

An Litir Bheag

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 3 (which corresponds to Litir 307). Ruairidh would welcome feedback on An Litir Bheag from listeners/readers. He can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Halò a-rithist. Tha ceist agam dhuibh. Am bi sibh a' bruidhinn ribh fhèin uair sam bith? Tha mi a' creidsinn gum bi. Bidh mise co-dhiù! Ach am bi sibh a' bruidhinn ribh fhèin ann an Gàidhlig uair sam bith? No dìreach ann am Beurla? No cànan eile?

Uill, bu chòir dhuibh a bhith a' bruidhinn ribh fhèin ann an Gàidhlig. Aig amannan co-dhiù. Tha e math airson an cànan ionnsachadh. Feuchaibh rudan sìmplidh. Canaibh ribh fhèin, "Ciamar a tha thu an-diugh, a charaid?" Agus rudan mar sin. Agus canaibh rudeigin mar fhreagairt. Mar eisimpleir, "Tha mi gu math, tapadh leat" no "Chan eil mi ach meadhanach an-diugh."

Carson a tha mi ag ràdh sin? Uill, an t-seachdain sa chaidh, bha mi a' bruidhinn mu Iain Dubh. Iain Dubh Mac Dhòmhnaill 'ic Iain, no Iain MacIllInnein. Bha Iain na bhàrd. Bha e a' fuireach ann an Astràilia. Bha e na bhàrd don Chomunn Ghàidhealach ann am Brisbane.

Rugadh Iain ann an Geàrrloch. Bha e math air òrain a sgrìobhadh. Seo agaibh òran a sgrìobh e. 'S e an tiotal a th' air *A' Labhairt na Gàidhlig Rium Fhìn*. *A' Labhairt na Gàidhlig Rium Fhìn*.

Bhiodh Iain a' bruidhinn, no a' labhairt, ris fhèin, ann an Gàidhlig. Agus bhiodh e a' seinn dha fhèin ann an Gàidhlig cuideachd. Seo an t-sèist bhon òran:

*Seinn, seinn, seinnidh mise a' Ghàidhlig
Seinn, seinn, seinnidh mi dhomh fhìn,
Bho nach cluinn mi nise fuaim aig a' mhuinntir tha mun cuairt,
Seinn, seinn, seinnidh mi dhomh fhìn.*

Carson a sgrìobh Iain an t-òran? Carson a bhiodh e a' seinn dha fhèin ann an Gàidhlig? Uill, seo freagairt. Seo dà loidhne bhon òran:

*Nuair a labhras mi rium fhìn anns a' Ghàidhlig laghach, ghrinn,
Bidh mi ann am bruadar anns na glinn...*

Bhiodh e ann am bruadar. A bheil am facal sin agaibh – *bruadar*? Tha e a’ ciallachadh smuaintean anns a’ cheann aige fhèin. Smuaintean a bhios aig duine nuair a tha e na chadal. Agus, anns a’ bhruadar aige, bhiodh Iain air ais anns na glinn. Bhiodh e air ais air a’ Ghàidhealtachd.

Nise, seo obair-dachaigh dhuibh. Anns an sgìre aig Iain, sgìre Gheàrrloch, tha dà bhaile ann le “Mellon” anns na h-ainmean aca. *Mellon Charles* agus *Mellon Udrigle*. Dè tha “Mellon” a’ ciallachadh? Innsidh mi dhuibh an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan is abairtean: tha ceist agam dhuibh: *I have a question for you [dhuibh is the prepositional pronoun formed from do + sibh]; am bi sibh a’ bruidhinn ribh fhèin?: do you speak to yourself (the future tense is used to refer to a current repeated activity); uair sam bith: [at] any time; tha mi a’ creidsinn gum bi: I reckon [you] do [will]; bidh mise co-dhiù: I do [will] anyway; gum bu chòir dhuibh: that you should [bu chòir is accompanied by the preposition do]; aig amannan co-dhiù: at times, at least; tha e math airson an cànan ionnsachadh: it is good for learning the language; feuchaibh rudan sìmplidh: try simple things; canaibh ribh fhèin: say to yourself/yourselves (in both these examples feuchaibh and canaibh are the second person plural imperative – I am speaking to more than one person. It is also the polite way of addressing an older person. In the singular it would be feuch and can); chan eil mi ach meadhanach: I’m not too well (note that while meadhanach means “middling” it can mean “poorly” in relation to a person’s health); carson a tha mi ag ràdh sin?: why am I saying that?; Iain Dubh Mac Dhòmhnail ‘ic Iain: black [haired] John, son of Donald, son of Iain; MacIllInnein: MacLennan; bha Iain na bhàrd: John was a bard [lit. Iain was of a bard – this is the way to use “bi” – the verb “to be” when expressing identity]; bha e math air òrain a sgrìobhadh: he was good at writing songs; A’ Labhairt na Gàidhlig Rium Fhìn: Speaking Gaelic to Myself; seinnidh mi dhomh fhìn: I will sing to myself; bho nach cluinn mi [a-]nise fuaim: since I can no longer hear a noise; aig a’ mhuinntir [a] tha mun cuairt: from [at] the people [who are] around; carson a sgrìobh Iain an t-òran?: why did John write the song? [note the t- in front of òran after the article – this marks it out as a masculine noun]; carson a bhiodh e a’ seinn dha fhèin?: why would he sing to himself [bhiodh is an example of a verb in the conditional – which also in Gaelic represents repeated actions taking place in the past]; nuair a labhras mi rium fhìn: when I speak to myself [the verb with an –as ending is in the relative future after “nuair”]; anns a’ Ghàidhlig laghach, ghrinn: in nice neat Gaelic; bidh mi ann am bruadar anns na glinn: I will be in a dream in the glens; anns a’ cheann aige fhèin: in his own head; bhiodh e air ais air a’ Ghàidhealtachd: he would be back in [on] the Gaidhealtachd; obair-dachaigh: homework; tha dà bhaile ann le “Mellon” anns na h-ainmean aca: there are two villages with “Mellon” in their names; innsidh mi dhuibh an ath-sheachdain: I will tell you next week.*

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