

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 197 (which corresponds to Litir 501). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

We speak clipped Gaelic. That's what a man in Aberdeenshire said. He was meaning "We speak clipped Gaelic." Clipped Gaelic.

In places on the mainland, people say bail for baile, and duin for duine. The "e" at the end disappears [leaves]. That's clipped Gaelic.

I was reading a wee story in the Aberdeen dialect. It is in the new edition of Scottish Gaelic Studies. The story was recorded on paper by Francis Diack. That was in Braemar in the 1920s (the twenties of the twentieth century). The scholar, Seumas Grant, scrutinized the story.

What else do we see in Aberdeenshire Gaelic? To begin with, another example of clipping. People weren't saying -adh at the end of words. For example they would say tuill for tuilleadh.

Instead of dol the Aberdeenshire folk were saying dul. That's common on the mainland. The nn was like the ng in English. For

'S e Gàidhlig chutach a tha againn. 'S e sin a thuirtear ann an Siorrachd Obar Dheathain. Bha e a' ciallachadh, "We speak clipped Gaelic." Gàidhlig chutach.

Ann an àiteachan air tìr-mòr, canaidh daoine bail airson baile, agus duin airson duine. Tha an "e" aig an deireadh a' falbh. 'S e sin Gàidhlig chutach.

Bha mi a' leughadh stòiridh beag ann an dualchainnt Obar Dheathain. Tha e anns an iris ùr de Scottish Gaelic Studies. Bha an stòiridh air a chlàradh air pàipear le Francis Diack. Bha sin ann am Bràigh Mhàrr anns na ficheadan dhen fhicheadamh linn (1920s). Thug an sgoilear, Seumas Grand, sùil air an stòiridh.

Dè rudan eile a chì sinn ann an Gàidhlig Siorrachd Obar Dheathain? An toiseach, eisimpleir eile de chutadh. Cha robh daoine a' cantainn an -adh aig deireadh fhaclan. Mar eisimpleir, chanadh iad tuill airson tuilleadh.

An àite dol bha muinntir Siorrachd Obar Dheathain ag ràdh dul. Tha sin cumanta air tìr-mòr. Bha an nn coltach ri ng ann am Beurla. Mar

example, people were saying “shing” for a’ seinn. They were saying “s vating” for sa mhadainn. And – another thing that’s common on the mainland – they were saying “aki” for agaibh and “shi” for sibh.

The Gaelic of Aberdeenshire and of Strathspey were alike. That’s strange, perhaps, because there are high mountains between the two areas. That’s the Monadh Ruadh [Cairngorms].

Seumas Grant puts forward two ideas. The Gaels in olden times weren’t looking on the Cairngorms as a barrier. Many people were moving between Strathspey and Braemar. They were doing that for purposes of trade and social affairs.

Also, we must keep the clans in our thoughts [memory]. Braemar was under the control of the Farquharsons. And they arose from the Shaws in Strathspey. Thus, there was a historical link between the people on each side of the Cairngorms.

eisimpleir, bha daoine ag ràdh “shing” airson a’ seinn. Bha iad ag ràdh agus “s vating” airson sa mhadainn. Agus – rud eile a tha cumanta air tìr-mòr – bha iad ag ràdh “aki” airson agaibh agus “shi” airson sibh.

Bha Gàidhlig Siorrachd Obar Dheathain agus Gàidhlig Shrath Spè rudeigin coltach ri chèile. Tha sin annasach, ’s dòcha, oir tha beanntan àrda eadar an dà sgìre. ’S e sin am Monadh Ruadh.

Tha Seumas Grandd a’ cur air adhart dà smuain. Cha robh na Gàidheil anns an t-seann aimsir a’ coimhead air a’ Mhonadh Ruadh mar chnap-starra. Bha tòrr dhaoine a’ gluasad eadar Srath Spè is Bràigh Mhàrr. Bha iad a’ dèanamh sin airson malairt agus airson gnothaichean sòisealta.

Cuideachd, feumaidh sinn na fineachan a chumail nar cuimhne. Bha Bràigh Mhàrr fo smachd Clann ’ic Fhearchair. Agus dh’èirich iadsan bho na Seathaich ann an Srath Spè. Mar sin, bha ceangal eachdraidheil ann eadar na daoine air gach taobh dhen Mhonadh Ruadh.