wemyss Bay* agus *Wemyss Point* ann an Siorrachd Àir, agus *Port Wemyss* ann an Ìle. Math dh’fhaodte gur e an teaghlach *Wemyss* a th’ air ainmeachadh annta. Tha Iain Mac an Tàilleir ag innse dhuinn gur e a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air *Port Wemyss* ann an Ìle – Bun Othan, a’ ciallachadh ‘beul na h-aibhne’.

Eadhon ged a bhitheas na h-ainmean sin a’ tighinn bhon teaghlach, càit an d’ fhuair an teaghlach fhèin an t-ainm? Sgrìobh Sir Raibeart Sibbald anns an leabhar aige *The History of Fife and Kinross* – ‘*The Earl of Weems takes his surname ... from*

the caves in his ground upon the coast to the east of the house’. Sgrìobh Sibbald an t-ainm W-E-E-M-S. A-nise, bidh Iarla Wemyss ga litreachadh W-E-M-Y-S-S. Saoil a bheil fios aige gu bheil ainm a’ tighinn bho thùs bhon Ghàidhlig? Tapadh leibh airson a bhith còmhla rium a’ toirt sùil air àiteachan uamhach.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Siorrachd Pheairt: *Perthshire*; Siorrachd Aonghais: *Angus*; An Seann Chunntas Staitistigeach: *The Old Statistical Account*; Ceathramh Moire: *Kirriemuir*; Machair Aonghais: *the flat lands of Angus*; faclairian Albais: *Scots dictionaries*; Fìobh: *Fife*; Farfair: *Forfar*; Cathair Chaladain: *Kirkcaldy*; Siorrachd Àir: *Ayrshire*; Ìle: *Islay*.

Abairtean na Litreach: ceann shuas Ghleann Chlàbhaidh: *the top end of Glen Clova*; a rèir Leabhar nan Ainmean aig an t-Suirbidh Òrdanais: *according to the Ordnance Survey Name Book*; mòr gu leòr airson fasnadh a thoirt do suas ri ochdnar: *big enough to shelter eight people*; ri taobh a’ chladaich: *beside the shore*; tha tòrr uamhan ann: *there are many caves there*; math dh’fhaodte gur e an teaghlach Wemyss a th’ air ainmeachadh annta: *perhaps it is the Wemyss family that is named in them*; tha Iain Mac an Tàilleir ag innse dhuinn gur e a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air X: *Iain Taylor tells us [in ‘Place-Names of Scotland’] that the Gaelic for X is*; Bun Othan, a’ ciallachadh ‘beul na h-aibhne’: *Bun Othan, meaning ‘river mouth’*; eadhon ged a bhitheas na h-ainmean sin a’ tighinn bhon teaghlach, càit an d’ fhuair an teaghlach fhèin an t-ainm?: *even if these names come from the family, where did the family itself get its name?*; saoil a bheil fios aige gu bheil ainm a’ tighinn bho thùs bhon Ghàidhlig?: *I wonder if he knows that his name comes originally from Gaelic?*; tapadh leibh airson a bhith còmhla rium a’ toirt sùil air àiteachan uamhach: *thanks for being with me, looking at places connected to caves*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *còs: cave, crevice, recess. You might recall a controversy a couple of years ago when the Gaelic word còsach was being put forward as an equivalent to the Danish hygge. I suppose somebody thought còsach meant ‘cosy’ and perhaps it does in some places, but it is most commonly an adjectival form of còs and it was pointed out that it means ‘cavelike, cavernous, abounding in hollows or recesses, spongy, porous’. At that point còsach as a Gaelic ‘hygge’ quietly disappeared. We have a lot to be proud of in Gaelic but we don’t need to purloin, in a false way, aspects of other cultures. Let the Danes – a fine people – rejoice in their hygge. We, on the other hand, could do a lot more with ‘cèilidh’ ...*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: *Thuige seo: up to now/to this point in time.*

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