

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk **

Anns a’ phuing-ghràmar anns an Litir mu dheireadh, thug sinn sùil air an abairt “is coireach”. Anns an ochdamh linn deug, nuair a bha e anns a’ chùirt fo chasaid de mhurt, chleachd Seumas Stiùbhart, neo Seumas a’ Ghlinne, mar as fheàrr a dh’aithnichear e, an abairt sin. “Cò air bith is coireach,” thuirt e, “is mis’ an creanaiche.” ’S e *creanaiche* cuideigin a tha a’ fuiling ann an dòigh air choreigin. Bha Seumas a’ ciallachadh gur e cuideigin eile bu choireach airson a’ mhurt, ach gur e e fhèin a bhiodh ciontach a rèir na cùirte.

Tha e iongantach mar a tha deasbad ann fhathast mu dheidhinn ciont Sheumais Stiùbhairt. Tha mi a’ dèanamh dheth gur e is coireach airson sin gun do chleachd an sgrìobhadair ainmeil, Raibeart Louis Stevenson, a’ chùis anns an nobhail aige, “Kidnapped”. Fàgaidh sinn an leabhar an darna taobh, ge-tà, is bheir sinn sùil air na thachair, cho fad ’s is aithne dhuinn, ann am “Muirte Apainn” ann an seachd ceud deug, dà fhichead ’s a dhà dheug (1752).

Air a’ cheathramh latha deug dhen Chèitean, bha ceathrar a’ dol tro Choille an Leitir Mhòir ann an Apainn, ann an Earra-Ghaidheal. Chualas urchair-ghunna agus thuit fear far an eich a bha e a’ marcachd, agus dà pheilear na dhruim. B’ esan Cailean Caimbeul à Gleann Iubhair.

Bha an Caimbeulach ag obair don riaghaltas mar bhàillidh air na h-oighreachdan a chaidh a ghabhail thairis an dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair, air sgàth ’s gun tug na cinn-chinnidh taic do Theàrlach Og Stiùbhart. Am measg nan oighreachdan sin, bha Ard Seile ann an Apainn, a bha le Stiùbhartach eile (nach robh càirdeach don Phrionnsa). An dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair, theich an ceann-cinnidh don Fhraing agus chaill e a chuid fearainn.

Sia bliadhna as dèidh sin, ’s e Cailean Caimbeul à Gleann Iubhair a bha a’ riaghladh na h-oighreachd, as leth an riaghaltais. Ach bha muinntir an àite gu math mì-thoilichte. Bha an Caimbeulach a’ feuchainn ri cuid aca fhuadachadh bhon dachannan. Agus bha nàimhdeas air a bhith ann eadar na Stiùbhartaich agus na Caimbeulaich airson uine mhòir co-dhiù.

Chan eil fios le cinnt cò mhurt Cailean Caimbeul, ach bha amharas ann gur e Stiùbhartach eile, Ailean Breac, a bu choireach. Bha Ailean na shaighdear aig an riaghaltas, ach chaidh e thairis do dh’arm nan Seumasach, agus theich e don Fhraing an dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair. Thill e a dh’Alba bho àm gu àm, ge-tà, ann an dìomhaireachd, agus tha e coltach gu robh e ann an Earra-Ghaidheal aig àm a’ mhurt.

Cha d'fhuair an riaghaltas greim air, ach bha iad airson cuideigin a pheanasachadh. Chuir iad casaidean as leth lethbhràthair a' chinn-chinnidh, Seumas Stiùbhart, Seumas a' Ghlinne, gu robh esan an sàs anns a' mhurt còmhla ri Ailean Breac. Mu dheireadh, nochd e anns a' chùirt ann an ... càite? Càite, ach Inbhir Aora, prìomh bhaile nan Caimbeulach!

