

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An t-Urr. Uilleam Seathach (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 1,245. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 941 corresponds to Litir 1,245. 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 an Urramach Uilleam Seathach a **chuir faclair Gàidhlig ri chèile** ann an seachd ceud deug is ochdad (1780). Tha am faclair a' gabhail a-steach fhaclan Albannach agus Èireannach, measgaichte còmhla.

Fhuair e taic agus brosnachadh bhon Oll. Somhairle MacIain a bh' air turas a ghabhail air a' Ghàidhealtachd beagan bhliadhnaichean roimhe. Mar a tha e a' mìneachadh anns an ro-ràdh aige, dh'fhalbh Mgr. Seathach don Ghàidhealtachd as t-earrach seachd ceud deug, seachdad 's a h-ochd (1778).

Cha do dh'iarr e airgead poblach airson a' phròiseict. Bha e airson 's gum biodh aontachairean cliùiteach aige a bhiodh deònach an leabhar a cheannach bhuaithe nuair a bha e deiseil. Agus bha an liosta aige dhiubh gu math drùidhteach. Nam measg bha Àrd-easbaig Chanterbury, Diùc Earra-Ghàidheal, Diùc Ghòrdain – a cheannaich còig lethbhreacan – agus **mar sin air adhart**.

Bha an Seathach dhen bheachd gun robh an cànan aige a' sìor bhàsachadh. Bha e airson beagan dhith a shàbhaladh mus rachadh i à bith.

Cha robh e furasta dha air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Chaidh e gu mòran sgìrean, a' gabhail a-steach diofar eileanan. Cha robh mòran leabhraichean no làmh-sgrìobhainnean ann. Mar sin, 's ann bhon ghuth fhèin a fhuair e cuid mhath de na faclan aige. Ach, ann am Muile, fhuair e liosta de dhà cheud facal bho fhear de na ministearan, Mgr. MacArtair.

Fhuair e taic mhòr bho na h-uaislean ach fhuair e briseadh-dùil am measg a' phobaill. Cha robh iad deònach fiosrachadh a thoirt dha às aonais duais. Bha iad dhen bheachd gun robh e a' faighinn deagh thuarastal bhon sporan phoblach airson a cuid saothrach – oir, mura robh, carson a bhiodh e an sàs ann an obair mar sin?

Ach fhuair e taic mhòr bhon Ridire Seumas Foulis, an còigeamh frith-bharan de Cholinton, faisg air Dùn Èideann. Bha Foulis air Gàidhlig ionnsachadh agus bha e air tòrr rannsachaidh a dhèanamh air a' chànan. Dh'fhosgail e a chruinneachadh don Urr. Seathach.

Chaidh Seathach an uair sin gu ruige Èirinn, far an d' fhuair e grèim air tòrr làmh-sgrìobhainnean. Am measg sin, bha an fheadhainn ann an Leabharlann Colaiste na Trianaid ann am Baile Atha Cliath. Thill am ministear a Lunnainn anns a' Ghearran seachd ceud deug, seachdad 's a naoi (1779). Bha e a' tomhas gun do shiubhail e trì mìle mìle agus gun do chruinnich e faisg air trì mìle facal.

Tha am faclair aige ann an dà phàirt. Anns a' chiad phàirt, tha na faclan Gàidhlig air an làimh chli mar cheann-fhaclan, leis a' Bheurla air an làimh dheis. Anns an dàrna leabhar, tha a' Bheurla air an làimh chli mar cheann-fhaclan. Chleachd Seathach an siostam litreachaidh a bha stèidhichte aig an àm.

Anns an Fhaoilleach seachd ceud deug, ochdad 's a sia (1786) thug Uilleam Seathach feadhainn gu Cùirt an t-Seisein ann an Dùn Èideann. Bha iad air diùltadh an t-airgead a gheall iad a thoirt dha. Bha iad a' cumail a-mach nach do choilean am ministear na gheall e fhèin. Saoilidh mi gun robh cuid dhen bheachd gun robh cus fhaclan Èireannach ann. Ach chaidh a' chùis le Mgr Seathach oir cha robh e air a bhith ri foill no cealg. Faodaidh sibh ur beachd fhèin a ghabhail air an obair aige, oir gabhaidh am faclair a leughadh air an eadar-lìon.

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Faclan na Litreach: An t-Urramach Uilleam Seathach: *The Reverend William Shaw*; measgaichte còmhla: *mixed together*; An t-Oll. Somhairle MacIain: *Dr. Samuel Johnson*; ro-ràdh: *preface*; drùidhteach: *impressive*; Muile: *Mull*; MacArtair: *MacArthur*; frith-bharan: *baronet*; An Gearran: *February*; an siostam litreachaidh: *the writing system, orthography*; Cùirt an t-Seisein: *Court of Session*; foill no cealg: *fraud or deceit*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a bh' air turas a ghabhail air a' Ghàidhealtachd beagan bhliadhnaichean roimhe: *who had travelled in the Highlands a few years before*; cha do dh'iarr e airgead poblach: *he didn't seek public money*; gum biodh aontachairean cliùiteach aige a bhiodh deònach an leabhar a cheannach bhuaithe: *that he'd have well-to-do subscribers who would be willing to buy the book from him*; a' sìor bhàsachadh: *incessantly dying*; bha e airson beagan dhith a shàbhaladh mus rachadh i à bith: *he wanted to save a bit of it before it became extinct*; cha robh mòran leabhraichean no làmh-sgrìobhainnean ann: *there were not many books or manuscripts there*; 's ann bhon ghuth fhèin a fhuair e X: *it was from the voice itself that he obtained X*; fhuair e taic mhòr bho na h-uaislean: *he got a lot of help from the gentry*; fhuair e briseadh-dùil am measg a' phobaill: *he received disappointment among the [ordinary] people*; cha robh iad deònach fiosrachadh a thoirt dha às aonais duais: *they weren't willing to give him information without a [financial] reward*; gun robh e a' faighinn deagh thuarastal bhon sporan phoblach airson a cuid saothrach: *that he was receiving a good income from the public purse for his labours*; dh'fhosgail e a chruinneachadh: *he opened his collection*; Leabharlann Colaiste na Trianaid ann am Baile Atha Cliath: *Trinity College Library in Dublin*; a' tomhas gun do shiubhail e trì mìle mìle: *estimating that he travelled three thousand miles*; air an làimh chli mar cheann-fhaclan: *on the left-hand side as headwords*; bha iad air diùltadh an t-airgead a gheall iad a thoirt dha: *they had refused to give him the money they had promised him*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: agus mar sin air adhart: *and so on and so forth*. This is the Gaelic phrase that we use as an equivalent to Latin etcetera 'and others' which is used in English. Thus, you might see the initials m.s.a.a. at the end of a sentence. This stands for 'mar sin air adhart' and is an equivalent to English 'etc'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a chuir faclair Gàidhlig ri chèile: *who compiled a Gaelic dictionary*.

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