

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 453. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 149 corresponds to Litir 453.

Chan ann tric a bhios sinn a’ tadhal **air a’ Bhreatainn Bhig** ann an Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh. Ach bu mhath leam ur toirt don dùthaich sin an t-seachdain seo airson stòiridh innse dhuibh. Stòiridh gu math Ceilteach, saoilidh mi. Gu ìre, ’s e eachdraidh a th’ ann de naomh a bha beò anns an t-siathamh linn AC. Ach tha uiread de mhòrbhailean anns an eachdraidh ’s gum biodh e doirbh gabhail ris a h-uile mìr dhith mar an fhìrinn.

Bhuineadh Pòl Aurélien don Chuimrigh. Bha e gu math naomh eadhon nuair a bha e òg. Bha rìgh na dùthcha ag iarraidh air a bhith na easbaig. Ach bha Pòl ag iarraidh beatha shìmplidh a bhith aige ann am manachainn. **Chaidh e a dh’fhuireach** ann am manachainn anns a’ Bhreatainn Bhig.

Nise, bha seachd cluig aig rìgh na Cuimrigh. Bha iad uile brèagha. Bha iad air an dèanamh de dh’airgead is copair. Nuair a bha Pòl a’ falbh, dh’iarr e air an rìgh fear de na cluig a thoirt dha. Ach dhiùlt an rìgh.

Latha a bha seo, nuair a bha e sa Bhreatainn Bhig, chaidh Pòl agus grunn charaidean aige air bòrd bàta. Thog iad na siùil agus leig iad leis a’ bhàta dhol far an toireadh a’ ghaoth i. Thug a’ ghaoth i do Eilean Ushant far costa siar na dùthcha. Stad Pòl aig fuaran anns an eilean agus thog e cealla an sin ann an àite ris an canar Lambaol. Tha an t-ainm sin a’ ciallachadh “Lann Phòil” – *the religious enclosure of Paul*.

Bha Pòl am beachd fuireach ann an Ushant ach thàinig aingeal a dh’iarr air dhol gu tìr-mòr. Ràinig e tìr-mòr agus thog e cealla. Bha tarbh-allaidh a’ cur eagal air na daoine anns an sgìre. Chaidh Pòl air beulaibh an tairbh. Laigh an tarbh aig a chasan gu modhail. An uair sin dh’fhalbh e don choille. Cha do nochd e a-rithist.

Cha do dh’fhuirich Pòl anns an sgìre sin. Lean e air gu eilean far costa cheann a tuath na Breatainne Bige, faisg air Roscoff, far am bi bàtaichean-aiseig a’ toirt luchd-turais à Sasainn. ’S e an t-ainm air an eilean Batz no L’Isle de Batz ann am Fraingis. Nuair a bha e san eilean, thàinig iasgair thuige le bradan mòr. Am broinn a’ bhradain bha an t-iasgair air rudeigin annasach a lorg – clag air a dhèanamh de dh’airgead is copair! Tha an clag ri fhaicinn fhathast anns a’ chathair-eaglais ann an Saint Pol-de-Leon faisg air Roscoff, a chaidh ainmeachadh airson an Naoimh Phòil seo. Nuair a chunnaic e an clag, rinn Pòl gàire. B’ e sin fear de na cluig a bh’ aig rìgh na Cuimrigh!

Fhad ’s a bha e san eilean, chuala Pòl mu nathair mhòr. Bha i cho cunnartach ’s gun do mharbh i dà dhamh agus dithis fhear air an aon latha. Bha na lanntan oirre cho cruaidh ’s nach robh comas aig claidheamh no sleagh a dhol tromhpa.

