

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 411. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 107 corresponds to Litir 411.

O chionn ghoirid bha mi air taobh an ear na Gàidhealtachd, ann an Gleann Sìdh. 'S e àite brèagha a th' ann le beanntan àrda, garbha. Tha dualchas gu math Gàidhealach aig an sgìre, ged gur gann a chluinnear an cànan fhèin an-diugh. Tha na h-ainmean-àite gu math Gàidhealach. Mar eisimpleir, chaidh mi suas gleann air a bheil *An Gleann Taitneach*. Air latha brèagha tha mi cinnteach gu bheil an t-ainm glè cheart. Bhiodh e taitneach dha-rìreabh.

Bha mòran a' fuireach anns a' ghleann uaireigin. Bhuineadh iad do Chloinn 'ic Thomaidh. Ged a chaidh an sliochd fad is farsaing, bidh an comann aca – *the Clan MacThomas Society* mar a chanar riutha ann am Beurla – a' dol a Ghleann Sìdh a h-uile bliadhna air an treas deireadh-sheachdain dhen Lùnastal. Bidh iad a' cruinneachadh timcheall clach air a bheil *Clach a' Choilich*. Agus tha mi a' tuigsinn gum bi iad a' gabhail bhòidean de dhìlseachd don cheann-chinnidh aca an sin – dìreach mar a bhiodh an sinnsirean. Anns an t-seann aimsir, bhiodh an ceann-cinnidh a' toirt seachad a bheachd air iomadach gnothach, agus e na sheasamh air a' chloich.

Tha stòiridh ann mu mar a fhuair a' chlach a h-ainm – Clach a' Choilich. Ghluais duin-uasal à Bàideanach a Ghleann Sìdh anns a' chòigeamh linn deug. B' esan Tomaidh Mòr. Agus 's ann bhuaithesan a fhuair an cinneadh ainm – MacThomaidh. Bha iad a' fuireach còmhla faisg air a' chloich seo. Cha robh iad air a bhith ann uabhasach fada, agus oidhche a bha seo chualas coileach a' gairm. Bha seo ann an dorchadas na h-oidhche, chan ann aig a' chamhanaich **mar a bhiodh dùil**. Bha an coileach na sheasamh air mullach na cloiche. Dhùisg e muinntir a' bhaile. Dh'èirich iad uile oir bha iad a' smaoinichadh gun robh rudeigin ceàrr. Agus bha. Bha daoine a' dèanamh orra le droch rùn.

Air sàilleabh gairm a' choilich, rinn Clann 'ic Thomaidh a' chùis air an nàimhdean. Thachair seo ann an àite ris an canar Finegand ann am Beurla. Finegand. Fhad 's a bha mi ann, leugh mi gur e gun do chaill feadhainn an cinn ann anns an t-siathamh linn deug a bu choireach ris an ainm. Ach, gu dearbh, cha robh mi a' faicinn dad anns an ainm a bha ag innse sin dhomh. Anns an t-siathamh linn deug, gu cinnteach cinnteach, 's e ainm Gàidhlig a bhiodh ann.

Fhuair mi a-mach gun tàinig Finegand bho Fèith nan Ceann. Fèith nan Ceann. *The bog-stream of the heads*. A, uill, thuirt mi rium fhìn, feumaidh gu bheil an stòiridh ceart. Agus seo, a rèir beul-aithris, mar a thàinig an t-ainm gu bith.

Bha oifigearan siorraim anns an sgìre airson cìsean a thogail. Bha an dòigh aig na h-ùghdarrasan aig an àm ud, airson airgead a thogail, gu math eadar-dhealaichte bho na th' aca a-nise. Bhiodh còmhlan a' dol gu sgìre, agus armachd aca. Bhiodh iad a' tadhal air a h-uile

taigh, ag iarraidh orra airgead a thoirt seachad sa spot. Mura robh an t-airgead aca, bhiodh na h-oifigearan a' toirt leotha sprèidh no rudan eile. Bhiodh iad a' reic nan rudan sin airson an t-airgead fhaighinn.

Nam biodh barrachd airgid aca bhon reic na bha a dhìth, bha còir aca **an còrr** a thoirt air ais do na daoine. Ach gu math tric, cha tug. Mar sin, bha fìor dhroch bheachd aig a' mhòr-shluagh air muinntir nan cìsean. Chì sinn an ath-sheachdain mar a thachair ann am Fèith nan Ceann is mar a fhuair an t-àite ainm.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Gleann Sìdh: *Glenshee*; uaireigin: *at one time*; Bàideanach: *Badenoch*; armachd: *weaponry*.

Abairtean na Litreach: taobh an ear na Gàidhealtachd: *the eastern Highlands*; ged gur gann a chluinnear an cànan: *though the language is seldom heard*; bhiodh e taitneach dha-rìreabh: *it would be extremely pleasant*; bhuineadh iad do: *they belonged to*; mar a chanar riutha: *as they are called*; air an treas deireadh-sheachdain dhen Lùnastal: *on the third weekend in August*; a' gabhail bhòidean de dhìlseachd don cheann-chinnidh aca: *taking vows of loyalty to their clan chief*; mar a bhiodh an sinnsirean: *as their ancestors would do*; 's ann bhuaitheasan a fhuair an cinneadh ainm: *it's from him the clan took its name*; chualas coileach a' gairm: *a cock was heard crowing*; na sheasamh air mullach na cloiche: *standing on the top of the stone*; a' dèanamh orra le droch rùn: *making for them with evil intent*; rinn X a' chùis air an nàimhdean: *X defeated their enemies*; gun do chaill feadhainn an cinn a bu choireach ris an ainm: *that it was the fact that some people had lost their heads that was responsible for the name*; gu cinnteach cinnteach: *with absolute certainty*; feumaidh gu bheil an stòiridh ceart: *the story must be correct*; oifigearan siorraim: *sheriff's officers*; an dòigh aig na h-ùghdarrasan aig an àm ud: *the way of the authorities at that time*; gu math eadar-dhealaichte bho na th' aca a-nise: *very different from what they have now*; ag iarraidh orra airgead a thoirt seachad sa spot: *asking them to hand over money instantly*; bhiodh na h-oifigearan a' toirt leotha sprèidh: *the officers would take livestock with them*; nam biodh barrachd airgid aca na bha a dhìth: *if they had more money than was required*; bha fìor dhroch bheachd aig a' mhòr-shluagh air muinntir nan cìsean: *the populace had a terrible opinion of the tax-collectors*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha còir aca **an còrr** a thoirt air ais: *they should have given back the remainder/balance*. An còrr is what is used in the schools for "the remainder" in mathematical calculations (as well as being an old word which is still in common usage). If you are interested in expanding your ability to discuss arithmetic and other mathematical issues in Gaelic, there is a Faclair Matamataig/Maths Glossary available (from sources like Comhairle nan Leabhraichean), which was developed by Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig for use in schools. It would make a good exercise for an advanced Gaelic class to use the glossary in conjunction with a maths text book to try some problem solving in Gaelic.

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: [chan ann aig a' chamhanaich] **mar a bhiodh dùil:** [not at dawn as would be expected]. Although this is not strictly a passive structure there is an implied grammatical passivity.

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