

## *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](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \**

An t-seachdain sa chaidh dh’innis mi dhuibh mun chù a chaidh an sàs anns an spreadhadh nuair a chaidh seann chaisteal Inbhir Nis, Gearastan Deòrsa, a sgrios leis na Seumasaich. Dìreach dà mhìos as dèidh sin, chaidh sgrios a dhèanamh air na Seumasaich fhèin air blàr taobh a-muigh Inbhir Nis, faisg air baile beag le ainm a dh’fhàs gu math ainmeil – Cùil Lodair.

Bu mhath leam an t-seachdain seo sùil a thoirt, chan ann air a’ bhatail fhèin, ach air an ainm sin – Cùil Lodair. Dè tha e a’ ciallachadh agus carson is e *Culloden* a th’ air ann am Beurla, le “n” aig an deireadh, seach “r”?

Thathar a’ dèanamh dheth gur e a’ chiad phàirt dhen ainm “*Cùil*” a tha a’ ciallachadh *nook* is, gu dearbh, tha an eileamaid seo a’ nochdadh ann an ainmean-àite eile ann an sgìre Inbhir Nis agus anns an Eilean Dubh. Bha feadhainn dhen bheachd gur dòcha gur e “*cùil*” a bh’ ann o thùs, a’ ciallachadh *back* no *at the back of* ach, an-diugh, tha a’ chuid mhòr dhen bheachd gur e “*cùil*” a bh’ ann. Ach dè tha *Lodair* a’ ciallachadh?

Rinn mi beagan rannsachaidh agus cho fada air ais ’s a b’ urrainn dhomh lorg, ’s e Cùil Lodair a bh’ air an àite seo ann an Gàidhlig. Mar eisimpleir, tha “do Chuilodair” a’ nochdadh ann am pìos bàrdachd a sgrìobh am bàrd à Inbhir Nis, Coinneach MacCoinnich, a rugadh ann seachd deug, caogad ’s a h-ochd (1758). Agus sgrìobh am bàrd ainmeil à Srath Spè, Iain Ruadh Stiùbhart, a bh’ air a’ bhàr air là a’ bhatail, dàn air an robh “Latha Chuilodair”. Bha Cuilodair air a litreachadh C-U-I-L-O-D-A-I-R. ’S e *Culloden* a bh’ air ann am Beurla aig an àm agus, mar sin, tha e follaiseach gu robh an diofar eadar an “n” agus an “r” air èirigh ro mheadhan an ochdamh linn deug.

Ann am meadhan an naoidheamh linn deug, nochd an litreachadh F-H-O-D-A-I-R airson “fodar”. Cùil-Fhodair, the nook of the fodder. ’S e sin a bh’ aig Iain MacCoinnich anns an leabhar Ghàidhlig aige, “Eachdraidh a’ Phrionnsa” agus, airson greis, lean Gaidheil Inbhir Nis an dòigh smaoinichaidh sin. Gu dearbh, ’s ann mar sin a sgrìobh Màiri Mhòr nan Òran e na cuid bàrdachd. Ach tha a h-uile coltas ann gu robh iad ceàrr. Bha feadhainn eile ceàrr cuideachd, oir shaoil iadsan gu robh an dàrna pàirt dhen ainm a’ seasamh airson “oitir” no fiù ’s airson “Odin”, fear de sheann diathan pàganach nan Lochlannach!

Nuair a thèid sinn air ais cho fada ’s as urrainn ann an eachdraidh Inbhir Nis, agus a’ chuid a bu mhò dhith sgrìobhte ann am Beurla, ’s e *Culloden*, no rudeigin coltach ris a tha sinn a’ lorg. Ann an clàr a’ bhaile ann am meadhan an t-siathamh linn deug, chithear *Cullodyn*, le “yn” aig an deireadh. Gu h-annasach, oir ’s ann air an rathad eile a tha e mar as trice, ’s e an t-ainm Gàidhlig a th’ air atharrachadh, seach an t-ainm Beurla.

Ann an Srath Narainn, pìos beag a-mach à Inbhir Nis, tha àite ann air a bheil *Achlodan* ann am Beurla. 'S e sin Ach' an Lodain – *the field of the little pool*. Tha *lodan* a' ciallachadh *little pool, bog no little marsh*. Agus Culloden? Uill, 's e Cùil Lodain a bh' air ann an Gàidhlig bho thùs, rud a thuig na sgoilearan Gàidhlig anns an fhicheadamh linn. Cùil Lodain – *the nook of the pool no nook of the marsh* – ainm a tha gu math coltach.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** eileamaid: *element*; Eilean Dubh: *Black Isle*; Coinneach MacCoinnich: *Kenneth Mackenzie*; Srath Spè: *Strathspey*; Iain Ruadh Stiùbhart: *John Roy Stewart*; fodar: *fodder*; Srath Narainn: *Strathnairn*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** bu mhath leam sùil a thoirt, chan ann air a' bhatail fhèin, ach air an ainm sin: *I would to look, not at the battle itself, but at that name*; gu robh an diofar air èirigh ro mheadhan an ochdamh linn deug: *that the difference had arisen before the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*; lean Gaidheil Inbhir Nis an dòigh smaoinichaidh sin: *the Gaels of Inverness followed that line of thinking*; 's ann mar sin a sgrìobh Màiri Mhòr nan Òran e na cuid bàrdachd: *that's the way Big Mary of the Songs (Mary MacPherson) wrote it in her poetry*; tha a h-uile coltas ann gu robh iad ceàrr: *it appears they were wrong*; gu robh an dàrna pàirt dhen ainm a' seasamh airson "oitir": *that the second part of the name stood for "oitir" (a shingle bank of which there were many close to Inverness)*; fear de sheann diathan pàganach nan Lochlannach: *one of the old pagan Norse gods*; nuair a thèid sinn air ais cho fad 's as urrainn ann an eachdraidh Inbhir Nis: *when we go back as far as we can in Inverness's history*; gu h-annasach, oir 's ann air an rathad eile a tha e mar as trice: *unusually, for it is usually the other way round*; 's e an t-ainm Gàidhlig a th' air atharrachadh, seach an t-ainm Beurla: *it is the Gaelic name that has changed, rather than the English name*; rud a thuig na sgoilearan Gàidhlig anns an fhicheadamh linn: *something the Gaelic scholars understood in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.

**Puing-ghràmaid na seachdaine:** chaidh sgrìobhadh a dhèanamh air na Seumasaich fhèin air blàr taobh a-muigh Inbhir Nis: *the Jacobites themselves were destroyed on a battlefield outside Inverness. I once heard a heated argument between two fluent Gaelic speakers after one of them had said (in Gaelic) that he had just been to Blàr Chùil Lodair. The second asked facetiously if he had the Tardis-like ability to transport himself back in time to 1746, to which the other replied with a proverb that castigates ignorance! Of course, they were talking at cross purposes. The first, a mainlander, meant, quite legitimately, that he had just been to the Culloden Battlefield site. The second, an islander, had seemingly only heard blàr being used, at least in reference to Culloden, for the famous battle itself. The original meaning of blàr is a plain or large flat area and this is the reason for its appearance in old place names, such as Blairgowrie (Blàr Ghobharaidh) and Blair Atholl (Blàr Athall). Such places were ideal for battles, so the word came to mean "battlefield" and, in time, also to mean "battle". So Blàr Chùil Lodair can mean "The Battle of Culloden" or "The Battlefield of Culloden"; the context should make it obvious what is meant.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** ainm a tha gu math coltach: *a name which is pretty likely (to be correct).*

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