Chuir Pòl roimhe cur às don bhèist. Chaidh e dha h-ionnsaigh. Chuir e an sgarfa aige timcheall amhaich na bèiste. Bha an creutair gu math solt an uair sin. Thug Pòl an nathair mhòr

gu costa mu thuath an eilein agus dh'iarr e oirre leum don mhuir. Rinn i sin agus bha i air a bàthadh. Gabhaidh an t-àite far an do thachair sin faicinn fhathast. Ann am Breatannais, 's e *Toul ar Zarpant* a chanas iad ris. Tha sin a' ciallachadh Toll na Nathrach.

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Faclan na Litreach: manachainn: *monastery*; clag, cluig: *bell, bells*; dhiùlt: *refused*; siùil: *sails*; fuaran: *spring*; tarbh-allaidh: *buffalo*; gàire: *smile*; nathair: *serpent*; solt: *placid*; Breatannais: *the Breton language*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Stòiridh gu math Ceilteach, saoilidh mi: *a very Celtic story, I think*; naomh a bha beò anns an t-siathamh linn AC: *a saint who lived in the sixth Century AD*; tha uiread de mhìorbhailean anns an eachdraidh: *there are so many miracles in the history*; gabhail ris a h-uile mìr dhith mar an fhìrinn: *to accept every bit of it as the truth*; bhuineadh X don Chuimrigh: *X belonged to Wales*; ag iarraidh air a bhith na easbaig: *wanting him to be a bishop*; air an dèanamh de dh'airgead is copair: *made of silver and copper*; leig iad leis a' bhàta dhol far an toireadh a' ghaoth i: *they let the boat go where the wind would take her*; costa siar na dùthcha: *the west coast of the country*; thog e cealla an sin: *he built a cell there*; 's e am baile as motha an-diugh: *it's the biggest village today*; thàinig aingeal a dh'iarr air dhol gu tìr-mòr: *an angel came that asked him to go to the mainland*; laigh X aig a chasan: *X lay at his feet*; far am bi bàtaichean-aiseig a' toirt luchd-turais à Sasainn: *where ferries take tourists from England*; thàinig iasgair thuige le bradan: *a fisherman came to him with a salmon*; ri fhaicinn fhathast anns a' chathair-eaglais: *still to be seen in the cathedral*; mharbh i dà dhamh agus dithis fhear: *she killed two oxen and two men*; bha na lanntan oirre cho cruaidh: *the scales on her were so hard*; 's nach robh comas aig claidheamh no sleagh a dhol tromhpa: *that neither sword nor spear could penetrate them*; chuir e an sgarfa aige timcheall amhaich na bèiste: *he put his stole around the beast's neck*; dh'iarr e oirre leum don mhuir: *he asked her to jump into the sea*; bha i air a bàthadh: *she was drowned*; gabhaidh an t-àite far an do thachair sin faicinn fhathast: *the place where that happened can still be seen*; Toll na Nathrach: *the serpent's hole*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Chan ann tric a bhios sinn a' tadhal air a' Bhreatainn Bhig: *it's not often we visit Brittany. An interesting situation has arisen regarding terminology for Wales, Brittany and Britain in the Gaelic countries. A Manxman calls Wales Bretn, Çheer Vretyn or Yn Vretyn Veg, and Brittany Yn Vritaán. He calls Britain Goal or Çheer Ny Goal (Tìr nan Gall). An Irishman calls Wales An Bhreatain Bheag, Brittany An Bhriotáin and Britain An Bhreatain (Mhór). A Scot calls Wales A' Chuimrigh, Brittany A' Bhreatainn Bheag and Britain Breatainn. This can lead to some confusion in inter-Gaelic conversation! In Scotland Breatainn (Britain) has lost its article. So we say muinntir Bhreatainn (the people of Britain), lenition having become the genitive marker. But A' Bhreatainn Bheag (Brittany) has retained its article and traditional grammatical usage. We say anns a' Bhreatainn Bhig (slenderisation of the adjective qualifying a feminine noun in the dative singular) and muinntir na Breatainne Bige (the people of Brittany).*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Chaidh e a dh'fhuireach: *he went to live.*

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