

## **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 491 (which corresponds to Litir 795). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I was telling you about a book that came out this year – The Naughty Little Book of Gaelic. It was put together by Michael Newton. I ought to say that I'm not encouraging people to engage in bad behaviour or bad language! But there's an interesting vocabulary there.*

*I imagine you'll be familiar with deoch an dorais. That's when people would get a drink on their way out of a house. A drink at the door, as it were. And deoch-eòlais means a drink that people take when they are getting to know each other.*

*But people were always aware that drink harbours dangers. A proverb tells us – when drink is within, sense is without. But there is another proverb: one glass – not the better or worse of it, two glasses – the better and not the worse of it, three glasses – the worse and not the better of it.*

*There are phrases in the book connected to levels of drunkenness. For example, tha smùid air means 'he is happily drunk'. And 'smùid' appears again in the phrase bha e air smùid mhòr a ghabhail. That*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu leabhar a thàinig a-mach am-bliadhna – *The Naughty Little Book of Gaelic*. Chaidh a chur ri chèile le Micheal Newton. Bu chòir dhomh a ràdh nach eil mi a' brosnachadh dhaoine a dh'ionnsaigh droch ghiùlan no droch chainnt! Ach tha briathrachas ann a tha inntinneach.

Tha mi an dùil gum bi sibh eòlach air *deoch an dorais*. Sin nuair a bhiodh daoine a' faighinn deoch air an rathad a-mach à taigh. Deoch aig an doras, mar gum biodh. Agus tha *deoch-eòlais* a' ciallachadh deoch a ghabhas daoine nuair a tha iad a' faighinn eòlas air a chèile.

Ach bha daoine riamh mothachail gu bheil cunnart an cois na dibhe. Tha seanfhacal ag innse dhuinn – *nuair a bhios deoch a-staigh, bidh ciall a-muigh*. Tha seanfhacal eile ann: *aon ghlainne – chan fheàrrde 's cha mhiste i, dà ghlainne – is fheàrrde 's cha mhiste i, trì glainneachan – is miste 's chan fheàrrde i*.

Tha abairtean anns an leabhar co-cheangailte ri ìrean de mhisg. Mar eisimpleir, *tha smùid air* a' ciallachadh *'he is happily drunk'*. Agus tha *'smùid'* a' nochdadh a-rithist anns an abairt *bha e air smùid mhòr a ghabhail*. Tha sin a'

means 'he went on a big drinking binge.'

*The final chapter of the book is about sex. The vocabulary isn't in the normal dictionaries. If you want to learn words for the genitalia in men and women, this is the book for you. I'm not going to broadcast them on the radio, and you'll understand why!*

*There is a Gaelic phrase for 'French kiss' as people say in the other language. But, instead of naming France, it names a small Gaelic island in Scotland. Which island? It will perhaps surprise you, and I'm not going to tell you. You'll have to buy the book!*

*And there is another meaning, I didn't appreciate before, I have to admit, for 'playing the clarsach'. From now on, I'll be very careful about asking a woman to play her clarsach for me. I'd be worried that I'd get a slap on the mouth!*

ciallachadh 'he went on a big drinking binge'.

Tha a' chaibideil mu dheireadh dhen leabhar mu dheidhinn feise. Chan eil am briathrachas anns na faclairan àbhaisteach. Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh faclan ionnsachadh airson nam ball-gineamhainn ann am fir is mnathan, seo an leabhar dhuibh. Chan eil mi a' dol gan craoladh air an rèidio, agus tuigidh sibh carson!

Tha Gàidhlig ann airson 'pòg Fhrangach' mar a chanas daoine anns a' chànan eile. Ach, an àite an Fhraing ainmeachadh, tha e ag ainmeachadh eilean beag Gàidhealach ann an Alba. Dè an t-eilean? Cuiridh e iongnadh oirbh 's dòcha, agus chan eil mi a' dol a dh'innse dhuibh. Feumaidh sibh an leabhar a cheannach!

Agus tha ciall eile, nach robh agam roimhe, feumaidh mi aideachadh, air 'seinn na clàrsaich'. Bho seo a-mach, bidh mi gu math faiceallach de bhith a' faighneachd de bhoireannach an seinn i a clàrsach dhomh. Bhiodh an t-eagal orm gum faighinn sgailc air mo bhus!