

# 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 [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \* This is Litir 358. 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 54 corresponds to Litir 358.*

Tha cuid de dhaoine a’ creidsinn gu mòr ann an co-fheall. *Conspiracy theorists* mar a chanar riutha ann am Beurla. Uill, leugh mi rudeigin an là eile mu cho-fheall co-cheangailte ri fìor dhroch thachartas air a’ Ghàidhealtachd. An e an fhìrinn a th’ ann? Chan eil fhios agam – ach seo an stòiridh.

Thòisich e anns a’ bhliadhna seachd ceud deug, trithead ’s a naoi (1739). Bha sin dìreach sia bliadhna ro Bhliadhna a’ Phrionnsa. Sheòl long Èireannach a-steach a Loch Bràcadail anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. ’S e an *William* an t-ainm a bh’ oirre agus bhuineadh i do phort ann an Contae an Dùin air a bheil Dòmhnach Daoi. ’S e Uilleam MacDhaibhidh an t-ainm a bh’ air an sgiobair agus, gu dearbh, **chan e deagh dhuine a bh’ ann.**

Nuair a bha an *William* aig acair ann an Loch Bràcadail, chaidh cuireadh a thoirt do bhuidhean de mhuinntir an àite dhol air bòrd. Nuair a bha iad air bòrd, chaidh an toirt am bruid. Bha na Sgitheanaich gu bhith nan tràilleann ann an Ameireagaidh. Dh’fhàg an *William* an t-Eilean Sgitheanach le seasgadh duine air bòrd.

Ach cha robh i deiseil. Chaidh i a-null gu Fionnasbhadh anns Na Hearadh agus Loch Portain ann an Uibhist a Tuath. Thug an criutha tuilleadh dhaoine am bruid anns na h-àiteachan sin. Bha a-nise còrr is ceud duine air bòrd.

Rinn an soitheach air Dòmhnach Daoi ann an Èirinn. Ach, air an t-slighe, **stad i far costa Dhiùra.** Bha dithis bhoireannach tinn agus bha boireannach eile an dùil leanabh a bhith aice an ceann greis bheag. Chaidh an cur air tìr **ann an Diùra** gun rud sam bith ach an t-aodach a bh’ orra.

Nuair a ràinig an soitheach Èirinn, bha na Gàidheil air an glasadh ann an dà shabhal air iomall a’ bhaile. Bha an criutha a’ dèanamh an long deiseil airson turas cuain a dh’Ameireagaidh. Ach air an oidhche, rinn mòran de na Gàidheil dol-às. Cha robh air fhàgail sa mhadainn ach ochd duine deug – feadhainn a bha ro shean airson teicheadh.

Chaidh MacDhaibhidh, an sgiobair, gu maighstir-lagha. Bha e ag iarraidh gum biodh “na h-eucoraich” air an cur an grèim. Ach bha am maighstir-lagha amharasach mun ghnothach. Dh’iarr e air MacDhaibhidh dearbhadh gur e eucoraich a bh’ annta. Agus cha b’ urrainn dha.

An uair sin thòisich na daoine air tighinn a-steach. Chuala am maighstir-lagha mar a thachair dhaibh, is gu robh iad air an cur am bruid. Chuir e barantas a-mach airson MacDhaibhidh a chur an grèim.

Ach chan e MacDhaibhidh a-mhàin. ’S e am fear a bh’ air iarraidh air MacDhaibhidh an obair ghràineil aige a dhèanamh Tormod MacLeòid à Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh. Bha am

barantas ga ainmeachadh-san cuideachd. Ach cha robh sgeul air MacLeòid no MacDhaibhidh. Bha iad air teicheadh.

Agus dè thachair do na Gàidheil? Uill, chaidh mòran aca dhachaigh. Ach dh'fhuirich feadhainn ann an Èirinn.

Thathar a' cuimhneachadh an *William* an-diugh mar “Long nan Daoine”. Ach càit an robh an co-fheall? Uill, bha na cinn-chinnidh, Dòmhnallach Shlèite agus MacLeòid Dhùn Bheagain, an sàs anns a' ghnòthach. Ach mus deach an dètheadh ann an cùirt airson a bhith ri tràilleachd, chuir Ceann-suidhe Cùirt an t-Seisein, Donnchadh Foirbeis, stad air a' chùis.

Sia bliadhna às dèidh sin, dhiùlt na cinn-chinnidh sin dhol air taobh Theàrlaich Òig. An robh iad air bargan a dhèanamh leis an t-sàr-Hanoibhèirianach, Donnchadh Foirbeis?

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**Faclan na Litreach:** co-fheall: *conspiracy*; long: *ship*; Loch Bràcadail: *Loch Bracadale*; Dòmhnach Daoi: *Donaghadee*; Uilleam MacDhaibhidh: *William Davidson*; seasgad: *sixty*; Fionnasbhadh: *Finsbay*; Loch Portain: *Loch Portan*; maighstir-lagha: *magistrate*; amharasach: *suspicious*; barantas: *warrant*; cinn-chinnidh: *clan chiefs*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** co-cheangailte ri fìor dhroch thachartas: *connected to a terrible event*; an e an fhìrinn a th' ann?: *is it the truth?*; Bliadhna a' Phrionnsa: *The Year of the Prince (1745-6)*; bhuineadh i do phort ann an Contae an Dùin: *she belonged to a port in County Down*; chaidh cuireadh a thoirt do bhuidhnean de mhuinntir an àite: *an invitation was given to groups of local people*; chaidh an toirt am bruid: *they were kidnapped*; bha X gu bhith nan tràillean: *X were going to be slaves*; an dùil leanabh a bhith aice an ceann greis bheag: *expecting to give birth in the near future*; air an glasadh ann an dà shabhal: *locked in two barns*; turas cuain: *an ocean journey*; rinn mòran dol-às: *many escaped*; ro shean airson teicheadh: *too old to flee*; bha e ag iarraidh gum biodh “na h-eucoraich” air an cur an grèim: *he wanted the “criminals” to be caught*; cha b' urrainn dha: *he could not*; 's e am fear a bh' air iarraidh air MacDhaibhidh an obair ghràineil aige a dhèanamh Tormod MacLeòid: *the man who had asked Davidson to do his despicable work was Norman MacLeod*; bha am barantas ga ainmeachadh-san: *the warrant named him*; mus deach an dètheadh airson a bhith ri tràilleachd: *before they were prosecuted for being involved in slavery*; an robh iad air bargan a dhèanamh leis an t-sàr-Hanoibhèirianach?: *had they made a bargain with the arch-Hanoverian?*

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** ann an Diùra: *in Jura. The Norse suffix –ey indicating an island, is represented in Gaelic today as –aigh (by convention, although you also see –aidh). Thus we have Barraigh, Beàrnaraigh and Pabaigh. But it should be noted that this word ending does not reflect the pronunciation in Argyll, where the –ey is generally represented by an –a. Thus, although a Lewisman might call Jura “Diùraigh” and Gigha “Gioghaigh”, the natives of Argyll say “Diùra” and “Giogha”. And, despite the spelling convention, it is unlikely that a Colonsay Gaelic speaker would want his island to be written “Colbhasaigh” on local signage. In fact, the locals tend to use “Colasa”. In such instances, I tend to follow local usage in the Litir.*

**Stad i far costa Dhiùra:** *she stopped off the coast of Jura. Note the lenition to indicate the genitive – this is the common model – and there is no terminal inflection.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach:** chan e deagh dhuine a bh' ann: *he was not a good man (ie he was a rogue).*

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