

An Litir Bheag

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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 896 (which corresponds to Litir 1,200). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

You'll know the word boogie for 'dance'. It's relatively common in US English. Some reckon that it came from an African language. But is there a connection to the Gaelic word bogadh?

The Gaelic scholar Michael Newton proposes that in his book Gaelic in Your Gob. The book appeared last year. Michael has done a lot for Gaelic and here is a small attractive book that is full of gems [pearls]. Perhaps the matter at the base of the relationship between boogie and bogadh is sexual intercourse.

Dwelly's dictionary says this. Bogadh: 'softening, mollifying, steeping, dipping, moistening ... wagging, bobbing, softness, tenderness ...' For 'the dog is wagging its tail' we say 'tha an cù a' bogadh earbaill'.

Now, perhaps Edward Dwelly was too 'polite' to include another meaning of the word. But Michael Newton tells us that poets in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were using bogadh as slang for sexual intercourse. He gives examples in his book. He reckons that the Gaelic word bogadh is among [the words]

Bidh sibh eòlach air an fhacal *boogie* airson 'danns'. Tha e car cumanta ann am Beurla nan Stàitean Aonaichte. Tha cuid dhen bheachd gun tàinig e bho chànan Afraganach. Ach a bheil ceangal ann ris an fhacal Ghàidhlig *bogadh*?

Tha an sgoilear Gàidhlig Micheal Newton a' cur sin air adhart anns an leabhar aige *Gaelic in Your Gob*. Nochd an leabhar an-uiridh. Tha Micheal air tòrr a dhèanamh airson na Gàidhlig agus seo leabhar beag tarraingeach a tha làn neamhnaidean. Math dh'fhaodte gur e an gnothach aig bunait a' chàirdeis eadar *boogie* agus *bogadh* – feise.

Tha faclair Dwelly ag ràdh seo. Bogadh: 'softening, mollifying, steeping, dipping, moistening ... wagging, bobbing, softness, tenderness ...' Airson 'the dog is wagging its tail' canaidh sinn 'tha an cù a' bogadh earbaill'.

Nise, 's dòcha gun robh Eideard Dwelly ro 'mhodhail' airson ciall eile dhen fhacal a chur ann. Ach tha Micheal Newton ag innse dhuinn gun robh bàird anns an t-seachdamh is ochdamh linn deug a' cleachdadh 'bogadh' mar thruaill-chainnt airson feise. Tha e a' toirt eisimpleirean anns an leabhar aige. Tha e dhen bheachd gur dòcha gu bheil

that contributed to boogie in the United States.

There are almost fifty words in the book. We shall look at another example or two. You'll know the word bean-sìthe or bean-shìthe in Gaelic. Fairy woman. Since it is 'banshee' that people say in English, there is an opinion that it came from Irish Gaelic.

However, Michael Newton tells us that it came originally from Scottish Gaelic. It appeared in 1771 as 'Benshi or the Fairies wife' in Scotland.

Perhaps the English word blackmail came from Gaelic. Màl dubh was a sum of money that a farmer would pay to a landlord corresponding to each of his cattle. That was like insurance against the theft of the livestock. The landlord would retrieve the animals or find others to replace them. Blackmail.

am facal Gàidhlig *bogadh* am measg na chuir ri *boogie* anns na Stàitean Aonaichte.

Tha cha mhòr leth-cheud facal anns an leabhar. Bheir sinn sùil air eisimpleir no dhà eile. Bidh sibh eòlach air an fhacal *bean-sìthe* no *bean-shìthe* ann an Gàidhlig. *Fairy woman*. Leis gur e 'banshee' a chanas daoine ann am Beurla, tha beachd ann gun tàinig e bho Ghàidhlig na h-Èireann.

Ge-tà, tha Micheal Newton ag innse dhuinn gun tàinig e an toiseach bho Ghàidhlig na h-Alba. Nochd e ann an clò ann an seachd ceud deug, seachad 's a h-aon (1771) mar '*Benshi or the Fairies wife*' ann an Alba.

'S dòcha gun tàinig am facal Beurla *blackmail* bhon Ghàidhlig. B' e *màl dubh* sùm airgid a bhiodh tuathanach a' pàigheadh do uachdaran mu choinneamh gach mart aige. Bha sin mar àrachas an aghaidh goid na sprèidhe. Bhiodh an t-uachdaran a' faighinn nam beathaichean air ais no a' lorg feadhainn eile nan àite. Am *màl dubh*.