

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.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 384. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 80 corresponds to Litir 384.

An t-seachdain sa chaidh bha sinn ann am Baile Cheatharnach, faisg air Loch Nis. 'S e sin a chanadh mòran daoine anns an ochdamh linn deug ris an sgìre faisg air Abhainn Fharragaig.

Gu tric, gu h-àraidh an dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair, bha fir à Baile Cheatharnach air an dìteadh airson crodh a ghoid. Ach chan e crodh a-mhàin. Ann an seachd ceud deug, leth-cheud 's a trì (1753) nochd fear Alasdair Fearghasdan anns an taigh-chùirte ann an Inbhir Nis. Bha e fo chasaid gun do ghoid e muilt, uain agus clòimh **bho Mhac an Tòisich, Fear an Tuilm**. Fhuair e fear eile, Iain Friseal, ciontach de bhith a' goid each. Thuirt na h-ùghdarrasan gun do dh'aidich e a chiont. Ach anns a' chùirt chaidh a ràdh gur e nach robh Beurla aige fhèin is nach robh Gàidhlig na h-ùghdarrasan a bu chòir ris a' “mhì-thuigse” sin.

Cha robh muinntir an àite fhèin saor bho eucoir. Chaidh each a ghoid turas bho thuathanach ann am Bail' a' Chreagain. Chaidh bliadhna seachad agus cha chualas guth air an each. An uair sin, aig a' Bhliadhn' Ùir, nochd an t-each aig an doras. Bha e a' giùlain botail de dh'uisge-beatha. Tha e coltach gun robh e air a bhith a' giùlain uisge-beatha eadar diofar sgìrean agus gun do theich e dhachaigh.

Tha am fiosrachadh seo a' tighinn bho dhà leabhar – fear le Ailean B Lawson air a bheil *A Country Called Stratherrick* agus leabhar a chuireadh ri chèile leis an uachdaran, Niall Friseal-Tytler, anns na ficheadan dhen fhicheadamh linn. **Bha sin gu mòr stèidhichte** air fiosrachadh bho Sheumas Gobha. Rugadh Seumas ann an ochd ceud deug 's a trì (1803), agus chaochail e ann an naoi ceud deug 's a trì (1903). Bha cuimhne mhath aige chun an latha a chaochail e. 'S e am ministear ainmeil, an Dr Tòmas Sinton, Ministear Durais, a chruinnich mòran de na naidheachdan aige.

Bha athair Sheumais na threabhaiche ann am Baile an Lagain, faisg air Dùn Dearduil. Às dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair, bha seanair Sheumais am falach ann an uamh airson trì seachdainean deug, fhad 's a bha na saighdearan dearga a' dèanamh sgrios thall 's a-bhos. Bha còig balaich dheug còmhla anns an uaimh, oir bha muinntir an àite air cluinntinn gun robh na saighdearan a' murt balaich, eadhon san leabaidh.

Bha sinn-seanmhair Sheumais na bantrach. Nuair a chuala i gun robh na saighdearan dearga a' tighinn dlùth, dh'iarr i air buachaille na sia bà bainne aice a thoirt air falbh. Ach thachair am buachaille ris na saighdearan. Mharbh na saighdearan an crodh air fad.

Nuair a bha Seumas fhèin na ghille, fhuair e obair aig a' Choirneal Lester, a bhiodh a' tighinn a shealg ann an Srath Fharragaig. Bha oighreachd aig a' Choirneal Lester ann an Ceant, agus bhiodh Seumas a' dol ann gu tric. Ach, às dèidh greis, thill e don Ghàidhealtachd

agus cha do dh'fhalbh e a-rithist. Bha e an sàs gu mòr ann an gnìomhachas an uisge-bheatha – ged nach robh cead laghail aige sin a dhèanamh!

Bha triùir bhràithrean aige agus, a dh'aindeoin na thachair leis na saighdearan dearga nan òige, chaidh iad uile don arm. Bha aon bhràthair na fhreiceadan aig uaigh Napoleon ann an St Helena fad còig bliadhna. Bhiodh e ag innse mar a chaith Napoleon snaoisean gu leòr – trì puinnd de chuideam dheth – fhad 's a bha e a' coimhead Blàr Bhatairliù, leis gu robh a' ghaoth làidir ga shèideadh air falbh!

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Faclan na Litreach: ciontach: *guilty*; Duras: *Dores (village on Loch Ness)*; treabhaiche: *ploughman*; dlùth: *close*; Ceant: *Kent*; freiceadan: *guard*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Baile Cheatharnach: *literally “township of freebooters”*; Abhainn Fharragaig: *River Farigaig*; gu h-àraidh an dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair: *particularly following the Battle of Culloden*; bha fir air an dìteadh: *men were convicted*; chan e crodh a-mhàin: *not only cattle*; fo chasaid gun do ghoid e muilt, uain agus clòimh: *accused of stealing widders, lambs and wool*; gun do dh'aidich e a chiont: *that he admitted his guilt*; chaidh a ràdh gur e nach robh Beurla aige: *it was said that it was [because] he did not speak English*; a bu choireach ris a' “mhì-thuigse”: *that was responsible for the “misunderstanding”*; saor bho eucoir: *free from [suffering] crime*; cha chualas guth air: *nothing was heard of*; a' giùlain botail de dh'uisge-beatha: *carrying bottles of whisky*; leabhran a chuireadh ri chèile leis an uachdaran: *a booklet that was compiled by the landlord*; Seumas Gobha: *James Gow*; a chruinnich mòran de na naidheachdan aige: *who collected many of his anecdotes*; fhad 's a bha na saighdearan dearga a' dèanamh sgrios: *while the redcoat soldiers were engaged in atrocities*; bha sinn-seanmhair Sheumais na banntnach: *James's great-grandmother was a widow*; dh'iarr i air buachaille na sia bà bainne aice a thoirt air falbh: *she asked a herdsman to take her six milking cows away*; ged nach robh cead laghail aige: *although he did not have legal authority*; a dh'aindeoin na thachair: *despite what happened*; mar a chaith Napoleon snaoisean: *how Napoleon used snuff*; trì puinnd de chuideam dheth: *three pounds weight of it*; Blàr Bhatairliù: *the Battle of Waterloo*; leis gu robh a' ghaoth ga shèideadh air falbh: *because the wind was blowing it away*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **bho Mhac an Tòisich, Fear an Tuilm:** *from Mackintosh, the laird of Holm (then just to the south of Inverness, now a suburb of the city). When you see Fear with a capital letter, followed by a name of a place in the genitive case, it traditionally means the “laird” or “landlord” (although it is rarely used for contemporary landlords.) Other examples are Fear na Comraich (the laird of Applecross in Wester Ross), Fear Thalaisgeir (the laird of Talisker in Skye) and Fear Chanaigh (the late laird of the Isle of Canna, John Lorne Campbell, who died in 1996).*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: **Bha sin gu mòr stèidhichte** air fiosrachadh bho Sheumas Gobha: *that was largely based on information from James Gow.*

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