

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.maclea@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 338. 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 34 corresponds to Litir 338.*

Bha am foghar ann. Bha an t-Urramach Tormod MacLeòid a’ searmonachadh airson an turas mu dheireadh ann an Ceap Breatainn. Bha an coitheanal mòr a-muigh air leathad oir bha an eaglais ro bheag dhaibh. Air an ochdamh là fichead dhen Dàmhair, ochd ceud deug, leth-cheud ’s a h-aon (1851), sheòl am *Margaret* air falbh. **Bha i a’ dèanamh air Astràilia.**

Anns na h-Eileanan Cape Verde, chaidh iad a-steach gu cala. Chuir na daoine litrichean air ais gu càirdean is caraidean ann an Ceap Breatainn, ag innse dhaibh gu robh iad sàbhailte. Lean iad orra a dh’Afraga a Deas. Ann an Cape Town, ge-tà, chuala iad naidheachd a chuir iomagain air feadhainn aca. Bha longan ann a sin a bha a’ dèanamh air Melbourne. Faisg air a’ bhaile sin, bha òr air a lorg agus bha mòran a’ dol ann, feuch fortan a dhèanamh.

Chan ann air Melbourne a bha Tormod agus a luchd-leantainn ag amas, ge-tà. Bha mac Thormoid, Dòmhnall, ann an Adelaide, agus bha dùil aca gu robh esan air fearann a thaghadh dhaibh faisg air a’ bhaile sin. Ràinig iad Adelaide anns a’ Ghiblean ochd ceud deug, leth-cheud ’s a dhà (1852), ach bha droch naidheachd ann dhaibh. Bha Dòmhnall air a dhol gu Melbourne.

Bidh cuimhne agaibh, ’s dòcha, gu robh Dòmhnall na dheasaiche air pàipear-naidheachd. Uill, bha tòrr naidheachdan a’ tighinn à Bhictoria aig an àm sin – far an robh na mìltean mòra air a dhol ann, a’ coimhead airson òr. Bha Dòmhnall air a dhol ann còmhla riutha.

Dh’fhuirich cuid à buidheann Thormoid ann an Adelaide. Ach cha robh fearann ann far am b’ urrainn dhaibh a bhith a’ fuireach còmhla. Mar sin, an ceann grunn seachdainean, lean càch orra gu ruige Melbourne.

Anns a’ bhliadhna roimhe sin, bha Melbourne air a bhith na bhaile beag, le dìreach còig air fhichead mìle duine a’ fuireach ann. A-nise bha dà mhìle duine às ùr a’ dol a dh’fhuireach ann gach seachdain. Bha iad bho air feadh an t-saoghail – Eòrpaich, Ameireaganaich is Sìonaich gu h-àraidh. Chaidh iad gu Melbourne an toiseach, an uair sin gu àiteachan mar Ballarat, far an robh na raointean òir.

Bha Tormod is a chompanaich air an dì-mhisneachadh gu mòr. Fhuair iad àite-fuirich ann am baile theantaichean. Ach **bha an t-airgead aca air a chaitheamh.** Agus bha a h-uile rud ann am Melbourne uabhasach daor, eadhon an t-uisge airson òl. Cha robh aca ach aon rud a b’ urrainn dhaibh reic airson airgead fhaighinn – am *Margaret*. Reic iad i.

Fhad 's a bha seo a' tachairt, bha soitheach eile a' dèanamh air Astràilia à Ceap Breatainn. B' ise an *Highland Lass*. Bha na daoine oirre à diofar sgìrean ann an Ceap Breatainn agus bha eadhon feadhainn oirre à Eilean a' Phrionnsa. Bha an fheadhainn air bòrd a' Mhargaret uile, cha mhòr, à Baile Anna, is bha iad mion-eòlach air a chèile.

Sheòl an *Highland Lass* anns a' Chèitean ochd ceud deug, leth-cheud 's a dhà (1852). Ràinig i Adelaide san Dàmhair. Fhuair na daoine a bh' air bòrd a-mach gu robh cùisean truagh ann am Melbourne, agus roghnaich iad fuireach ann an Adelaide airson greis.

Ann am Melbourne bha luchd-siubhail a' *Mhargaret* fhathast an dòchas fuireach còmhla mar choimhearsnachd. Ach bha airgead a dhìth orra. Chaidh feadhainn aca do na raointean òir ann am Ballarat is Bendigo. Mar sin, chaidh Tormod gu tric air an rathad eadar Melbourne agus na raointean òir airson cèilidh orra. Ach bha na rathaidean sin cunnartach, mar a chì sinn anns an ath Litir.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: leathad: *slope*; cala: *harbour*; Eilean a' Phrionnsa: *Prince Edward Island*; raointean òir: *goldfields*.

Abairtean na Litreach: lean iad orra a dh' Afraga a Deas: *they continued to South Africa*; chuala iad naidheachd a chuir iomagain air feadhainn aca: *they heard news which disturbed some of them*; feuch fortan a dhèanamh: *to try to make a fortune*; chan ann air X a bha Y ag amas: *Y weren't heading for X*; bha dùil aca gu robh esan air fearann a thaghadh dhaibh: *they expected that he had selected land for them*; gu robh Dòmhnall na dheasaiche: *Donald was an editor*; far an robh na mìltean mòra air a dhol: *where many thousands had gone*; far am b' urrainn dhaibh a bhith a' fuireach còmhla: *where they could live together*; lean càch orra gu ruige Melbourne: *the others continued to Melbourne*; bha X air a bhith na bhaile beag: *X had been a small town*; bha dà mhìle duine às ùr a' dol a dh'fhuireach ann gach seachdain: *two thousand people went to live there anew every week*; bha Tormod is a chompanaich air an dì-mhisneachadh: *Norman and his companions were discouraged*; ann am baile theantaichean: *in a tent city*; eadhon an t-uisge airson òl: *even the water for drinking*; cha robh aca ach aon rud a b' urrainn dhaibh reic: *they only had one thing they could sell*; bha na daoine oirre à diofar sgìrean: *the people on her were from different parishes/areas*; bha iad mion-eòlach air a chèile: *they were very well acquainted with each other*; roghnaich iad fuireach ann an Adelaide: *they chose to stay in Adelaide*; an dòchas fuireach còmhla mar choimhearsnachd: *hoping to live together as a community*; bha airgead a dhìth orra: *they were short of money*; airson cèilidh orra: *to visit them*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha an t-airgead aca air a chaitheamh: *their money was spent. I want to be sure you didn't think they had been throwing their money away because some of you will use, or will have heard, the verb caith being used for "throw" eg a' caitheamh chlachan (throwing stones). But it also means "consume, spend, wear away, exhaust" – its meaning in the Litir. Incidentally, this is the reason that the Gaelic for the disease tuberculosis is a' chaitheamh. It is equivalent to the informal English "consumption", a description of the wasting of the lung tissues which occurs with this disease.*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: Bha i a' dèanamh air Astràilia: *she was making for Australia*. A' dèanamh air: *making for (place)*.

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