

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 371. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 67 corresponds to Litir 371.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Bhlàr na Lèine an t-seachdain sa chaidh. Thug am batail sin fìor dhroch bhuaidh air Clann 'ic Shimidh. A rèir beul-aithris, am measg nan ceudan de Fhrisealaich is Granndaich a bha an sàs ann, choisich na bu lugha na leth-dhusan air falbh. Agus a bharrachd air sin, chaidh an ceann-cinnidh, Mac Shimidh fhèin, a mharbhadh.

Chan e sin a-mhàin ach nochd a mhac, Ùisdean, aig a' bhlàr. Bha Mac Shimidh air òrdugh a thoirt dha fuireach aig an taigh. Ach thàinig e gu Loch Lòchaidh agus **chaidh a mharbhadh-san cuideachd**. No chaidh a leòn, agus chaochail e beagan làithean às a dhèidh.

A dh'aindeoin a' chall, ge-tà, cha b' fhada gus an robh Clann 'ic Shimidh air ais ann an suidheachadh làidir. Ciamar? Uill, a rèir beul-aithris a' chinnidh, bha ochdad boireannach a bhuineadh dhaibh trom air an latha sin. Chaill iad na daoine cèile aca aig Blàr na Lèine ach, taobh a-staigh mìosan, rugadh ochdad gille – seadh, gillean uile gun sgeul air nighean sam bith nam measg! (is, ged a tha sin gu math eucoltach, chan urrainn dhut beul-aithris fhìrinneachadh no a bhreugnachadh!)

Ochd bliadhn' deug às dèigh Blàr na Lèine bha fear ùr na cheann-cinnidh do Chlann 'ic Shimidh. B' esan Ùisdean – Ùisdean eile – mac bràthair an fhir a chaidh a mharbhadh aig Ceann Loch Lòchaidh. Bha e dìreach seachd bliadhn' deug a dh'aois. Agus chuir e fàilte sa bhliadhna sin air a' Bhàn-rìgh – Màiri Stiùbhart – nuair a thadhail i air Inbhir Nis.

Nuair a chaochail Ùisdean, bhathar ag ràdh gu robh naoi ceud gaisgeach de Chlann 'ic Shimidh aig a thiodhlacadh. A dh'aindeoin na sgrìos aig Blàr na Lèine, dh'èirich na Frisealaich às ùr. Agus tha gu leòr dhiubh ann an-diugh – air feadh an t-saoghail, gu dearbh.

Tha rud inntinneach mu na Frisealaich – agus 's e sin an lus a nochdas air an t-suaicheantas aca. 'S e sùbh-làir a th' ann – *strawberry*. Tha e air a bhith air an t-suaicheantas aca bhon treas linn deug. Tha beul-aithris a' dèanamh ceangal eadar an sùbh-làir agus an cinneadh seo – agus cuimhnichibh gur e *Fraser* a th' orra ann am Beurla. 'S e *fraise* an Fhraingis airson sùbh-làir. Tha cuimhne agam glè mhath cho blasta 's a bha na *tartes aux fraises* nuair a bha mi anns a' Bhreatainn Bhig.

A rèir na sgeòil, bha fear Frangach ann air an robh Julius de Berry (seadh, de Berry). Bha e a' toileachadh an rìgh le bhith a' cur thuige bobhlaichean de shùbhaichean-làir. Dh'òrdaich an rìgh dha ainm atharrachadh gu *Fraise* agus sùbhaichean-làir a chur air suaicheantas a theaghlach. A rèir cuid, 's e *Fraissier* an t-ainm a thagh an rìgh air a shon. Tha sin a' ciallachadh “fear a bhios a' giùlain sùbhaichean-làir.” Uaireigin às dèidh sin, dh'fhalbh feadhainn dhen teaghlach a dh'Alba. Agus thug iad an t-ainm ùr leatha.

Uill, 's e stòiridh laghach a th' ann. Ach a bheil sibh ga chreidsinn? Chan eil? Chan eil, no mise. Uill, tha mi amharasach mu dheidhinn co-dhiù. Tha an stòiridh stèidhichte a-mhàin air coltas is fuaimneachadh an ainm ann am Beurla. Ach ciamar a dhèanamaid ceangal eadar *fraise* agus Friseal – dreach an ainm ann an Gàidhlig?

Tha cuid eile a' dèanamh dheth gum b' e *de Freselieres* an t-ainm a bh' air na Frangaich a thàinig a dh'Alba. Bha feadhainn dhen aon ainm a' fuireach ann an Sasainn aig an àm. Chuir na Gàidheil *Friseal* air an ainm, is chuir luchd na Beurla *Fraser* air.

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Faclan na Litreach: Clann 'ic Shimidh: *the Frasers of Lovat*; ceann-cinnidh: *clan chief*; Mac Shimidh: *the clan chief of the Frasers of Lovat*; Loch Lòchaidh: *Loch Lochy*; sùbh-làir: *strawberry*.

Abairtean na Litreach: nochd a mhac aig a' bhlàr: *his son appeared at the battle*; bha X air òrdugh a thoirt dha fuireach aig an taigh: *X had ordered him to stay at home*; chaochail e beagan làithean às a dhèidh: *he died a few days later*; cha b' fhada gus an robh: *it wasn't long until*; bha ochdad boireannach a bhuineadh dhaibh trom: *80 women who belonged to them [the clan] were pregnant*; na daoine cèile aca: *their spouses*; gillean uile gun sgeul air nighean: *all boys without a single girl*; chan urrainn dhut beul-aithris fhìrinneachadh no a bhreugnachadh: *you can't prove or disprove oral tradition*; nuair a thadhail i air: *when she visited*; bhathar ag ràdh: *it was said*; aig a thiodhlacadh: *at his funeral*; dh'èirich na Frisealaich às ùr: *the Frasers recovered*; an lus a nochdas air an t-suaicheantas aca: *the plant that appears on their [clan] badge*; cho blasta 's a bha na tartes aux fraises: *how tasty the strawberry tarts were*; anns a' Bhreatainn Bhig: *in Brittany*; bha fear Frangach ann air an robh X: *there was a Frenchman called X*; le bhith a' cur thuige bobhlaichean de: *by sending him bowls of*; dh'òrdaich an rìgh dha ainm atharrachadh: *the king ordered him to change his name*; ciamar a dhèanamaid ceangal?: *how would we make a link?*; tha cuid eile a' dèanamh dheth: *others maintain (say)*; bha feadhainn dhen aon ainm a' fuireach ann an Sasainn: *some people of the same name were living in England*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **chaidh a mharbhadh-san cuideachd:** *he was killed as well. Call me old-fashioned if you like, but I am still more comfortable with the traditional mode of forming an emphatic passive using "rach" (the verb "to go"). Many speakers today, and the vast majority of young people, would change the structure of the passive from chaidh a mharbhadh (he was killed, with no personal pronoun) to chaidh esan a mharbhadh (he was killed, emphatic), with the emphatic pronoun esan suddenly making an appearance. The traditional mode is to retain the same grammatical structure as the non-emphatic example, but to employ the relevant emphatic suffix following the verbal infinitive. It's much more elegant! Contrast the following: chaidh mo bhreabadh (I was kicked) can become, in its emphatic form, either chaidh mise a bhreabadh (modern) or chaidh mo bhreabadh-sa (traditional).*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: **chan e sin a-mhàin** (ach): *not only that (but).*

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