

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 * This is Litir 272.*

Bha mi a-mach, an t-seachdain sa chaidh, air an naomh a thathar ag ràdh a chuir às do nathraichean ann an Èirinn, co-dhiù air talamh tioram. B’ esan Naomh Pàdraig. Ach tha e coltach nach b’ e Pàdraig a’ chiad phears-eaglais a sgaoil an soisgeul ann an Èirinn. Bha Naomh Ciaran ann roimhe, agus bu mhath leam rudeigin innse dhuibh mu dheidhinn.

Rugadh Ciaran, a rèir aithris, ann an eilean beag far cladach a deas na h-Èireann anns a’ bhliadhna trì cheud, fichead ’s a còig (325). Tha seann làmh-sgrìobhainn a’ dèanamh tuairisgeul dheth mar a’ chiad naomh Èireannach a rugadh san dùthaich. ’S e an t-eilean anns an do rugadh e Eilean Clèire no, mar a chanas muinntir an àite, aig a bheil Gàidhlig na h-Èireann fhathast, *Oileán Cléire*. Canaidh iad *Ciarán* ri Ciaran.

Tha an naomh air a chuimhneachadh gu mòr anns an eilean an-diugh. ’S e *Trá Chiaráin* a chanar ris an tràigh bhig far am bi na bàtaichean-aiseig a’ tighinn a-steach. Canaidh iad *Cill Chiaráin* ris an t-seann eaglais faisg air sin, a tha nise na tobhta. Faisg air an eaglais tha *Tobar Chiaráin* agus *Gallán Chiaráin*. ’S e *gallán* a chanas muinntir an àite ri *tursa*, agus thathar ag ràdh gur e Naomh Ciaran fhèin a shnaigh a’ chrois air a’ chloich. Eadhon an là an-diugh, gabhaidh muinntir Eilein Chlèire là dheth air Là Fèill Ciarain – an còigeamh là dhen Mhàrt.

Tha Naomh Ciaran ainmeil ann an Èirinn oir stèidhich e manachainnean agus sgaoil e an soisgeul mus robh Naomh Pàdraig a’ dèanamh a leithid. Ach chan ann a-mhàin ann an Èirinn a tha e ainmeil. Is esan prìomh naomh na Cùirn, ged a chanas muinntir na Cùirn Naomh “Piran” ris. Bidh fios agaibh, far an robh “c” ann an Gàidhlig gur ann tric a bhiodh “p” ann an Còrnais is Cuimris.

Agus bha Ciaran ann an Alba cuideachd. An urrainn dhuibh smaoinichadh air àite ann an Alba a tha a’ giùlan ainm? Baile ann an taobh an iar-dheas na Gàidhealtachd. Ann an Cinn Tìre. An-diugh ann am Beurla, ’s e *Campbeltown* a chanar ris. Ach ann an Gàidhlig, ’s e an seann ainm a th’ air fhathast – Ceann Loch Cille Chiarain. Stèidhich Ciaran cealla ann a sin, agus tha muinntir Chinn Tìre fhathast a’ coimhead air mar naomh sònraichte dhaibh.

Is iomadh sgeulachd a thathar ag innse mu Naomh Ciaran. Bha taobh mòr aige do bheathaichean. Thathar ag ràdh gur e torc nimhe a thog a chiad bhothan dha nuair a chaidh e a dh’fhuireach ann an coille mhòr.

Thathar ag innse mun chumhachd àraidh a bh’ aige – ’s e sin gu robh comas aige daoine marbh a thoirt beò a-rithist. Mar eisimpleir, bha seachdnar chlàrsairean aig Rìgh Aonghas na Mumhain. Là a bha seo, chaidh an seachdnar a mhurt le

nàimhdean an rìgh. Thilg na murtairean na cuirp ann am boglach agus chroch iad an clàrsaich air craobh. Bha Aonghas air leth brònach.

Ach thuirt Naomh Ciaran ris gun d' fhuair e a-mach cò iad na murtairean agus càite an do rinn iad a' chùis olc. Chaidh an naomh agus an rìgh don àite còmhla. Sguir Ciaran bho bhith ag ithe fad là agus, thairis air an ùine sin, thiormaich a' bhoglach. Chunnaic Ciaran agus Aonghas cuirp an t-seachdnar agus rinn an naomh ùrnaigh. Ged a bha iad air a bhith marbh fad mìos, dh'èirich na clàrsairean, agus iad slàn fallain a-rithist. Thog iad an cuid chlàrsach agus sheinn iad òrain bhinn airson taing a thoirt don naomh agus don rìgh. Sin agaibh Naomh Ciaran agus bidh tuilleadh agam ri ràdh mu dheidhinn an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdaine: naomh: *saint*; nathraichean: *snakes*; làmh-sgrìobhainn: *manuscript*; tuairisgeul: *description*; bàtaichean-aiseig: *ferry boats*; tursa: *standing stone*; Còrnais is Cuimris: *Cornish and Welsh*; a' giulan: *carrying*; Cinn Tìre: *Kintyre*; Ceann Loch Cille Chiarain: *Campbeltown*; cumhachd: *power*; Rìgh Aonghas na Mumhain: *King Aengus of Munster*; cuirp: *bodies*; boglach: *bog*; brònach: *sad*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: bha mi a-mach air: *I was on about*; co-dhiù air talamh tioram: *at least on dry land*; a' chiad phears-eaglais a sgaoil an soisgeul: *the first churchman who spread the gospel*; bu mhath leam rudeigin a ràdh: *I would like to say something*; mar a chanas muinntir an àite: *as the people of the place say*; a chanar ris an tràigh bhig: *that the small beach is called*; a tha nise na tobhta: *which is now a ruin*; a shnaigh a' chrois air a' chloich: *who engraved the cross on the stone*; eadhon an là an-diugh: *even today*; là dheth air Là Fèill Ciarain: *a day off on St Ciaran's Day*; an còigeamh là dhen Mhàrt: *the 5th of March*; mus robh X a' dèanamh leithid: *before X was doing the like*; prìomh naomh na Cùirn: *the patron saint of Cornwall*; is iomadh sgeulachd a thathar ag innse: *many stories are told*; bha taobh mòr aige do bheathaichean; *he was fond of animals*; gur e torc nimhe a thog a chiadh bhothan dha: *that it was a wild boar that built him his first bothy*; chaidh an seachdnar a mhurt: *the seven men were murdered*; gun d' fhuair e a-mach: *that he found out*; rinn an naomh ùrnaigh: *the saint prayed*; dh'èirich na clàrsairean: *the harpists arose*; sheinn iad òrain bhinn; *they sang melodious songs*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: *I wanted to make a little point about the pronunciation of Scottish Gaelic, in comparison with the Gaelic of Munster, the southern province of Ireland in which Oileán Cléire (Cape Clear Island) is located. Scottish Gaelic is thought to have preserved the ancient stress pattern – that is, the stress almost always goes on the first syllable of a bisyllabic or polysyllabic word, whereas the southern dialects of Irish came heavily under the influence of Norman French, which is considered to be the cause of the terminal stress found there on very similar words. Thus Scottish bradan (salmon) is bradán in Ireland, amadan (fool) is amadán, eilean (island) is oileán and Ciaran is Ciarán. But can you think of any Scottish words (other than recent loan-words from other languages) in which the final syllable is emphasised? An example is carson (why) which arose as a compound of two other words. See if you can think of any others.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Bha Naomh Ciaran ann roimhe: *St. Ciaran was there before/beforehand. Actually, this could also mean “St. Ciaran was there before him” (referring to St. Patrick). Roimhe means both “beforehand” and “before him”.*

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