

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 471 (which corresponds to Litir 775). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I'm going to look at compound nouns from Armstrong's old dictionary. We'll see how many you understand. I'll be going through the alphabet.

The first word is airgead-beò. It's equivalent to argento vivo in Italian. Airgead-beò. It's a metal. It looks like silver but it moves as if it is alive. That's mercury or quicksilver – airgead-beò ('living silver').

The second word – bian-leasaiche. Bian-leasaiche. Bian is an animal hide. Bian an tuirc – the hide of the wild boar. A leasaiche is a person who develops or processes something. A bian-leasaiche processes, or tans, hides. In English – a tanner, somebody who tans hides.

Now, a word starting with 'c' – cluas-chrochag. Cluas-chrochag. You'll know what a cluas is. And what's a crochag? Well, something small that hangs. Cluas-chrochag – an ear-pendant.

We're now at 'd' and I have an unusual one for you – deud-cheartaiche. Now, deud is an old Gaelic word for tooth. We still have it in the Gaelic for toothache – an deudadh. Tha an deudadh orm – I have toothache. A deud-cheartaiche is a person who corrects your teeth. A

Tha mi a' dol a choimhead air faclan-fillte à seann fhaclair Armstrong. Chì sinn cia mheud dhiubh a thuigeas sibh. Bidh mi a' dol tron aibidil.

'S e a' chiad fhacal airgead-beò. Tha e co-ionann ri argento vivo ann an Eadaltais. Airgead-beò. 'S e meatailt a tha ann. Tha i a' coimhead coltach ri airgead ach bidh i a' gluasad mar gu bheil i beò. Sin mercury no quicksilver – airgead-beò.

An dàrna facal – bian-leasaiche. Bian-leasaiche. 'S e bian seiche aig ainmhidh. Bian an tuirc – the hide of the wild boar. 'S e leasaiche duine a bhios a' leasachadh rudeigin. Bidh bian-leasaiche a' leasachadh, no a' cartadh, nam bian. Ann am Beurla – a tanner, somebody who tans hides.

A-nise, facal a' tòiseachadh le 'c' – cluas-chrochag. Cluas-chrochag. Bidh fios agaibh dè tha ann an cluas. Agus dè tha ann an crochag? Uill, rudeigin beag a bhios a' crochadh. Cluas-chrochag – an ear-pendant.

Tha sinn aig 'd' a-nise agus tha fear annasach agam dhuibh – deud-cheartaiche. Nise, 's e deud seann fhacal Gàidhlig airson fiacail. Tha e againn fhathast anns a' Ghàidhlig airson toothache – an deudadh. Tha an deudadh orm – I have toothache. 'S e deud-cheartaiche neach a bhios a' cur nan

dentist! We say fiaclair today.

Now, eug-lios – that’s E-U-G, hyphen, L-I-O-S. Eug-lios. Do you know the word eug? It means ‘death’. In some dialects, one says dh’eug e for he died. Thus, an eug-lios is a place – a garden – where the dead are put after they die. A cemetery or graveyard. I’d say that eug-lios is just as appealing as cladh – ‘a place where people dig’, wouldn’t you agree?

Now, fiadh-ghleann. Fiadh-ghleann. A glen where deer gather in herds. But it also means ‘wild glen’, a glen where nobody lives. The word fiadh is strongly connected with ‘wild’ things, as is said in English. From that we get the word fiadhaich. Words are fun, aren’t they? I’ll have more for you next week.

deudan agad ceart. A *dentist!* Bidh sinn ag ràdh ‘fiaclair’ an-diugh.

Nise, *eug-lios* – sin E-U-G, tàthan, L-I-O-S. Eug-lios. A bheil sibh eòlach air an fhacal *eug*? Tha e a’ ciallachadh ‘bàs’. Ann an cuid de dhualchainntean, bithear ag ràdh *dh’eug e* airson *chaochail e* no *bhàsaich e*. Mar sin, ’s e *eug-lios àite* – lios, leas, gàrradh – far am bi na mairbh air an cur às dèidh dhaibh bàs fhaighinn. A *cemetery or graveyard*. Chanainn gu bheil *eug-lios* a cheart cho tarraingeach ri *cladh* – ‘àite far am bi daoine a’ cladhach’, nach eil?

Nise, *fiadh-ghleann*. Fiadh-ghleann. Gleann far am bi fèidh a’ cruinneachadh ann an treudan. Ach tha e cuideachd a’ ciallachadh *wild glen*, gleann anns nach eil daoine a’ fuireach. Tha am facal *fiadh* gu mòr co-cheangailte ri rudan ‘wild’ mar a chanar ann am Beurla. Às a sin gheibh sinn am facal *fiadhaich*. Tha spòrs ann am faclan, nach eil? Bidh tuilleadh agam dhuibh an-ath-sheachdain.