'S e Caimbeulach a bh' anns an àrd-bhrìtheamh, agus bha Caimbeulaich anns a' mhòr-chuid anns an diùraidh. Chan eil e na iongnadh, ma-thà, gun d'fhuair a' chùirt ciontach e. Chaidh Seumas a chrochadh air croich ann am Bail' a' Chaolais, agus chaidh a chnàmhan fhàgail ann a sin, air an cumail ri chèile le ueir, airson bliadhnaichean, mar rabhadh do mhuinntir an àite.

Shaoileadh tu, nuair a bha e air ais anns an Fhraing, gu robh Ailean Breac air aideachadh don mhurt, ach cha do dh'aidich. Cò, ma-thà, a mhuirt Cailean Caimbeul? 'S dòcha nach bi fios againn air a sin a-chaoidh.

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Faclan na seachdaine: creanaiche: *sufferer*; iongantach: *surprising*; ciont: *guilt*; nobhail: *novel*; Apainn: *Appin*; Coille an Leitir Mhòir: *Lettermore Wood*; Cailean Caimbeul à Gleann Iubhair: *Colin Campbell of Glenure*; an Caimbeulach: *Campbell (informal)*; Ard Seile: *Ardsheal*; Blàr Chùil Lodair: *The Battle of Culloden*; theich: *fled*; dìomhaireachd: *secrecy*; Inbhir Aora: *Inveraray*; àrd-bhrìtheamh: *senior judge*; diùraidh: *jury*; croich: *gibbet*; Bail' a' Chaolais: *Ballachulish*; a chnàmhan: *his bones*; rabhadh: *warning*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: fo chasaid de mhurt: *charged with murder*; cò air bith is coireach: *whoever is responsible*; gur e e fhèin a bhiodh ciontach a rèir na cùirte: *that it was himself that would be guilty according to the court*; fàgaidh sinn an leabhar an darna taobh: *we will put the book aside*; chualas urchair-ghunna: *a gunshot was heard*; agus dà pheilear na dhruim: *with two bullets in his back*; mar bhàillidh air na h-oighreachdan a chaidh a ghabhail thairis: *as factor on the estates which had been taken over*; air sgàth 's gun tug na cinn-chinnidh taic do Theàrlach Og Stiùbhart: *because the clan chiefs helped Young Charles Stewart (ie Bonnie Prince Charlie)*; a bha le Stiùbhartach eile: *which was owned by another Stewart*; chaill e a chuid fearainn: *he lost his land*; as leth an riaghaltais: *on behalf of the government*; chaidh e thairis do dh'arm nan Seumasach: *he went over to the Jacobite army*; bha iad airson cuideigin a pheanasachadh: *they wanted to punish somebody*; chuir iad casaidean as leth lethbhràthair a' chinn-chinnidh: *they charged the chief's half-brother*; air an cumail ri chèile le ueir: *held together by wire*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: Thuit fear far an eich a bha e a' marcachd: *a man fell from the horse he was riding. The preposition far (sometimes written bhàrr and meaning "from" or "off") is an interesting one because it appears at first instance to be a simple one, requiring only the dative case in the following noun. But you will notice above that I said far an eich, not far an each. This shows that, in fact, it commands the genitive case, as do compound prepositions (those containing more than one element). The reason is that it was, historically, a compound preposition, de bhàrr, meaning "from the top or surface of". So we say "thàinig an carbad far an rathaid" (the vehicle came off the road), not "...far an rathad". Here are two other examples of the use of far; note the genitives: Thàinig e far na cìche aig bliadhna a dh'aois (he came off the breast, ie. was weaned, at one year old); Thuit e far a leapa air an oidhche (he fell off his bed during the night). How would you say in Gaelic "the cup fell from the table"*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Mar as fheàrr a dh'aithnichear e: *as he is best known. You will hear phrases of this type used in the funeral announcements on Radio nan Gaidheal, because people are still often best known in their own communities, and even outside them, by nicknames or patronymics, rather than by their “official” name.*

* *“Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh” is funded by Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig*