

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 at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 327. Note that Roddy also broadcasts a simplified version – An Litir Bheag – on Monday evenings at 7.00 pm. This is also available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 23 corresponds to Litir 327.*

Bha mi a’ bruidhinn ri boireannach à Nis ann an Leòdhas o chionn ghoirid agus dh’fhaighnich mi, “Ciamar a tha thu?” “Och uill,” thuir i, “**tha mi ag èirigh ’s a’ gearain ’s a’ cagnadh an arain.**” Chòrd sin rium. Tha e a’ ruith gu math, nach eil? Tha mi ag èirigh ’s a’ gearain ’s a’ cagnadh an arain.

’S iomadh adhbhar a th’ againn airson gearain, tha mi cinnteach. ’S dòcha gu bheil sinn airson gearain mun aimsir, mun riaghaltas, mun teaghlach no **mun sgioba ball-coise againn.** Ach smaoinich air an fheadhainn a tha a’ fulaing ana-ceartas mòr. Tha deagh adhbhar acasan a bhith a’ gearain.

An-diugh tha mi a’ smaoinichadh air an fheadhainn ann an Alba a bha nam “buidseachan” no “bana-bhuidseachan”, agus a dh’fhulaing airson sin. Tha mi a’ ciallachadh feadhainn air an deach casaid a thoirt gu robh iad ri buidseachd.

Ron bhliadhna sia ceud deug, seasgad ’s a dhà (1662), bha buidheann de Leathanaich – sin feadhainn de Chloinn ’ic Illeathain – air a bhith a’ fuireach air Oighreachd Shrath Ghlais. B’ e sin an oighreachd aig ceann-cinnidh nan Siosalach. Aig an àm sin, b’ e fear Alasdair Siosalach an ceann-cinnidh. Chaidh casaid a chur air feadhainn de na Leathanaich – no ’s dòcha a h-uile duine aca – gu robh iad ri buidseachd. Seo mar a thachair e.

Le taic bho na ministearan air an oighreachd aige, thug an Siosalach còig duine deug don eaglais ann an Cnoc Mhoire. Bha iad fo amharas gu robh iad ri buidseachd. ’S e boireannaich a bh’ ann an ceithir-deug aca. Chaidh ceathrar eile a thoirt ann le uachdaran eile. B’ e sin naoi duine deug ann an Eaglais Chnoc Mhoire fo chasaid de bhuidseachd.

Rinn fear MacPheadrais sgrùdadh air a h-uile duine aca. Bha esan air a bhith air feadh Alba, feuch buidseachan is bana-bhuidseachan a chomharrachadh le deuchainn àraidh. Bha prìne fada pràise aige. Bhiodh e an toiseach a’ maolachadh cinn nan daoine. Bhiodh e a’ toirt orra an cuid aodaich a chur bhuapa. Bhiodh e a’ suathadh a làmhan thairis air am bodhaigean (cuimhnichibh gur e boireannaich a bha sa chuid mhòir dhiubh), agus bhiodh e a’ stobadh a’ phrìne aige a-steach annta. Fad an rathaid a-steach. Mura faigheadh an duine lorg air a’ phrìne gu furasta, bhiodh MacPheadrais ag ràdh gur e buidseach no bana-bhuidseach a bh’ ann.

Ma tha sibh air an leigheas deilgneach fhaighinn, tuigidh sibh nach eil e furasta prìne mar sin a lorg annad. Chaidh mòran daoine neo-chiontach a chur gu bàs air sàilleabh na deuchainn' a bha seo. Agus an là sin ann an Eaglais Chnoc Mhoire, tha e coltach gun do dh'fhàilnich air a h-uile duine, no cha mhòr a h-uile duine, faighinn tron deuchainn.

Bha an Siosalach toilichte. Bha e ag iarraidh gum biodh na Leathanaich a bha seo air an cur gu bàs. Dh'iarr e air a' Chomhairle Dhìomhair ann an Dùn Èideann leigeil leis coimisean a stèidheachadh airson sùil a thoirt air a' chùis. Chaidh cead airson sin a thoirt seachad anns an Ògmhios sia ceud deug, seasgad 's a dhà (1662). Ach cò na buill a bh' air a' choimisean? A, uill, an Siosalach fhèin, a bhràthair agus dithis de na co-oghaichean aige. Bha cùisean a' coimhead gu math dubhach do na Leathanaich. Ach bha cuideigin a' dol a ghabhail gnothach ris a' chùis, feuch ceartas fhaighinn dhaibh. Innsidh mi dhuibh cò bh' ann an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: bana-bhuidsichean: *witches*; Leathanaich: *Macleans*; Srath Ghlais: *Strathglass*; Cnoc Mhoire: *Kirkhill*; a' maolachadh: *shaving (making bald) their heads*; an leigheas deilgneach: *acupuncture*; A' Chomhairle Dhìomhair: *The Privy Council*.

Abairtean na Litreach: 's iomadh adhbhar a th' againn: *we have many reasons*; a tha a' fulaing ana-ceartas mòr: *who are suffering great injustice*; air an deach casaid a thoirt gu robh iad ri buidseachd: *who were accused of being involved in witchcraft*; ceann-cinnidh nan Siosalach: *clann chief of the Chisholms*; le taic bho na ministearan: *with assistance from the ministers*; bha iad fo amharas: *they were under suspicion*; 's e boireannaich a bh' ann an ceithir-deug aca: *fourteen of them were women*; rinn fear MacPheadrais sgrùdadh air a h-uile duine aca: *a man called Paterson scrutinised all of them*; le deuchainn àraidh: *with a particular test*; prìne fada pràise: *a long brass pin*; bhiodh e a' suathadh a làmhnan thairis air am bodhaigean: *he would run his hands over their bodies*; bhiodh e a' stobadh a' phrìne aige a-steach annta: *he would stick the pin into them*; air fhàgail air uachdar: *left on the surface*; air sàilleabh na deuchainn' a bha seo: *because of this test*; cò na buill a bh' air a' choimisean?: *who were the members who were on the commission?*; dithis de na co-oghaichean aige: *two of his cousins*; bha cuideigin a' dol a ghabhail gnothach ris a' chùis: *somebody was going to get involved in the issue*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: mun sgioba ball-coise againn: *about our football team. Why did I chose to say sgioba ball-coise rather than sgioba buill-coise? This is explained succinctly by Michel Byrne in his excellent "Gràmar na Gàidhlig" (Stòrlann/Acair), in the section about indefinite masculine possessives: "On its own the masculine noun changes by slenderising, but if it has an adjective it tends nowadays not to change at all: seacaid balaich but seacaid balach beag". This is a relatively modern phenomenon and only occurs without the article being present. Ball-coise is a compound noun but it acts grammatically like a noun and accompanying adjective. We would say meudachd a' bhuill (the size of the ball), meudachd a' bhuill-choise (the size of*

the football), meudachd buill (the size of a ball), BUT meudachd ball-coise (the size of a football).

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: tha mi ag èirigh 's a' gearain 's a' cagnadh an arain: *I am rising, complaining and chewing the bread [it doesn't really translate!]*

** Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan*