

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 369. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 65 corresponds to Litir 369.

An cuala sibh a-riamh mu chath air a’ Ghàidhealtachd air a bheil *Blàr na Lèine*? Nise, dè a’ Bheurla a th’ air sin? *Field of the Shirt*, nach e? Blàr na Lèine. Ach mar as trice, bidh daoine ag ràdh *Field of the Shirts*, agus tha iad a’ toirt adhbhar airson sin, mar a chì sinn tro thìde. Ach nach e *Blàr nan Lèintean* a bhiodh ann an *Field of the Shirts*? Co-dhiù tha an gràmar ceart no ceàrr – agus thig mi air ais don phuing sin airson deagh adhbhar – tha mi airson innse dhuibh dè thug orm smaoineachadh mu Bhlàr na Lèine – a thachair ann an còig ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a ceithir (1544).

Bha mi ann an Uibhist a Deas o chionn ghoirid, mar a bha mi ag ràdh anns an Litir mu dheireadh. Agus fhad ’s a bha mi ann, chaidh mi gu Taigh-tasgaidh Chill Donnain. Tha iomadach rud inntinneach ann agus tha mòran sgrìobhte ann an Gàidhlig, ged a tha làmh-an-uachdair aig a’ Bheurla ann, gu mì-fhortanach. B’ fheàrr leam gum biodh co-ionannachd eadar an dà chànan ann an àite mar sin, ach fàgaidh mi an deasbad sin gu latha eile.

Anns an taigh-thasgaidh, tha clach shnaighte ainmeil, air a bheil *Clach Chlann ’ic Ailein*. *The Clanranald Stone* ann am Beurla. Clach Chlann ’ic Ailein. **Snaighte air a’ chloich tha suaicheantais Chlann ’ic Ailein**. Thathar a’ smaoineachadh gun robh i air a snaigheadh anns an t-siathamh linn deug airson Iain Muideartach, ceann-cinnidh Chlann ’ic Ailein. Thathar a’ smaoineachadh cuideachd gun robh i bho thùs ann am balla ann an seipeal, no caibeal, anns an Tobha Mhòr, pìos beag sìos an rathad bho Chill Donnain.

’S e àite cudromach a bh’ anns an Tobha Mhòr ann an eachdraidh na h-Eaglaise anns na h-eileanan. Nuair a chaochail Iain Muideartach ann an còig ceud deug, seachdad ’s a ceithir (1574), bha e air a thiodhlacadh anns an Tobha Mhòr. Agus dh’fhàg e airgead airson caibeal ùr a thogail anns an àite sin. Thathar a’ dèanamh dheth gur ann an uair sin a chaidh Clach Chlann ’ic Ailein a dhèanamh.

Nuair a thòisich an caibeal air tuiteam às a chèile, chaidh a’ chlach a thoirt a-mach às a’ bhalla. Chaidh a cur am broinn na tobhta. Ach dh’fhaodadh duine sam bith a togail is a toirt air falbh. Agus ’s e sin a thachair. Ann an naoi ceud deug is naochad (1990), chaidh a’ chlach a ghoid. Chaidh a toirt gu ruige Lunnainn. Gu fortanach, fhuair Comunn Eachdraidh Uibhist a Deas air ais i às dèidh còig bliadhna.

Ach càite a bheil Blàr na Lèine a’ tighinn a-steach don ghnòthach? Uill, bha Iain Muideartach an sàs anns a’ bhatail sin. Gu dearbh, bha e aig teis-meadhan a’ bhlàir. Ann an còig ceud deug is ceathrad (1540) **chaidh e fhèin is an Rìgh, Seumas V, a-mach air a chèile**. Chaidh Iain a chur don phrìosan. Bha e air a bhith na cheann-cinnidh airson deich bliadhna aig an ìre sin.

Leis gu robh e sa phrìosan, bha deasbad ann mu cò ghabhadh thairis ceannas a' chinnidh aige. Thug na Frisealaich – Clann 'ic Shimidh – taic do charaid aig Iain – Ragnall. 'S e ban-Fhrisealach a bh' ann am màthair Raghnaill, agus chaidh Ragnall fhèin a thogail mar dhalta aig na Frisealaich. Bha dà fhar-ainm aig na h-eileanaich air – Ragnall Gallta, leis gun do thogadh e ann an dùthaich 'ic Shimidh, agus Ragnall nan Cearc. Innsidh mi dhuibh mar a fhuair e an dàrna ainm sin, agus mu Bhlàr na Lèine, an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Uibhist a Deas: *South Uist*; Iain Muideartach: *John of Moidart*; ceann-cinnidh: *clan chief*; seipeal/caibeal: *chapel*; na Frisealaich: *the Frasers*; Clann 'ic Shimidh: *the Fraser clan*; far-ainm: *nickname*; Ragnall nan Cearc: *Ranald of the Hens*.

Abairtean na Litreach: an cuala sibh a-riamh?: *have you ever heard?*; mar a chì sinn tro thìde: *as we will see eventually*; co-dhiù tha an gràmar ceart no ceàrr: *whether [or not] the grammar is correct or incorrect*; dè thug orm smaoineachadh: *what made me think*; Taigh-tasgaidh Chill Donnain: *Kildonan Museum*; tha làmh-an-uachdair aig a' Bheurla: *English is dominant*; b' fheàrr leam gum biodh co-ionannachd [ann]: *I would prefer [that there would be] equivalence*; gun robh i bho thùs ann am balla: *that it [fem] was originally in a wall*; anns an Tobha Mhòr: *in Howmore*; nuair a thòisich an caibeal air tuiteam às a chèile: *when the chapel began to collapse*; chaidh a cur am broinn na tobhta: *it was placed inside the ruin*; dh'fhaodadh duine sam bith a togail is a toirt air falbh: *anyone could pick it up and take it away*; an sàs anns a' bhatail: *involved in the battle*; bha deasbad ann mu cò ghabhadh thairis ceannas a' chinnidh: *there was a dispute about who would take over as clan chief*; 's e ban-Fhrisealach a bh' ann am màthair Raghnaill: *Ranald's mother was a Fraser*; chaidh X a thogail mar dhalta aig Y: *X was fostered by Y*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Snaighte air a' chloich tha suaicheantais Chlann 'ic Ailein:** *sculpted on the stone there are the emblems of Clanranald. Have you wondered why there appears to be no obvious consonance between the Gaelic and English names of this clan? Actually, this is not always the case, as you will see Clann Raghnaill sometimes used to refer to Clanranald, as in the famous poem by Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (one of the clan), "Birlinn Chlann Raghnaill". Clanranald is a branch of the great Clan Donald, and Ragnall (Ranald) was the eldest surviving son of the first Lord of the Isles upon whom was bestowed Uist, the Small Isles and a part of the West Highlands from Knoydart to Moidart. He died at Caisteal Tioram in Moidart in 1386. Ragnall's eldest son was Ailean (Allan), and the Gaelic clan name derives from him. Members of the clan, however, would use "MacDonald" where a surname was required by the authorities. The Frisealaich (Frasers) almost certainly derive their name from their French origins. But the Gaelic appellation for the clan chief – Mac Shimidh (son of Simon) – derives from Simon Fraser who appears in Scotland in 1160, and from the tradition of naming subsequent clan chiefs "Simon".*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: chaidh e fhèin is an Rìgh a-mach air a chèile: *he and the King fell out with each other.*

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