

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An t-Urr. Seumas MacDhonnchaidh (1)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,231. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 927 corresponds to Litir 1,231. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

O chionn beagan bhliadhnaichean, chaidh ainm-sràide ùr a thaghadh airson raon-taigheadais ùr ann an Calasraid anns na Tròisichean. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air an t-sràid 'Robertson Way'. Tha e a' cuimhneachadh fear ainmeil à Calasraid fhèin.

B' esan an t-Urramach Seumas MacDhonnchaidh – James Robertson – a bha na mhinistear paraiste ann an Calasraid anns an ochdamh agus naoidheamh linn deug. Rinn e a dhìcheall airson àiteachas agus foghlam adhartachadh anns an sgìre aige.

A bharrachd air sin, sgrìobh e an earrann mu Chalasraid anns an t-Seann Chunntas Staitistigeach ann an seachd ceud deug, naochad 's a ceithir (1794). Chan e earrann bheag a th' ann idir – tha caogad 's a seachd duilleagan innte! Agus tha tòrr fiosrachaidh innte mun Ghàidhlig agus dualchas nan Gàidheal.

Rugadh Seumas MacDhonnchaidh ann an Calasraid ann an seachd ceud deug, trithead 's a naoi (1739). Phòs e tè Iseabail Ghreumach agus bha aon duine deug aca de chloinn. Chaochail dithis aca nuair a bha iad nan leanaban, ach **ràinig a' chuid a bu mhotha dhiubh deagh aois.**

Anns an Litir seo, tha mi airson rud no dhà innse dhuibh a sgrìobh **Mgr MacDhonnchaidh** mun Ghàidhlig. Tha mi an dùil gun robh Gàidhlig aige bho dhùthchas. 'S e sgìre Ghàidhealach a bh' anns na Tròisichean an uair sin. Eadhon aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug, bha Gàidhlig fhathast aig ceathrar às gach deichnear anns an dùthaich timcheall Chalasraid.

Mar mhinistear, bha Seumas MacDhonnchaidh eòlach air Laidinn agus air an t-Seann Ghreugais. Tha e ag innse don leughadair anns a' chunntas aige gu bheil an aon fhacal ann airson 'an Tì as àirde' ann an Gàidhlig agus Greugais – *Dia*. Tha e cuideachd ag ràdh gu bheil an aon fhacal ann an Gàidhlig agus Laidinn airson '*land*', '*castle*' agus '*harbour*'. Feumaidh gun robh e a' beachdachadh air *tìr*, *caisteal* agus *port*. Chan eil e deònach a ràdh, ge-tà, dè an cànan anns an robh na faclan sin bho thùs. An ann bhon Laidinn gu Gàidhlig a chaidh iad, no an robh iad air a dhol dhan Laidinn bho sheann chànan nan Ceilteach.

Mar mhinistear, tha e inntinneach gu bheil uiread de dh'ùidh aige ann an creideamh nan draoidhean, ach tha. Tha e ag innse dhuinn gun robh na clachan seasaimh aig na draoidhean fìor chudromach dhaibh – agus do na daoine a bha beò ri an linn. Tha e a' sgrìobhadh seo – agus canaidh mi ann am Beurla e, mar a tha e

sgrìobhte aige. ‘... *the same expression, which the people then used for their place of worship, is still used to this day; as the Highlanders more frequently say, ‘Will you go to the stones’ or ‘Have you been at the stones?’ than ‘Will you go to, or have you been, at church?’*

Bha e a’ ciallachadh le sin, gum bi sinn a’ cleachdadh an fhacail *clachan* airson eaglais no baile ri taobh eaglais. An robh thu aig a’ chlachan? *Were you at church?* Anns an latha an-diugh, chanainn nach eil sin idir cho cumanta ’s a bha e ri linn Sheumais MhicDhonnchaidh. Ach, gu traidiseanta, chan e ‘Ministear na Comraich’ a chanadh mo shinnsirean fhèin ach ‘Ministear a’ Chlachain’ airson ‘*the minister of Applecross*’. Agus ’s e ‘Eaglais a’ Chlachain’ a chanas sinn fhathast ris an t-seann eaglais againn. Tuilleadh bhon Urr. Seumas MacDhonnchaidh an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Na Tròisichean: *The Trossachs*; an t-Seann Ghreugais: *Ancient Greek*; sinnsirean: *ancestors*.

Abairtean na Litreach: chaidh ainm-sràide ùr a thaghadh airson raon-taigheadais ùr: *a new street name was chosen for a new housing scheme*; Calasraid anns na Tròisichean: *Callander in the Trossachs*; b’ esan an t-Urramach Seumas MacDhonnchaidh: *he was the Reverend James Robertson*; a bha na mhinistear paraiste: *who was parish minister*; rinn e a dhìcheall airson àiteachas agus foghlam adhartachadh: *he made every effort to advance agriculture and education*; sgrìobh e an earrann mu Chalasraid anns an t-Seann Chunntas Staitistigeach: *he wrote the section about Callander in the Old Statistical Account*; phòs e tè Iseabail Ghreumach: *he married an Isabella Graham*; bha aon duine deug aca de chloinn: *they had eleven children*; chaochail dithis aca nuair a bha iad nan leanaban: *two of them died when they were infants*; tha mi an dùil gun robh Gàidhlig aige bho dhùthchas: *I imagine he spoke Gaelic as a native*; ceathrar às gach deichnear: *four people out of every ten*; an Tì as àirde: *the Supreme Being*; an robh iad air a dhol dhan Laidinn bho sheann chànan nan Ceilteach: *had they gone into Latin from the ancient language of the Celts*; tha e inntinneach gu bheil uiread de dh’ùidh aige ann an creideamh nan draoidhean: *it’s interesting that he has so much interest in the religion of the druids*; gun robh na clachan seasaimh aig na draoidhean fìor chudromach dhaibh: *that the standing stones were extremely important to them*; chanainn nach eil sin idir cho cumanta ’s a bha e ri linn Sheumas MhicDhonnchaidh: *I’d say that that is not at all as common as it was in James Robertson’s day*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: a sgrìobh Mgr MacDhonnchaidh mun Ghàidhlig: *that Mr Robertson wrote about Gaelic. Note that Robertson is MacDhonnchaidh not MacRaibeirt, although you will also see Robasdan. Also using the surname with Mgr (Maighstir) is a common form of address for a Protestant Minister (if ‘An t-Urramach’ or ‘Reverend’ is not being used). With Catholic Priests and traditionally with Episcopalian (Anglican) Priests, we use the person’s given name rather than their surname e.g. Mgr Ailean, Mgr Alasdair.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: ràinig a’ chuid a bu mhotha dhiubh deagh aois: *most of them reached a good age.*

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