

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 rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 370. Note that there is also a simplified version called *An Litir Bheag* which is likewise available on the BBC website. *Litir Bheag 66* corresponds to *Litir 370*.*

Ann an còig ceud deug is ceathrad (1540), chaidh Iain Muideartach, ceann-cinnidh Chlann 'ic Ailein, a chur don phrìosan. Thàinig caraid dha, Ragnall Gallta, gu Caisteal Tioram, prìomh àros a' chinnidh. Le taic bho na Frisealaich, Clann 'ic Shimidh, bha Ragnall airson àite Iain a ghabhail thairis dha fhèin.

Bhathar a' còcaireachd mairt is caoraich airson cuirp dha. **Thuir Ragnall nach leigeadh iad a leas**, agus gum biodh cearcan ròsta math gu leòr dha. Ghabh muinntir Chlann 'ic Ailein a bheachd gu h-olc agus chuir iad dhachaigh e gu Caisteal 'ic Shimidh faisg air a' Mhanachainn. Bho sin a-mach, **'s e Ragnall nan Cearc a bh' aig mòran air mar ainm**.

Rinn Iain Muideartach dol-às bhon phrìosan agus chruinnich e feachd airson stad a chur air Ragnall. Chaidh iarraidh air Iarla Hunndaidh dèiligeadh ris a' chòmhsri as leth an riaghaltais. Chuir e arm ri chèile. Cuide ris bha Frisealaich, Granndaich is buill de Chlann 'ic an Tòisich. Ann am meadhan an t-samhraidh, còig ceud deug, ceathrad 's a ceithir (1544), thachair iad ri feachd de Chlann 'ic Ailein agus Camshronaich.

Bha còmhradh ann eatarra. Dh'aontaich iad falbh bho chèile gun sabaid. Rinn Iain air an taobh an iar. Dh'fhalbh na Frisealaich tron Ghleann Mhòr – an rathad a bu ghiorra gu ruige a' Mhanachainn. Ach thionndaidh Iain is an còig ceud saighdear aige. Chaidh iad gu tuath, gu ceann a tuath Loch Lòchaidh. Bha iad a' feitheamh ris na Frisealaich oir bha Ragnall Gallta nam measg. Bha, agus Mac Shimidh fhèin.

'S ann air a' chòigeamh latha deug dhen Iuchar a bha am batail. Am-bliadhna bha mìos an Iuchair uabhasach fhèin teth ann an Alba. Agus bha e mar sin an uair sin. Teth is grianach. Bha lèana mòr ann aig ceann an locha. Nuair a ràinig na Frisealaich an t-àite sin, thàinig Clann 'ic Ailein sìos orra. Bha sabaid mhòr ann. Bha bàs uabhasach ann. Chaill na ceudan am beatha. Chaidh Ragnall Gallta a mharbhadh. Chaidh, agus Mac Shimidh. Ged a chaidh Iain Muideartach a leòn, mhair e beò.

Às dèidh làimh bha an lèana aig ceann Loch Lòchaidh còmhdhaichte le cuirp. Bha e còmhdhaichte cuideachd le lèintean. Thathar ag ràdh gun robh an latha cho teth 's gun do reub cuid mhath de na saighdearan an lèintean dhiubh. Agus gur e sin as coireach ri ainm a' bhatail – *Blàr na Lèine*. Bha lèintean nan saighdearan air am fàgail air a' bhàr às dèidh làimh.

Ach tha cuid eile a' cumail a-mach gun do thilg na saighdearan am fèilidhean dhiubh is gur e lèintean a-mhàin a bh' orra nuair a bha iad a' sabaid – agus gur e sin as coireach gur e Blàr na Lèine a th' air. Ach mar a thuir mi an t-seachdain sa chaidh, tha

cuid a' cur teagamh anns an dà stòiridh seo – oir tha Blàr na Lèine a' ciallachadh *Field of the Shirt*, seach *Field of the Shirts*.

'S e an smuain eile gur e Blàr na Lèana an t-ainm ceart – *the Field or Battle of the Swampy Meadow*. Uill, b' e sin an àrainneachd anns an do thachair e. Ach – ceist gràmair a-rithist. Nach eil am facal *lèana* fireann? Mar sin, 's e *Blàr an Lèana* a bhiodh ann. A, uill, 's dòcha nach eil fuasgladh ann an gràmar do cheist mar sin.

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Faclan na Litreach: Iain Muideartach: *John of Moidart*; ceann-cinnidh Chlann 'ic Ailein: *the clan chief of the MacDonalds of Clanranald*; na Frisealaich: *the Frasers*; Clann 'ic Shimidh: *the Fraser clan*; dol-às: *escape*; Granndaich: *Grants*; Clann 'ic an Tòisich: *Mackintoshes*; Camshronaich: *Camerons*; Loch Lòchaidh: *Loch Lochy*; lèana: *damp or swampy meadow*; fèilidhean: *plaids*; àrainneachd: *environment*.

Abairtean na Litreach: prìomh àros a' chinnidh: *the clan seat*; bhathar a' còcaireachd mairt is caoraich: *cattle and sheep were being cooked*; gum biodh cearcan ròsta math gu leòr dha: *that roast chickens would be good enough for him*; ghabh X a bheachd gu h-olc: *X were deeply offended by his opinion*; faisg air a' Mhanachainn: *near Beaulieu*; chruinnich e feachd: *he gathered a military force*; chaidh iarraidh air Iarla Hunndaidh dèiligeadh ris a' chòmhstri as leth an riaghaltais: *the Earl of Huntly was asked to deal with the conflict on behalf of the government*; an rathad a bu ghiorra gu ruige: *the shortest route to*; bha, agus Mac Shimidh fhèin: *as was the Fraser clan chief himself*; air a' chòigeamh latha deug dhen Iuchar: *on the 15th of July*; mhair e beò: *he survived*; còmhdach le cuirp: *covered with bodies*; gun do reub X an lèintean dhiubh: *that X ripped off their shirts*; gur e sin as coireach: *that is the reason*; gur e lèintean a-mhàin a bh' orra: *that it was only shirts they were wearing*; tha cuid a' cur teagamh: *some doubt*; 's dòcha nach eil fuasgladh ann an gràmar: *perhaps grammar does not provide a solution*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: 's e *Ragnall nan Cearc a bh' aig mòran air mar ainm*: *Many called him "Ranald of the Hens"*. Have you noticed that you don't need to use the verb "to name" (ainmich) when talking about a person's name or nickname? It's enough to use the preposition air, as we say a name is "on" someone (dè an t-ainm a th' ort?) In the above example I put in the words mar ainm at the end to make it explicit but I need not have. It would have been enough to say, "'s e X a bh' aig mòran air" (many called him X). I could even have eliminated "bh' aig mòran" without materially affecting the message ie 's e X a bh' air (he was called X). Here are some other examples: 's e Màiri a th' oirre (she is called Mary); 's e Ailean a th' orm (my name is Allan); dè th' aca air anns a' choimhearsnachd aige fhèin? (what's he called in his own community?)

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: *thuirt Ragnall nach leigeadh iad a leas*: *Ranald said they didn't need to bother*. Cha leig thu (a) leas [also cha ruig thu (a) leas] X a dhèanamh: *you don't need to do X*.

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