

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 **

Air bruach an iar Loch Laomainn, faisg air an rathad A 82, gu deas air baile Àird Laoigh, tha clach mhòr ainmeil ann. Air a’ mhap, ’s e *Pulpit Rock* a th’ oirre. Tuigidh sibh gu robh i air a cur gu feum uaireigin mar chùbaid.

Bha sin bho ochd-deug, fichead ’s a còig (1825) a-mach, as dèidh do mhuinntir an àite gearain don mhinistear aca gu robh aca ri coiseachd ro fhada don eaglais air an t-Sabaid. “Uill,” thuir am ministear, an t-Urramach Peadar Proudfoot, “ma thogas sibh cùbaid is seòmar-culaidh dhomh ann am badeigin, thig mi a-mach agus searmonachaidh mi dhuibh ann a sin.”

Agus ’s e sin a thachair. Chleachd na daoine stuth spreadhaidh agus chladhaich iad toll anns a’ chloich, a bhiodh mòr gu leòr airson a’ mhinistear. Aig a’ cheann thall, bha e mòr gu leòr airson triùir – am ministear, eildear agus fear a chuireadh a-mach an loighne nuair a bhathar a’ gabhail nan salm.

Chaidh doras a chur air beul an tuill agus, air a chùlaibh, bha an seòmar-culaidh. Bha àrd-ùrlar air a thogail air aghaidh na cloiche, air beulaibh an dorais. Bhiodh cùbaid air a cur air an àrd-ùrlar sin nuair a thigeadh am ministear air an t-Sàbaid. Bhiodh muinntir an àite a-muigh ag èisteachd ris an t-searmon, ann an deagh shìde is droch shìde – cleachdadh a bha cumanta gu leòr ann an eachdraidh na h-Alba.

’S ann mar sin a bha e airson seasgad ’s a còig bliadhna gus an deach eaglais bheag a thogail ann an Àird Laoigh aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug. Chaidh an t-àrd-ùrlar agus an dòras, a bh’ air an dèanamh le fiodh, a chleachdadh mar chonnadh le luchd-siubhail, agus dhìochuimhnich a’ chuid mhòr dhen t-sluagh mu dheidhinn na cloiche. Tha coille mhòr dhorcha air fàs suas mu a timcheall.

’S ann mar sin a bha e gus o chionn ghoirid nuair a chum am ministear, an t-Urramach Dane Shepherd, searmon aig a’ chloich. Tha buidheann coimhearsnachd a-nise ag iarraidh na craobhan mu a timcheall a leigeal agus àite-pàircidh a thogail ri a taobh. Tha e coltach gum bithear a’ brosnachadh cuid de na daoine, a bhios a’ tadhal air Pàirce Nàiseanta ùr Loch Laomainn is nan Tròisichean, a dhol a dh’fhaicinn na cloiche.

Nise, saoil dè a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air *Pulpit Rock*? Clach na Cùbaid, ’s dòcha? Uill, chan e, oir bha ainm Gàidhlig oirre fada fada mus robh guth air cleachdadh na cloiche airson searmon. Tha an t-ainm Beurla oirre a’ buntainn ri cleachdadh Crìosdail, ach tha an t-ainm Gàidhlig a’ dol air ais gu dualchas nas sine na sin. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ oirre ann an Gàidhlig *Clach nan Tarbh*.

Tha sgeulachd co-cheangailte ris an ainm, a th' air aithris le Mìcheal Newton anns an leabhar mhath aige, “Bho Chluaidh gu Calasraid”. Bha tarbh mòr dearg à Sasainn a thàinig a dh'Alba airson an dùthaich a mhaslachadh. “Is truagh an dùthaich!” ghlaodh e nuair a bha e gu h-àrd os cionn Loch Laomainn.

