

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 255 (which corresponds to Litir 559). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was looking at an old page in Mac-Talla. That's an old newspaper. Mac-Talla was published in Nova Scotia. That was at the end of the 19th Century and beginning of the 20th Century.

On the page was a vocabulary for rothaidheachd. Do you understand that word – rothaidheachd. It means “cycling”. Perhaps it's baidhsagal you say yourself for “bicycle”. That word came from English. It's not in Dwelly's dictionary.

In some of the most recent Gaelic dictionaries, rothair is there for bicycle. Rothair – R-O-T-H-A-I-R. But in Dwelly, it's rothar – R-O-T-H-A-R. The word is based on roth an old Gaelic word for a wheel. We have that in barra-roth, the Gaelic for “wheelbarrow”. Anyway, in Dwelly, the English word bicycle appears twice. And here's the Gaelic for it: rothar dà-chuibhleach (“two-wheeled cycle”) and each-iarainn (“iron horse”). I don't think anyone would say “each-iarainn” today! Also in Dwelly are rothar (cycle), rothar trì-rothan (tricycle), rothaidhe (cyclist) and rothaidheachd (cycling).

Bha mi a' coimhead air seann duilleag ann am Mac-Talla. 'S e sin seann fhàipear-naidheachd. Bha Mac-Talla air fhoillseachadh ann an Alba Nuadh. Bha sin aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug agus toiseach an fhicheadamh linn.

Air an duilleig bha briathrachas airson rothaidheachd. A bheil sibh a' tuigsinn an fhacail sin – rothaidheachd? Tha e a' ciallachadh “cycling”. 'S dòcha gur e baidhsagal a chanas sibh fhèin airson “bicycle”. Thàinig am facal sin bhon Bheurla. Chan eil e ann am Faclair Dwelly.

Ann an cuid de na faclairan Gàidhlig as ùire, tha rothair ann airson bicycle. Rothair – R-O-T-H-A-I-R. Ach ann an Dwelly, 's e rothar – R-O-T-H-A-R. Tha am facal stèidhichte air roth, seann fhacal Gàidhlig airson cuibhle. Tha sin againn ann am barra-roth, a' Ghàidhlig air wheelbarrow. Co-dhiù, ann an Dwelly, tha am facal Beurla bicycle ann dà thuras. Agus seo a' Ghàidhlig air a shon: rothar dà-chuibhleach agus each-iarainn. Chan eil mi a' smaoinichadh gun canadh duine “each-iarainn” an-diugh! Cuideachd ann an Dwelly tha rothar (cycle), rothar trì-rothan (tricycle), rothaidhe (cyclist) agus rothaidheachd (cycling).

The article in Mac-Talla gives us words connected to a bicycle. Here are some of them: cluas (handle); slat (handlebar); gabhal (fork). And what's the Gaelic for the "spoke of a wheel"? Well – ga, spelt G-A. And it's bonn they have for "tyre": bonn cruaidh (solid tyre), bolg-bhonn (pneumatic tyre). Bolg or balg means "air tube". But who'd use a solid tyre on a bicycle today?!

Here are some of the other words on the list: luasgan (spring); troighean (pedal), cnò (nut), deocan (valve), teannaire (pump) and priocadh (puncture). We still use some of those words. But instead of teannaire, people say pump. Instead of priocadh, they say toll.

Tha an t-alt ann am Mac-Talla a' toirt dhuinn faclan co-cheangailte ri rothar. Seo cuid aca: *cluas (handle); slat (handlebar); gabhal (fork)*. Agus dè a' Ghàidhlig a tha air "spoke of a wheel"? Uill – *ga*, air a litreachadh G-A. Agus 's e *bonn* a tha aca air "tyre": *bonn cruaidh (solid tyre), bolg-bhonn (pneumatic tyre)*. Tha *bolg* no *balg* a' ciallachadh "air tube". Ach cò chleachdadh bonn cruaidh air rothar an-diugh?!

Seo cuid eile de na faclan air an liosta: *luasgan (spring); troighean (pedal), cnò (nut), deocan (valve), teannaire (pump) agus priocadh (puncture)*. Bidh sinn a' cleachdadh cuid de na faclan sin fhathast. Ach, an àite *teannaire* bidh daoine ag ràdh *pump*. An àite *priocadh* canaidh iad *toll*.