

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 342. 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 38 corresponds to Litir 342.*

Nuair a dh’fhàg sinn an Naomh Nachlan an t-seachdain sa chaidh, bha e san Ròimh. Bha a ghàirdean deas glaiste ri a chois mar pheanas, às dèidh gun do chàin e Dia. Thilg e an iuchair airson na glaise ann an Uisge Dè, ann an àite ris an canar chun an là an-diugh *Poll na h-Iuchrach*.

Co-dhiù, nuair a bha e san Ròimh, cheannaich e iasg bho bhalach air an t-sràid. Dè lorg e am broinn an èisg ach iuchair – an aon tè a thilg e don abhainn ann an Alba. ’S e mìorbhail a bh’ ann. Thug Nachlan taing do Dhia. Bha e dhen bheachd gu robh Dia a’ toirt maitheanas dha.

Chuala am Pàp fhèin mun mhìorbhail agus chuir e fios gu Nachlan dhol a chèilidh air. Chaidh Nachlan ann agus dh’innis e don Phàp mun sgìre agus na daoine aige fhèin làimh ri Uisge Dè ann an Alba. Thathar ag ràdh gun do dh’iarr am Pàp air Nachlan fuireach san Ròimh greis agus gun do rinn e easbaig dheth.

Nuair a thill e a dh’Alba, thog Nachlan eaglais anns an Tulaich. Sgaoil e facal an Tighearna na b’ fhaide na dìreach sin, ge-tà. Thathar ag ràdh gun do thog e dà eaglais eile ann an Siorrachd Obair Dheathain. Bha tè dhiubh sin ann am Mealdruim. Bhathar ag ràdh gun do shàbhail e na daoine an sin bho phlàigh le bhith a’ cuairteachadh na paraiste air a ghlùinean. Bha muinntir an àite a’ cumail a-mach gur ann sa chladh acasan a chaidh a thiodhlacadh às dèidh a bhàis.

Ach ’s ann don Tulaich as làidire a tha na ceanglaichean aige. A bharrachd air Poll na h-Iuchrach, tha *Sliabh a’ Bheannachaidh* agus *Dail a’ Mhallachaidh* ann. Tha iad le chèile co-cheangailte ris an naomh, a rèir beul-aithris. Ann an còig ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a h-aon (1541), stèidhich Rìgh Seumas V fèill do Nachlan. Bha sin air a cumail air an ochdamh là dhen Fhaoilleach anns an Tulaich. Nuair a dh’atharraich am mìosachan anns an ochdamh linn deug, chaidh a chur air adhart chun an naoidheamh là deug dhen Fhaoilleach.

Thogadh eaglais ùr air làrach seann eaglais an Naoimh Nachlain, ach tha sin na tobhta an-diugh. Tha mi a’ dèanamh dheth gu bheil an eaglais sin ainmeil – ach chan ann airson gnothaichean creideimh. A rèir beul-aithris, **bha fìor dhroch shìde ann** Didòmhnaich a bha seo. Bha am ministear dhen bheachd nach biodh coitheanal ann air sàilleabh na droch shìde. Dh’fhuirich e sa mhansa.

Ach chaidh gu leòr de mhuinntir an àite ann. Bha iad a’ feitheamh ris a’ mhinistear. Ach bha e eagallach fuar anns an eaglais. Bha dà dhòigh ann airson cumail blàth, shaoil na daoine – le bhith a’ dannsadh no le bhith a’ gabhail dram.

Chaidh bonaid timcheall airson airgead, agus chaidh feadhainn de na gillean sìos an rathad gu taigh-seinnse. Thug iad uisge-beatha air ais leotha don eaglais. Thug iad fìdhlear leotha cuideachd. Cha b' fhada gus an do thòisich feadhainn air dannsadh san eaglais – gu port ùr a chaidh a dhèanamh sa spot leis an fhìdhlear. Agus am port? Uill, 's e fear ainmeil a th' ann air a bheil “Ruidhle an Tulaich” – *the Reel of Tulloch* – agus 's ann mar sin a thòisich e.

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Faclan na Litreach: mìorbhail: *miracle*; maitheanas: *forgiveness*; am Pàp: *the Pope*; Mealdruim: *Old Meldrum*; plàigh: *plague*.

Abairtean na Litreach: às dèidh gun do chàin e Dia: *after he criticised God*; thilg e an iuchair airson na glaise ann an Uisge Dè: *he threw the key for the lock in the River Dee*; Poll na h-Iuchrach: *the pool of the key*; dè lorg e am broinn an èisg ach iuchair: *what did he find within the fish but a key [there is a play on ideas here because iuchair means fish roe, in addition to a key, so it would be natural to find “iuchair” inside a [female] fish*; chuir e fios gu Nachlan dhol a chèilidh air: *he sent a message to Nachlan to do and visit him*; gun do rinn e easbaig dheth: *that he made him a bishop*; sgaoil e facal an Tighearna na b' fhaide na dìreach sin: *he spread the word of the Lord further than just that*; bhathar ag ràdh gun do shàbhail e na daoine: *it was said that he saved the people*; a' cuairteachadh na paraiste air a ghlùinean: *circumnambulating the parish on his knees*; Sliabh a' Bheannachaidh agus Dail a' Mhallachaidh: *the moor of the blessing and the dale of the cursing*; stèidhich Rìgh Seumas V fèill do Nachlan: *King James V established a feast-day for Nachlan*; nuair a dh'atharraich am mìosachan: *when the calendar changed*; thogadh eaglais ùr: *a new church was built*; tha sin na tobhta: *that is a ruin*; chan ann airson gnothaichean creideimh: *not for religious matters*; nach biodh coitheanal ann air sàilleabh na droch shìde: *that there would be no congregation because of the bad weather*; dh'fhuirich e sa mhansa: *he stayed in the manse*; eagallach fuar: *terribly cold*; le bhith a' dannsadh no le bhith a' gabhail dram: *by dancing or by taking a dram*; chaidh feadhainn de na gillean gu taigh-seinnse: *some of the lads went to an inn*; thug iad uisge-beatha air ais leotha: *they took whisky back with them*; gu port ùr a chaidh a dhèanamh sa spot leis an fhìdhlear: *to a new tune that was improvised by the fiddler*; 's ann mar sin a thòisich e: *that's how it started*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: 's ann don Tulaich as làidire a tha na ceanglaichean aige: *his strongest connections are to Tullich. I want you to look at the construction of this Gaelic sentence – it is entirely different from the English. Literally, we say, “it is to Tullich the strongest are his connections”. Note in particular the position of the superlative adjective. Here are two other examples: 's ann do dh'Alba a bu mhò a bha e dìleas (it is to Scotland he was most loyal); 's ann air a' chroit as trice a lorgar e (it is most often on the croft he will be found)*

Try to develop a feel for such constructions as you strive towards fluency – try to think in Gaelic where possible, and listen carefully to native speakers. A good person to listen to is Seumas Dòmhnallach, one of the presenters of Aithris na Maidne on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM or on the internet). Why not listen to him this week?

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: bha fìor dhroch shìde ann: *the weather was absolutely awful.*

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