

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 rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk **

Mholainn don a h-uile duine a tha a’ fuireach ann an Alba, no a chuireas seachad ùine ann an Alba, tadhal air Loch Coir’ Uisg’ co-dhiù aon turas mus tig an saoghal aca gu crìch. Tha e air leth brèagha, air a chuirteachadh cha mhòr le beanntan. Mura h-eil sibh eòlach air, tha Loch Coir’ Uisg’ ann an ceann an deas an Eilein Sgitheanaich am measg a’ Chuilthinn.

Ma sheasas tu aig ceann a deas an locha, far a bheil abhainn a’ sruthadh as, bidh thu aig bonn Sgùrr na Strì, beinn chreagach a ruigeas cha mhòr còig ceud meatair a dh’àirde. An coimeas ris na beanntan eile a tha timcheall an locha, tha Sgùrr na Strì ìosal, oir ruigidh iadsan còrr math is naoi ceud meatair a dh’àirde. Is tha i suidhichte leatha fhèin, pìos beag air falbh bho na beanntan eile. Tha i mar fhreiceadan aig “geata” Loch Coir’ Uisg’ – far am bi luchd-turais a’ coiseachd ann à Loch Sgàbhaig, far an toir bàtaichean à Eallagholl’ iad.

Tha dualchas co-cheangailte ri a h-ainm. A rèir beul-aithris à Eilean Sothaigh, an t-eilean ann an Loch Sgàbhaig faisg air làimh, bha an strì eadar dà chinneadh – Clann ’ic Leòid Dhùn Bheagain agus Clann ’ic Fhionghain an t-Srath. Bha crìoch eadar fearann an dà chinnidh ann an ceann a deas a’ Chuilthinn, ach cha robh aonta ann eatarra air dè d’ireach a bha a’ comharrachadh na crìche.

Bha an oighreachd aig Clann ’ic Leòid anns an iar-thuath, agus bha iadsan a’ cumail a-mach gu robh am fearann-san a’ dol cho fada deas agus cho fada sear ris a’ ghleann eadar Camas Fhionnairigh agus Sligeachan. Ach bha Clann ’ic Fhionghain, aig an robh oighreachd anns a’ cheann a deas, dhen bheachd gu robh am fearann acasan a’ dol nas fhaide don iar – cho fada ri Allt a’ Chaothaich, a shruthas don mhuir ann an Loch Sgàbhaig eadar Meall na Cuilce agus Gars-bheinn.

A rèir na beul-aithris à Sothaigh, a nochdas anns an leabhar “The Soay of our Forefathers” le Laurance Reed, dh’aontaich na cinn-chinnidh air crìoch ùr – loighne a bha a’ ruith gu tuath air tom aig Port Sgàile aig ceann Loch Sgàbhaig. Agus, gus am biodh sin air a chuimhneachadh leis an dà thaobh, agus leis a’ mhòr-shluagh, chaidh gille à Sothaigh a chuipeadh gu dona air an tom. ’S e an t-ainm a bh’ air a’ ghille Aonghas MacAonghais, no Aonghas Mac Iain Òig.

Bha seo tràth san ochdamh linn deug a rèir choltais agus, ann an ochd-deug, seachdad ’s a sia (1876), thug iar-bhan-ogha Aonghais fianais seachad mun chùis. B’ ise Màiri Dhòmhnallach agus bha i a’ fuireach ann an Gleann Bhreatail gu siar air a’ Chuiltheann. Nuair a bha i òg, bha i a’ fuireach ann an Sothaigh, chuala i an naidheachd mu dheidhinn a h-iar-sheanar, agus chaidh an t-àite far an deach a chuipeadh – ma tha an stòiridh fìor – a shealltainn dhi.

Carson, ge-tà, nach deach Abhainn Sgàbhaig, an abhainn a shruthas a-mach à Loch Coir’ Uisg’, a thaghadh mar chrìoch? Tha e nas fhasa a’ chrìoch fhaicinn ma ’s e abhainn no allt a tha ga comharrachadh. Chan urrainn dhomh sin a ràdh ach, gu practaigeach, tha e coltach gur e an abhainn dha-rìreabh a chleachd muinntir an àite mar chrìoch. Agus ’s e an

abhainn a chaidh a thaghadh mar chrìoch eadar paraistean Bhràcadail agus an t-Srath – no Srath MhicFhionghain mar a chanadh na daoine ris o shean.

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Faclan na seachdaine: mholainn: *I would recommend*; Loch Coir' Uisg': *Loch Coruisk*; freiceadan: *sentry, watchman*; luchd-turais: *tourists*; an Cuiltheann: *the Cuillin(s)*; Loch Sgàbhaig: *Loch Scavaig*; Sothaigh: *Soay*; Clann 'ic Leòid Dhùn Bheagain: *the Macleods of Dunvegan*; Clann 'ic Fhionghain an t-Srath: *the Mackinnons of Strath*; crìoch: *boundary*; eatarra: *between them*; Camas Fhionnairigh: *Camasunary*; Sligeachan: *Sligachan*; Gleann Bhreatail: *Glenbrittle*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: no a chuireas seachad ùine: *or who spends time*; air a chuirteachadh cha mhòr le beanntan: *almost surrounded by mountains*; am measg a' Chuilthinn: *among the Cuillin(s)*; ruigidh iadsan còrr math is naoi ceud meatair: *they reach a good bit more than 900 metres*; tha i suidhichte leatha fhèin: *she is situated by herself*; far an toir bàtaichean à Eallagholl' iad: *where boats from Elgol take them*; bha an strì eadar dà chinneadh: *the struggle was between two clans*; a shruthas don mhuir: *which flows to the sea*; chaidh gille a chuipeadh: *a lad was whipped*; thug iar-bhan-ogha Aonghais fianais seachad: *Angus's great-grand-daughter gave evidence*; chaidh an t-àite a shealltainn dhi: *the place was shown to her*; ma 's e abhainn tha ga comharrachadh: *if it is a river which marks/defines it*; eadar paraistean Bhràcadail agus an t-Srath: *between the parishes of Bracadale and Strath*; mar a chanadh daoine ris o shean: *as people called it in the old days*.

Puing-ghràmaid na seachdaine: gu robh am fearann-san a' dol cho fada deas ri X: *that their land went as far south as X. The –san attached to fearann is an iar-leasachan, or suffix, which emphasizes that it is their land. If I had just said gu robh am fearann a' dol ..., it would have meant the same (i.e. that their land went...) without emphasizing their. The article “am” is of course the possessive article in the 3rd person plural and it is emphasized only with the –san suffix. Here is how the other possessive articles and emphatic suffixes would work with fearann (in the nominative case, fearann always being singular): m' fhearann-sa (my land), d' fhearann-sa (your land), fhearann-san (his land), a fearann-se (her land), ar fearann-ne (our land), ur fearann-sa (your land). Note that in the written word, we place a tathán (hyphen) between the noun and the suffix. There is another way of tackling this same issue, of course, and it is also to be found in the Litir: gu robh am fearann acasan a' dol nas fhaide don iar (that their land went further to the west). Here the possessive article is avoided in favour of the standard article (am in front of “f”), and possession being described by acasan, the emphatic form of aca, the prepositional pronoun formed from aig in the 3rd person plural. Acasan, like almost all emphatic prepositional pronouns, is unhyphenated.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: an coimeas ris na beanntan eile a tha timcheall an locha: *compared to the other mountains that are around the loch. An coimeas ri X: compared to X.*

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