

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An t-Urr. Uilleam Seathach (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 1,244. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 940 corresponds to Litir 1,244. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

An latha eile, bha mi a' leughadh seann aithris on phàipear-naidheachd ainmeil, Tìmh Lunnainn, *The Times of London*. 'S e pìos naidheachd a bh' ann à Dùn Èideann. Nochd e sa phàipear anns an Fhaoilleach seachd ceud deug, ochdad 's a sia (1786). Carson a thog e m' aire? Uill, a chionn 's gun robh e mu dheidhinn faclair Gàidhlig. Gu mionaideach, bha an naidheachd mu dheidhinn cùis-chùirte anns an robh faclair Gàidhlig aig meadhan connspaid.

Bha am faclair air fhoillseachadh – ann an dà phàirt – sia bliadhna roimhe sin ann an Lunnainn. B' e fear de na ciad fhaclairean Gàidhlig. 'S e an tìotal a th' air Leabhar a h-Aon dheth '*A Galic and English Dictionary containing all the words in the SCOTCH and IRISH dialects of the CELTIC, that could be collected from the VOICE, and Old Books and MSS*'. Tha Galic air a litreachadh 'G-A-L-I-C.'

B' e deasaiche an fhaclair an t-Urramach Uilleam Seathach. Mus toir sinn sùil air an fhaclair aige, agus air a' chonnsaid mu dheidhinn, bheir sinn sùil bheag air an duine fhèin.

'S e Arainneach a bh' ann an Uilleam Seathach. Rugadh e ann an Clachaig ann an sgìre Cill Mhoire ann an ceann a deas an eilein. Bha sin anns a' bhliadhna seachd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a naoi (1749). Mar sin, bha e dìreach **beagan is** trithead bliadhna a dh'aois nuair a dh'fhoillsich e am faclair.

Fhuair Seathach foghlam ann an Inbhir Àir agus an uair sin ann an Oilthigh Ghlaschu. An dèidh sin, chaidh e a Lunnainn far an robh e ag obair mar oide aig ceannaiche. Bha e am measg buidheann de dhaoin-uaisle aig an robh ùidh ann an litreachas. Am measg buill na buidhne, bha am faclairiche ainmeil, an t-Oll. Somhairle MacIain. Bidh sibh nas eòlaiche air, math dh'fhaodte, mar Dr Samuel Johnson.

Chan e am faclair a' chiad leabhar a sgrìobh Uilleam Seathach. Dà bhliadhna mus do nochd am faclair, nochd leabhar eile a sgrìobh e – '*An Analysis of the Galic Language*'. A-rithist bha *Galic* air a litreachadh 'G-A-L-I-C.' 'S e nàdar de ghràmar a th' anns an leabhar sin.

Chan eil an anailis aige air a' chànan buileach mar a th' againn an-diugh. Tha e ag ainmeachadh sia tuisealan, mar eisimpleir. An-diugh, tha sinn ag aithneachadh ceithir. Mar eisimpleir, tha **an tuiseal ablatach** – *the ablative case* – aige mar a tha ann an Laidinn. An-diugh, tha sinn a' cur an tuiseil ablataich an cois an tuiseil

thabhartach. Agus tha e a' dèanamh sgaradh eadar an tuiseal ainmneach agus an tuiseal cuspaireach no *accusative case*. An-diugh tha sinn a' cur na dhà còmhla fo bhratach an tuiseil ainmnich.

Am measg eile, tha clisgearan aige – sin a' Ghàidhlig air *interjections*. Mar eisimpleir: *Grief*: och! och! mo chreach! 'my ruin!' mo thruaidh! 'my misery!'; *Derision*: mo nàir ort 'fy on you!'; *Fatigue*: heich ho! Agus tha eisimpleirean aige de litreachas Gàidhlig. Nam measg, tha eadar-theangachadh gu Gàidhlig dhen dàn ainmeil *Messiah* le Alexander Pope.

Tha droch chliù aig Somhairle MacIain air a' Ghàidhealtachd oir sgrìobh e rudan car nimheil mun Ghàidhlig, an dèidh dha turas a ghabhail air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Ach fhuair Uilleam Seathach taic agus brosnachadh bhon Ollamh MacIain am faclair Gàidhlig aige a tharraing ri chèile. Tuilleadh air an fhaclair – agus air a' chonnsaid a bha ga chuirteachadh – an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Dùn Èideann: *Edinburgh*; Am Faoilleach: *January*; cùis-chùirte: *court case*; connspaid: *controversy*; deasaiche: *editor*; An t-Urramach Uilleam Seathach: *The Reverend William Shaw*; Arainneach: *a native of Arran*; Inbhir Àir: *Ayr*; Oilthigh Ghlaschu: *The University of Glasgow*; faclairiche: *lexicographer*; An t-Oll. Somhairle MacIain: *Dr. Samuel Johnson*; tuiseal: *case of a noun (grammar)*; cuspaireach: *accusative (grammar)*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a chionn 's gun robh e mu dheidhinn faclair Gàidhlig: *because it was about a Gaelic dictionary*; b' e fear de na ciad fhaclairean Gàidhlig: *it was one of the first Gaelic dictionaries*; chaidh e a Lunnainn far an robh e ag obair mar oide aig ceannaiche: *he went to London where he was working as a tutor for a merchant*; buidheann de dhaoine-uaile aig an robh ùidh ann an litreachas: *a group of gentlemen who were interested in literature*; chan eil an anailis aige air a' chànan buileach mar a th' againn an-diugh: *his analysis of the language is not exactly as we have today*; tha sinn a' cur an tuiseil ablataich an cois an tuiseil thabhartach: *we put the ablative case along with the dative case*; fo bhratach an tuiseil ainmnich: *under the banner of the nominative case*; sgrìobh e rudan car nimheil: *he wrote rather nasty things*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: an tuiseal ablatach: *the ablative case*. The modern Gaelic is ablatach, but Shaw in 1780 gives it as diobhalach. Shaw explains that the dative case is activated following the preposition do [or don], whereas the ablative follows the prepositions le [leis an] and ann an [anns an]. This is close to the Latin model. Today, we combine both (and all simple prepositions) under the 'dative' banner. Shaw also follows the Latin model by proclaiming the existence of an accusative case which is governed by an active verb e.g. in the sentence sgrìobh am fear litir, fear is in the nominative case, whereas litir is in the accusative. But Shaw notes the following: 'We cannot with strict propriety say that the Galic [sic] has an Accusative, because the nominative and accusative are always the same'. That is why we no longer analyse Gaelic as possessing an accusative case.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: beagan is trithead bliadhna a dh'aois: *a little bit more than thirty years of age*.

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