

## **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 983 (which corresponds to Litir 1,287). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).*

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| <p><i>How ye doo'een? Ach yir se-en it. How's yerself? No bad – it's a smasheen day, ri'eenuff.</i></p> <p><i>I'm starting the Litir today with a bit of English. It belongs to the Highland capital, Inverness. A wee while ago I got a booklet that was published by the Inverness Local History Forum. The booklet's title is 'Old Inverness Words and Phrases'.</i></p> <p><i>Some of the words are peculiar to Inverness. For example – clacher. It's not a person who works professionally with stones, but somebody who supports the local football team – Clachnacuddin FC! And salachs – I've never heard that elsewhere. It means 'Salvation Army' – salachs.</i></p> <p><i>There is a section in the book about words that came into Inverness English from Gaelic. It's hardly surprising. Gaelic was spoken by a majority of the townsfolk over hundreds of years.</i></p> <p><i>Here is an example from their vocabulary. Amadan – a fool. That is the same in both languages. Also groyk – 'a fool, an awkward person' – from the Gaelic gròig.</i></p> | <p><i>How ye doo'een? Ach yir se-en it. How's yerself? No bad – it's a smasheen day, ri'eenuff.</i></p> <p><i>Tha mi a' tòiseachadh na Litreach an-diugh le beagan Beurla. Buinidh i do phrìomh bhaile na Gàidhealtachd, Inbhir Nis. O chionn ghoirid, fhuair mi leabhran a chaidh fhoillseachadh le Fòram Eachdraidh Ionadail Inbhir Nis. 'S e an tìotal a tha air an leabhran Old Inverness Words and Phrases.</i></p> <p><i>Tha cuid de na faclan sònraichte do Inbhir Nis. Mar eisimpleir – clacher. Chan e neach a tha ag obair gu proifeiseanta le clachan, ach cuideigin a tha a' toirt taic don sgioba ball-coise ionadail – Clachnacuddin FC! Agus salachs – cha chuala mi sin ann an àite eile. Tha e a' ciallachadh Salvation Army – salachs.</i></p> <p><i>Tha earrann anns an leabhran mu fhaclan a thàinig a-steach a Bheurla Inbhir Nis bhon Ghàidhlig. Is beag an t-iongnadh. Bha Gàidhlig aig a' mhòr-chuid de mhuinntir a' bhaile thairis air ceudan bhliadhnaichean.</i></p> <p><i>Seo eisimpleir bhon bhriathrachas aca. Amadan – a fool. Tha sin co-ionann anns an dà chànan. Cuideachd groyk – a fool, an awkward person – bhon Ghàidhlig gròig.</i></p> |
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| <p>Cyarack – left-handed. <i>The booklet does not explain how people use it. In Gaelic we say ‘tha cuideigin leis a’ chearraig’ or ‘tha a’ chearrag aige’.</i> Doorchan – a pine cone. <i>That comes from the Gaelic durcan.</i> Dossan – a fringe of hair on the forehead – <i>from the Gaelic dosan.</i></p> <p><i>They also have the word cappach, meaning ‘toothless’. The Gaelic word cabach means ‘toothless or possessing an ugly mouth’. In Inverness English, people say mappach for very drunk and confused. In Gaelic mabach means ‘stammering, stuttering’; it’s connected to speech but it doesn’t need to be connected to strong drink.</i></p> <p><i>The phrase mo-hooker is in Inverness English, meaning ‘it doesn’t matter’. That is obviously from the Gaelic phrase ma thogair with the same meaning. It will be interesting to see what survives of the old Gaelic words and phrases in Inverness English in the long term.</i></p> | <p><i>Cyarack – left-handed.</i> Chan eil an leabhran a’ mìneachadh mar a bhios daoine ga chleachdadh. Ann an Gàidhlig bidh sinn ag ràdh gu bheil cuideigin leis a’ chearraig no gu bheil a’ chearrag aige. <i>Doorchan – a pine cone.</i> Tha sin a’ tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig <i>durcan.</i> <i>Dossan – fringe of hair on the forehead – bhon Ghàidhlig dosan.</i></p> <p>Tha am facal <i>cappach</i> aca cuideachd, a’ ciallachadh <i>toothless</i>. Tha am facal Gàidhlig <i>cabach</i> a’ ciallachadh ‘gun fhiaclan no le beul grànda’. Ann am Beurla Inbhir Nis, canaidh daoine <i>mappach</i> airson <i>very drunk and confused</i>. Ann an Gàidhlig tha <i>mabach</i> a’ ciallachadh <i>stammering, stuttering</i>; tha e co-cheangailte ri cainnt ach cha leig e leas a bhith co-cheangailte ri deoch làidir.</p> <p>Tha an abairt <i>mo-hooker</i> ann am Beurla Inbhir Nis, a’ ciallachadh <i>it doesn’t matter</i>. Tha sin gu follaiseach bhon abairt Ghàidhlig <i>ma thogair</i> leis an dearbh chiall. Bidh e inntinneach faicinn dè mhaireas beò de na seann fhaclan is abairtean Gàidhlig ann am Beurla Inbhir Nis anns an ùine fhada.</p> |
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