Bha tarbh dubh nan Albannach feargach agus thug e an aghaidh air an tarbh dhearg. Bha iad a' strì an aghaidh a chèile shuas àrd air Beinn Mhurlaig agus phut iad thairis clach mhòr. Ruith a' chlach sìos a' bheinn don àite far a bheil i an-diugh ri taobh an locha. Agus rinn an tarbh dubh Albannach a' chùis air an tarbh dhearg Shasannach. Tha mi an dòchas, nuair a dh'innseas muinntir na Pàirce Nàiseanta do luchd-turais mu dheidhinn na cloiche, nach dìochuimhnich iad an t-ainm Gàidhlig, agus an dualchas a tha co-cheangailte ris.

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Faclan na seachdaine: Loch Laomainn: *Loch Lomond*; Àird Laoigh: *Ardlui*; seòmar-culaidh: *vestry*; stuth spreadhaidh: *explosive material*; eildear: *elder*; connadh: *fuel*; coille mhòr dhorcha: *a large dark wood (forest)*; Pàirce Nàiseanta Loch Laomainn is nan Tròisichean: *Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park*; Clach nan Tarbh: *The Stone (rock) of the Bulls*; Beinn Mhurlaig: *Ben Vorlich*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: gu robh i air a cur gu feum uaireigin mar chùbaid: *that it was at one time used as a pulpit*; gu robh aca ri coiseachd ro fhada don eaglais air an t-Sàbaid: *that they had to walk too far to the church on the Sabbath*; agus 's e sin a thachair: *and that's what happened*; nuair a bhathar a' gabhail nan salm: *when the psalms were being sung*; bha àrd-ùrlar air a thogail air aghaidh na cloiche, air beulaibh an dorais: *a platform was built on the face of the rock, in front of the door*; cleachdadh a bha cumanta gu leòr: *a practice that was common enough*; dhìochuimhnich X mu dheidhinn na cloiche: *X forgot about the rock*; tha Y air fàs suas mu a timcheall: *Y has grown up around it (fem.)*; gus o chionn ghoirid: *until recently*; tha X ag iarraidh na craobhan a leigeal agus àite-pàircidh a thogail ri a taobh: *X wants to fell the trees and build a parking place next to it (fem)*; tha an t-ainm Beurla a' buntainn ri cleachdadh Crìosdail: *the English name is associated with a Christian practice*; airson an dùthaich a mhaslachadh: *to put the country to shame*; is truagh an dùthaich!: *what a pathetic country!*; thug e an aghaidh air an tarbh dhearg: *he stood up to the red bull*; nach dìochuimhnich iad X, agus an dualchas a tha co-cheangailte ris: *that they won't forget X, and the heritage associated with it*.

Puing-ghràmail na seachdaine: *Did you notice the three uses of the adverb a-mach in this week's Litir? It appears first, meaning “from 1825 onwards” in bho 1825 a-mach. Secondly, it occurs in perhaps its most obvious circumstance, meaning simply “out” in thig mi a-mach agus searmonachaidh mi (I will come out and preach). And thirdly it appears in fear a chuireadh a-mach an loighne (lit. a man who would put out the line, meaning the precentor who would lead the psalm-signing). In the early stages of learning Gaelic, you would have been told that a-mach means “out”, usually expressing movement eg leum e a-mach às a' chàr (he leaped out of the car), dh'fhalbh i a-mach o chionn 5 mionaidean (she went out 5 minutes ago); choimhead mi a-mach air an uinneig (I looked out of the window). But be aware that this adverb is employed in a vast array of expressions and idiom, and that you will often come across it in situations where it cannot be translated simply as “out”. Here are some examples: bha iad a-mach air a chèile (they were having a heated argument, they fell out with each other); abair dol a-mach a bh' aige! (eg what a ridiculous way to behave!); anns a' chiad dol a-mach (in the first instance); tha iad a' cumail a-mach gu*

bheil ... (*they maintain that...*); bha i a-mach air cho math 's a bha a' Ghrèig (*she was going on about how good Greece was*); chuir mi a-mach trì tursan (*I vomited three times*).

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: 'S ann mar sin a bha e (airson seasgad 's a còig bliadhna): *that's how it was (for 75 years)*.

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