

## *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) \**

Uaireannan bidh daoine ag ràdh ann am Beurla, “*Scotland has only one lake*”. Ann an dùthaich far a bheil na mìltean de lochan, ’s e beachd neònach a th’ ann, ach tha e stèidhichte air an fhacal “*lake*” oir ’s e “*loch*” a tha anns cha mhòr a h-uile gin eile. ’S e an aon “*lake*” ainmeil a th’ againn *The Lake of Menteith*, ann an dùthaich ris an canar Tèadhaich, làimh ri Leamhnachd, eadar Sruighlea agus Loch Laomainn.

Mar a shaoileadh tu, ’s ann dìreach ann am Beurla a tha sin fìor oir tha seann ainm Gàidhlig air an loch seo – Loch Innse Mo Cholmaig. Nuair a chithear “Mo” mar sin ro ainm duine, tha e a’ ciallachadh gur e duine naomh a bh’ ann, agus tha ainmean eile mar sin anns a’ phàirt seo de dh’Alba. Baile Mo Thatha, mar eisimpleir, a th’ air ainmeachadh airson Naomh Mo Thatha.

Bha muinntir na sgìre seo cuideachd measail air Naomh Brìde, Naomh Mo Chùg, Naomh Bearachan agus naoimh eile. Agus tha Slighe Taobh an Iar na Gaidhealtachd a’ dol bho Bhaile Mo Thatha gu ruige àite eile air bruach Loch Laomainn a th’ air ainmeachadh airson naomh – Rubha Àird Eòdhnan. Tha Eòdhnán, no Adhamnan, ainmeil ann an eachdraidh na h-Alba. B’ esan an naoidheamh aba ann an Eilean Ì agus ’s e a sgrìobh an leabhar *Vita Sancti Columbae*, Beatha Chalum Chille.

Tha nàdar de cheangal ann eadar Eòdhnán agus am baile agam fhìn, Inbhir Nis, oir sgrìobh e mu thuras Chalum Chille a Rìgh nan Cruithneach ann an Inbhir Nis. Dh’innis e dhuinn cuideachd mar a chuir Calum Cille an teicheadh air an uilebheist ann an Abhainn Nis.

Agus tha naomh eile ann a tha a’ dèanamh ceangal eadar Leamhnachd agus Inbhir Nis – am fear a bu chudthromaiche do mhuinntir Leamhnachd – Naomh Mo Cheasag. Tha esan air a chuimhneachadh ann an ainmean-àite ann an Inbhir Nis – Ceasaig a Tuath agus Ceasaig a Deas. A rèir beul-aithris, chaidh ainm an naoimh a chur air an àite as dèidh dha mìorbhail a dhèanamh. Nuair a bha e na bhodach, bha e a’ faighinn aiseag thar a’ chaolais eadar Inbhir Nis agus an t-Eilean Dubh nuair a dh’èirich stoirm a chuir am bàta fodha. Chaidh na bh’ air bòrd a bhàthadh, ach Ceasag fhèin, agus thug an naomh beatha as ùr don a h-uile duine aca. As dèidh na mìorbhaile, ’s e Port Cheasaig agus Aiseag Cheasaig a chanadh an sluagh ris an dà phort air gach taobh dhen chaolas.

Chan e sin a’ chiad aithris de sheòrsa air Ceasag nas mò, oir tha Leabhar-Ùrnaigh Obair Dheathain ag innse mar a thachair dha ann an Eirinn nuair a bha e òg. Bha e mar phàirt de theaghlach uasal agus là a bha seo bha cuirm mhòr aca. Chaidh Ceasag agus na prionnsaichean eile gu ruige loch agus chaidh a h-uile duine aca a bhàthadh ach Ceasag. Bha athraichean nan gillean a chaill am beatha feargach is amharasach, agus mhaoidh iad air athar Cheasaig gun losgadh iad a chaistéal gu làr. Ach rinn Ceasag ùrnaigh fad na h-oidhche agus, anns a’ mhadainn, bha na gillean uile beò a-rithist.

A rèir beul-aithris, dh’fhuirich Ceasag air fear de na h-eileanan ann an Loch Laomainn air a bheil Innis Taigh a’ Mhanaich. B’ esan am “manach”. Thigeadh an sluagh

gu adhradh nuair a sheinneadh e clag air a' chnoc as àirde, ris an canar Tom nan Clag. Seo a-nise deireadh mo Litreach ach, an ath-sheachdain, bheir mi sùil air dìleab de sheòrsa eile air bruach Loch Laomainn – àite co-cheangailte ri eucoireach, an àite naomh.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** Tèadhaich: *Menteith*; Loch Innse Mo Cholmaig: *Lake of Mentelth*; Leamhnachd: *Lennox (country)*; Sruighlea: *Stirling*; Baile Mo Thatha: *Balmaha*; Rubha Àird Eòdhain: *Rowardennan*; Eòdhnan, Adhamnan: *Saint Adamnan*; Ceasag, Naomh Mo Cheasag: *St Kessock*; Ceasaig a Tuath/Deas: *North/South Kessock*; Leabhar-Ùrnaigh Obair Dheathain: *The Aberdeen Breviary*; uasal: *noble*; Innis Taigh a' Mhanaich: *Inchtavannach (island)*; eucoireach: *criminal*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** 's e beachd neònach a th' ann: *it's a strange opinion*; gu ruige àite eile air bruach Loch Laomainn: *to another place on the bank of Loch Lomond*; tha nàdar de cheangal ann: *there's a sort of relationship*; mu thuras Chaluim Chille a Rìgh nan Cruithneach: *about Columba's visit to the King of the Picts*; mar a chuir Calum Cille an teicheadh air an uilebheist: *how Columba caused the monster to flee*; as dèidh dha mìorbhail a dhèanamh: *after he caused a miracle*; aiseag thar a' chaolais: *ferry across the strait*; nuair a dh'èirich stoirm a chuir am bàta fodha: *when a storm arose that sank the boat*; chaidh na bh' air bòrd a bhàthadh: *those aboard were drowned*; chan e sin X nas mò: *that's not X either*; athraichean nan gillean a chaill am beatha: *the fathers of the boys that lost their lives*; mhaoidh iad air athair Cheasaig: *they threatened Kessock's father*; thigeadh an sluagh gu adhradh: *the people would come to worship*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine:** B' esan an naoidheamh aba ann an Eilean Ì agus 's e a sgrìobh an leabhar *Vita Sancti Columbae*: *he was the 9<sup>th</sup> abbot in Iona agus it was he that wrote the book Life of Columba. You might wonder why I used the past tense of the assertive verb at the beginning of the sentence (b' esan rather than is esan), but the present tense ('s e a sgrìobh rather than b' e a sgrìobh). There is no choice in the first instance because we are looking back to a past event; if I had written is esan an naoidheamh aba he would still be alive and still be in post on Iona. But in the second instance I might have written b' e a sgrìobh an leabhar. This however is not necessary because the sgrìobh gives you the past tense and the usual way of dealing with such a use of the assertive verb, where it is followed by a second verb, is to employ the present tense. Note, however, that it would be translated in English as "was" ie the past tense. Here is another example: b' e Seumas an siathamh rìgh Stiùbhartach. 'S e a fhuair crùn Shasainn nuair a chaochail Ealasaid.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** 'S e "loch" a tha anns cha mhòr a h-uile gin eile: *almost every other one is a "loch"*.

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