

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 **

Gu tuath air Inbhir Snàthaid, air bruach an ear Loch Laomainn, tha àite air a bheil Uamh Rab Ruaidh. Chan eil ach aon Rab Ruadh a b' urrainn a bhith ann, gu h-àraidh anns an sgìre sin – an Griogarach. Rab Ruadh MacGriogair. A rèir beul-aithris, nuair a bha e na eucoireach, chaidh e am falach anns an uaimh.

Chan e uamh cheart a th' ann ach toll am measg chreag a th' air tuiteam an aghaidh a chèile, ach saoilidh mi gum biodh e doirbh do dhaoine a lorg mura robh fios aca cà' robh i. An-diugh, tha sanas ann air a' cheum-choiseachd a tha a' leantainn bruach an ear an locha, agus air na creagan ri taobh na h-uamha, tha cuideigin air sgrìobhadh ann am peanta geal am facal “CAVE”. 'S e sin, air neo gu robh sgoilear Laidinn ann a bha ag iarraidh air daoine a bhith air am faiceall leis an fhacal – CAVE!

Bhiodh e coltach gun do chleachd Rab Ruadh, no Rob Ruadh mar a chanas cuid ris, an uamh sin oir bhuineadh e do na Tròisichean agus airson greis bha e na uachdaran aig Inbhir Snàthaid – mus deach cùisean na aghaidh. Ach tha e coltach gu robh na seann daoine cuideachd dhen bheachd gu robh Rab eile air an uamh a chleachdadh, fada mus robh guth air a' Ghriogarach. Tha mi a' ciallachadh Raibeart Brus, Rìgh na h-Alba, oir bha esan anns an sgìre timcheall Loch Laomainn nuair a bha e os cionn ar-a-mach an aghaidh Rìdh Eideard Shasainn a bha a' feuchainn ri Alba a chur fo smachd.

Tha Slighe Taobh an Iar na Gaidhealtachd a' dol seachad air àite eile a tha co-cheangailte ris a' Bhrusach beagan gu tuath air Loch Laomainn, eadar a' Chrìon Làraich agus Taigh an Droma, air a bheil Dail Rìgh. Anns a' bhliadhna trì-deug 's a sia (1306), bha batail ann a sin eadar feachd a' Bhrusaich agus feadhainn de Chloinn 'ic Dhubhghaill Latharna a bha nan nàimhdean dha.

Thathar ag ràdh gun do rinn am Brusach agus a chompanaich dol-às le bhith a' tilgeil an cuid arm mòra, a bha ro throm dhaibh, ann an lochan. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air an lochan chun an là an-diugh Lochan nan Arm, ged nach urrainn dhomh ràdh co-dhiù chaidh ball-airm sam bith a lorg ann.

Tha sinn a-nise letheach-slighe air an rathad eadar Muileann Dhaidh agus an Gearasdan ach mus fhàg sinn an Leamhnachd buileach, tha mi airson tilleadh ann airson criomag de bheul-aithris a thoirt dhuibh mu Rab Ruadh, a bha na ghaisgeach do na Gaidheil, ged a bha e na eucoireach do dh'ùghdarrasan a' Chrùin.

Bha Rab eòlach air seann bhantrach a bha bochd ach fialaidh. Gheibheadh e fhèin is mòran eile deoch is biadh aig an taigh aice gu math tric. Là bha seo, chaidh e a chèilidh oirre agus chunnaic e gu robh i muladach.

“Gu dè tha ceàrr oirbh, a bhean?” dh' fhaighnich e.

“Och,” ars' ise, “bidh am bàillidh a' tighinn an-diugh airson a' mhàil agus chan eil airgead agam dha.”

Thug Rab airgead dhi, airson a' mhàil, bho sporan fhèin, agus thug an t-seann bhean taing mhòr dha. Thàinig am bàillidh airson a' mhàil mar a bha dùil, ach air an rathad

dhachaigh ann an àite sàmhach, agus e leis fhèin, thachair Rab Ruadh ris. Thug Rab a h-uile sgillinn a bh' aige bhuaithe, a' faighinn a chuid airgid air ais, is a' dèanamh prothaid a bharrachd, agus a' cur ris a' chliù aige mar fhear de phrìomh ghaisgich na Gaidhealtachd.

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Faclan na seachdainne: Inbhir Snàthaid: *Inversnaid*; Uamh Rab Ruaidh: *Rob Roy's Cave*; eucoireach: *criminal, outlaw*; ceum-coiseachd: *walking track*; uachdaran: *landlord*; Raibeart Brus: *Robert Bruce*; a' Chrìon Làraich: *Crianlarich*; Taigh an Droma: *Tyndrum*; Lochan nan Arm: *Loch of the Arms (weapons)*; muladach: *extremely sad*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: chaidh e am falach anns an uaimh: *he hid in the cave*; toll am measg chreag: *a hole in (among) rocks*; mura robh fios aca cà' robh i: *if they didn't know where it (fem.) was*; ri taobh na h-uamha: *next to the cave*; ag iarraidh air daoine a bhith air am faiceall leis an fhacal CAVE!: *wanting people to be careful with the word CAVE (Latin for "look out!")*; bhiodh e coltach gun do chleachd X Y: *it would be likely that X used Y*; bhuineadh e do na Tròisichean: *he belonged to the Trossachs*; mus robh guth air a' Ghriogarach: *before MacGregor was even heard of*; a bha a' feuchainn ri Alba a chur fo smachd: *who was trying to control Scotland*; feachd a' Bhruasaich: *Bruce's fighting force*; feadhainn de Chloinn 'ic Dhubhghaill Latharna: *some of the MacDougalls of Lorne*; a bha nan nàimhdean dha: *who were enemies of (to) him*; an cuid arm mòra: *their heavy weapons*; a bha na ghaisgeach do na Gaidheil: *who was a hero to the Gaels*; seann bhantrach a bha bochd ach fialaidh: *an old widow who was poor but generous*; airson a' mhàil: *for the rent*; bho sporan fhèin: *from his own sporran*; thug X a h-uile sgillinn bhuaithe: *X took every penny from him*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne: "Och," ars' ise, "bidh am bàillidh a' tighinn an-diugh": "Och," she said, "the bailiff will be coming today". Have you sometimes wondered what this arsa (shortened to ars' before a vowel) is, because it appears in only one situation – in reported speech and in the past tense? You will find it nowhere else. In fact it is what is referred to as a defective verb (gnìomhair neo-iomlan), a verb in which only a restricted number of tenses or situations are retained in modern usage. Dwelly tells us that the "s" represents the "s" of the old pronoun sé or si (retained to this day in Irish Gaelic), ie ar sé (he said) and ar si (she said). Today we say ars' e (or ars' esan), he said, and ars' i (ars ise), she said. You can also use it with a noun rather than pronoun eg "'tha i fuar', ars' am bodach"; "'suidhe sìos', ars' a' chailleach." It is not commonly used in formal language or the media but you will hear it in an informal verbal report of somebody else's dialogue. It is very common in story telling as an alternative to thuir. If you are writing a story for your Gaelic learners' group, try to use it.

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne: gun do rinn am Brusach agus a' chompanaich dol-às: *that the Bruce and his companions made (their) escape*. Note the emphasis on the second syllable of dol-às, cf. dòlas which means "grief".

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