

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 rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk **

Halò a-rithist, a chàirdean. An t-seachdain-sa, tha mi airson ur toirt gu sgìre air leth brèagha ann am fìor cheann a tuath na h-Alba – Dùthaich MhicAoidh, ann an Cataibh. Gu deas air baile Thunga, tha beinn àrd air a bheil Beinn Laoghail. Agus eadar am baile agus a’ bheinn tha dà lochan ann.

’S e Lochan na Cuilce am fear as lugha dhiubh. Tha an t-ainm sin furasta gu leòr thuigsinn. Tha e a’ ciallachadh *Lochan of the Reeds*. Ach am fear as mò, ri thaobh? Air a’ mhap, ’s e *Lochan Hakel* a th’ air. H-A-K-E-L. Ach tha mi a’ smaoinichadh gur e *Lochan Hakon* a chanas muinntir an àite ris. H-A-K-O-N. Chanainn gur e ainm Lochlannach a th’ ann, is cò aige tha fios nach eil ceangal aige don t-seann rìgh Lochlannach a th’ air a chuimhneachadh ann an Caol Àcainn anns an Eilean Sgitheanach?

Co-dhiù no co-dheth, bu mhath leam eachdraidh annasach innse dhuibh mu dheidhinn an lochain seo. Anns a’ Mhàirt, seachd ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a sia (1746), bha na Seumasaich, agus Teàrlach Òg Stiùbhart, ann an staing. Bha an arm a’ sìor chrìonadh, agus ’s ann anns a’ cheann a tuath a-mhàin a bha iad a’ faighinn taic mhòr sam bith. Ach ’s e aon sgìre anns nach robh iad a’ faighinn taic – Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Bha Clann ’ic Aoidh taiceil do na Hanoibhèirianaich.

Ann am meadhan a’ Mhàirt, chuir Rìgh na Frainge, Louis XV, soitheach – *an Hazard* – a dh’ionnsaigh Alba le còrr is trì-deug mìle not ann am buinn òir air bòrd. Bha còrr is ceud saighdear air bòrd cuideachd. Dh’fhàg i Dunkirk fo òrdugh an t-òr a thoirt don Phrionnsa ann an Inbhir Nis. B’ fheudar dhi cumail fad air falbh o chosta sear Shasainn ach, nuair a ràinig i Linne Mhoireibh, bha longan cogaidh aig Cabhlach Bhreatainn a’ feitheamh rithe. B’ fheudar don *Hazard* seòladh gu tuath, feuch faighinn air falbh, agus an soitheach cogaidh, an *Sheerness*, an tòir oirre.

Thionndaidh an *Hazard* gu siar nuair a ràinig i an Caol Arcach, ach ghlac an *Sheerness* i nuair a bha iad faisg air Tunga, agus soitheach nan Seumasach glaiste air oitir. Bha batail ann agus chaidh sgrios a dhèanamh air an *Hazard*, ach cha b’ urrainn do sheòladairean a *Sheerness* faighinn air bòrd oirre. Air an oidhche, chaidh aig muinntir an t-soithich Fhrangaich faighinn air tìr, agus thòisich iad air coiseachd a dh’ionnsaigh Inbhir Nis leis an òr airson a’ Phrionnsa.

Ge-tà, chuir seòladairean an *Sheerness* fios gu ceann-cinnidh Cloinn ’ic Aoidh agus chuir esan feachd an sàs an aghaidh nan Seumasach. Choinnich an dà fheachd faisg air Lochan Hakon. Bha na Seumasaich sgìth agus cha robh comas aca sabaid. Nuair a bha iad a’

teicheadh, thilg feadhainn aca an t-òr aca anns an lochan. Goirid as dèidh sin, ghèill iad agus chaidh an toirt gu prìosan anns an *Sheerness*.

Agus, mean air mhean, lorg an Riaghaltas an t-òr a bh' air a thilgeil anns an lochan. No an do lorg? Oir, bhathar ag ràdh gun d' fhuair mart, a chuir a chasan anns an lochan turas, bonn òir an sàs ann an ladhar aige. Agus bha fathannan ann gun do thiodhlaic cuid de na Seumasaich an cuid òir fon talamh, agus gun d' fhuair feadhainn buannachd às a sin bliadhnaichean as dèidh làimh. Thathar ag ràdh gu robh teaghlach anns an sgìre – teaghlach bochd aig ciobair – a dh'fhàs beartach gu h-obann! Ach 's e am fear nach do dh'fhàs beartach – am Prionnsa Òg. Trì seachdainean as dèidh call an *Hazard*, chaill e gu dubh aig Blàr Chùil Lodair.

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Faclan na seachdainne: Dùthaich MhicAoidh: *Mackay country*; Cataibh: *Sutherland*; Tunga: *Tongue*; Beinn Laoghail: *Ben Loyal*; Teàrlach Òg Stiùbhart: *Bonnie Prince Charlie*; soitheach: *vessel (ship)*; Linne Mhoireibh: *The Moray Firth*; ceann-cinnidh: *clan chief*; a' teicheadh: *fleeing*; ghèill iad: *they surrendered*; fathannan: *rumours*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: tha mi airson ur toirt: *I want to take you (pl.)*; eadar am baile agus a' bheinn tha dà lochan ann: *between the village and the mountain there are two lochans*; cò aige tha fios?: *who knows?*; a th' air a chuimhneachadh ann an Caol Àcainn: *who is remembered in Kyleakin*; bha an arm a' sìor chrìonadh: *their army was steadily diminishing in size*; 's ann anns a' cheann a tuath a-mhàin a bha iad a' faighinn taic mhòr sam bith: *it's only in the north that they were getting any significant support*; le trì-deug mìle not (or trì mìle deug not) ann am buinn òir: *with £13,000 in gold coins*; b' fheudar dhi cumail air falbh o chosta sear Shasainn: *she had to keep away from the east coast of England*; bha longan cogaidh aig Cabhlach Bhreatainn a' feitheamh rithe: *warships of the British Navy were waiting for her*; feuch faighinn air falbh: *trying to get away*; an tòir oirre: *in pursuit of her*; agus soitheach nan Seumasach glaiste air oitir: *with the Jacobites' vessel stuck on a sandbank*; chaidh aig muinntir an t-soithich Fhrangaich faighinn air tìr: *the people of the French vessel managed to get to land*; chuir esan feachd an sàs: *he organised a force*; an t-òr a bh' air a thilgeil anns an lochan: *the gold that was thrown in the lochan*; bhathar ag ràdh gun d' fhuair mart bonn òir an sàs anns an ladhar aige: *it was said that a stirk got a gold coin stuck in its hoof*; a dh'fhàs beartach gu h-obann: *that suddenly got rich*; trì seachdainean as dèidh call an *Hazard*: *three weeks after the loss of the Hazard*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne: *I would like to make a point this week about the pronunciation of the letter combination – chd. In Scottish Gaelic, although not in Irish, when this is terminal to a word, the d is pronounced like the English “k”, and not like an English “d” or “t”. Thus we get words like achd (“achk”), uchd (“oochk”), smachd (“smachk”), feachd (“FEH-uchk”), cumhachd (“COO-uchk”), tiormachd (“CHIR-uh-muchk”) and diadhachd (“JEE-uh-ghuchk”). This is an important point in fine honing your spoken Gaelic. In internal situations, it is also commonly pronounced in this way, eg cleachdadh (“KLEH-uhchk-ugh”), reachdail (“REH-uhck-il”) and tlachdmhor (“TLACHK-vur”). However, eachdraidh (history, narrative) which appears in the Litir in bu mhath leam eachdraidh annasach innse dhuibh (I would like to relate an unusual story to you), is an exception to this in most parts of the Gaidhealtachd. It is pronounced “EH-uch-tree”, with the “d” being closer to a “t” and certainly not approximating a “k”. Remember this exception. But note also that in parts of Argyll, eg the island of Lismore, eachdraidh follows the “chk” pronunciation rule and is pronounced “EH-uch-kree”.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Chaill e gu dubh (aig Blàr Chùil Lodair): *he lost really badly (at the Battle of Culloden).*

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