

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Uisge-beatha agus Ainmean-àite (2)

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 1,240. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 936 corresponds to Litir 1,240. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha sinn a' toirt sùil air ainmean uisge-bheatha agus thaighean-staile on leabhar 'The A to Z of Whisky Place-Names' le Jacob King. Tha gu leòr dhiubh air a bheil ainm a tha rudeigin – no uile-gu-lèir – fuadain. Ach tha feadhainn ann le ainm stèidhichte air ainm-àite a th' air na mapaichean. Tha mi airson sùil a thoirt air feadhainn dhiubh sin an-diugh.

Tòisicheamaid ann an Ìle. An coimeas ri sgìrean eile, tha na h-ainmean ann an Ìle an ìre mhath uile stèidhichte air fìor ainmean-àite. Mar eisimpleir, tha Ardbeg air a dhèanamh faisg air An Àird Bheag 'the small promontory'. Tha Bowmore às a' bhaile as motha anns an eilean – air a bheil Am Bogha Mòr mar ainm. Tha e a' ciallachadh an dàrna cuid 'the big reef' no 'the big bend'.

Tha Bruichladdich bhon Ghàidhlig Bruthach a' Chladaich 'the brae of the shore' agus tha Bunnahabhain o Bun na h-Abhainne 'the mouth of the river'. Air cladach an earra-dheas an eilein, tha Lagavulin. Tha an t-ainm sin a' tighinn bho Lag a' Mhuilinn 'the hollow of the mill'. Air taobh eile an eilein, tha taigh-staile 'Caol Ìla'. Tha sin stèidhichte air cladach a' chaolais eadar Ìle agus Diùra, ris an canar Caol Ìle no An Caol Ìleach ann an Gàidhlig. Agus, air taobh thall a' chaolais, tha *Jura Distillery*. Tha an t-ainm sin a' tighinn bho ainm an eilein fhèin – Diùra ann an Gàidhlig – ged a thàinig sin on Lochlannais o shean. Tha e a' ciallachadh 'Eilean nam Fiadh'.

Gu tuath air Ìle agus Diùra, tha eilean eile ann an Earra-Ghàidheal air a bheil taigh-staile. 'S e sin Muile. An sin, thathar a' dèanamh uisge-beatha ris an canar *Tobermory*. Tha an t-ainm a' tighinn bhon bhaile far a bheil an taigh-staile – Tobar Mhoire, 'the well of the Virgin Mary'.

Air ais air tìr-mòr tha Tomatin, deas air Inbhir Nis. Tha sin bhon Ghàidhlig Tom Aitinn 'juniper hillock'. Chaidh an t-ainm-àite sin a chlàradh air mapa aig deireadh an t-siathamh linn deug. Tha Glenlivet ann am Moireibh a' tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig Gleann Liobhaid. Tha Jacob King ag innse dhuinn gu bheil e coltach gun tàinig Liobhaid bho fhreumh Cruithneach a' ciallachadh 'boillsgeach' no 'gleansach'. Agus faisg air Uisge Spè tha Tormore. Tha sin bhon Ghàidhlig An Tòrr Mòr 'the big hill'. 'S e *Allt an Torra Mhòir* ainm an uillt a tha a' sruthadh seachad air an taigh-staile.

Tha uisge-beatha Moireach eile ann air a bheil ainm car annasach dhuinne mar Ghàidheil. Tha e sgrìobhte mar aon fhacal – a-n-c-n-o-c. Bhithinn a’ fuaimneachadh sin mar ‘an cnoc’, ach tha làrach-lìn an uisge-bheatha ag innse dhuinn gu bheil ga fhuaimneachadh ‘a-nock’. Seadh. Uill, tha e air a dhèanamh aig *Knockdhu Distillery*. Shaoileadh sibh gun robh sin a’ tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig An Cnoc Dubh. Ach tha Jacob King ag innse dhuinn nach eil a leithid de dh’ainm clàraichte, agus gur e An Cnoc no, ann an Albais, *The Knock* a bha a-riamh air an àite.

Mu dheireadh, ann an taobh sear Rois, tha uisge-beatha ainmeil air a bheil Glenmorangie. **A bheil sin dha-rìribh a’ ciallachadh ‘The Glen of Tranquility’,** mar gun tàinig e à Gleann Mòr na Sith? Tha Jacob King ag innse dhuinn nach eil. Chaidh ‘Glen’ a chur ri Morangie, ainm-àite ionadail a tha a’ ciallachadh ‘*big haugh place*’. Tha an leabhar làn neamhnaidean mar sin.

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Faclan na Litreach: Lochlannais: *Norse*; o shean: *in olden times*; Earra-Ghàidheal: *Argyll*; taigh-staile: *distillery*; Moireibh: *Moray*; Moireach: *belonging to Moray*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a’ toirt sùil air ainmean uisge-bheatha agus thaighean-staile: *looking at names of whisky and distilleries*; rudeigin – no uile-gu-lèir – fuadain: *slightly – or completely – artificial*; an coimeas ri sgìrean eile: *compared to other areas*; tha na h-ainmean ann an Ìle an ìre mhath uile stèidhichte air fìor ainmean-àite: *the names on Islay are pretty much all based on real place-names*; às a’ bhaile as motha anns an eilean: *from the largest village on the island*; tha e a’ ciallachadh an dàrna cuid X no Y: *it means either X or Y*; cladach an earra-dheas an eilein: *the south-eastern shore of the island*; air cladach a’ chaolais eadar Ìle agus Diùra: *on the shore of the narrows (sound) between Islay and Jura*; gu tuath air: *north of*; air ais air tìr-mòr: *back on the mainland*; chaidh an t-ainm-àite sin a chlàradh air mapa aig deireadh an t-siathamh linn deug: *that place-name was recorded on a map at the end of the sixteenth century*; bho fhreumh Cruithneach: *from a Pictish root*; a tha a’ ciallachadh ‘boillsgeach’ no ‘gleansach’: *that means ‘glittering’ or ‘shining’*; ainm an uillt a tha a’ sruthadh seachad air: *the name of the burn that flows past*; car annasach dhuinne: *somewhat strange to us*; a bha a-riamh air an àite: *that the place was always called*; làn neamhnaidean mar sin: *full of pearls [treasures] like that*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Tòisicheamaid ann an Ìle: ***Let’s begin in Islay.***

Tòisicheamaid is the first person plural imperative form of the verb tòisich ‘begin’. To create such a form, we take the [unlenited] root of the verb and add –(e)maid to it. Here are some examples with regular verbs: cuireamaid ‘let us put’; cluicheadh ‘let us play’; sgrìobhadh ‘let us write’. Examples with irregular verbs are: rachamaid ‘let us go’; dèanamaid ‘let us do, make’. In a Gaelic church service, you might hear ‘dèanamaid adhradh’ [let us worship] or ‘dèanamaid ùrnaigh’ [let us pray]. And, in a less formal setting, there is the slightly whimsical ‘rogamaid is ròlamaid’ [let’s rock and roll!]

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **A bheil sin dha-rìribh a’ ciallachadh?:** *does that really mean?*

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