

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 459. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 155 corresponds to Litir 459.

Thairis air a’ cheala-deug a dh’fhalbh, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Phàdraig Grand no “Dubrach” am fear mu dheireadh a chaochail a bh’ air a bhith aig Blàr Chùil Lodair. Thogadh e ann an Dubrach, no an Dubh-bhruach, ri taobh Uisge Dè ann am Bràigh Mhàrr. Bha e a-muigh leis a’ Phrionnsa, chaidh a chur an grèim aig Cùil Lodair, agus rinn e dol-às. Ach chan eil e soilleir an deach e air ais don bhaile bheag aige fhèin.

Bha e air a bhith doirbh dha. Bha mòran anns an sgìre sin fhathast nan Seumasaich, agus chuir an Riaghaltas grunn saighdearan dearga ann airson dèanamh cinnteach nach biodh ar-a-mach eile ann. Agus, air sàilleabh sin, thachair rud iongantach – cùis-chùirte anns an do nochd fianais bho thaibhse!

Bha saighdear dearg aig meadhan a’ ghnothaich. B’ esan Artair Davies. Bha an Sàirdseant Davies os cionn buidheann de dh’ochdnar shaighdearan a bha stèidhichte san Dubh-bhruach **às dèidh Chùil Lodair**. ’S e duine gasta a bh’ ann agus bha muinntir an àite measail gu leòr air gu pearsanta, ged a bha e na shaighdear. Ach, an coimeas ri muinntir an àite, bha e gu math beartach. Agus **bha am farmad air feadhainn ris**.

Bha bucaill airgid air a bhrògan, bha putanan airgid air a phèitean, bha uaireadair luachmhor aige agus bhiodh e a’ giùlain dà sporan fad na h-ùine. Bha an dàrna sporan - fear leathair – làn airgid. Anns an sporan eile – fear de shìoda uaine – bha òr luach còig-deug gu leth gini. ’S e fortan a bha sin. Bho àm gu àm bhiodh an Sàirdseant Davies a’ crathadh an sporain sin mar spòrs nuair a bha e còmhla ri cloinn. Ach feumaidh gun robh e rudeigin faoin. Bhiodh e a’ fulaing mèirle mus biodh an ùine aige air a’ Ghàidhealtachd a-mach. Agus cha b’ e mèirle a-mhàin.

Air an ochdamh latha fichead dhen t-Sultain, seachd ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a naoi (1749), dh’fhàg e an t-àite san robh e a’ fuireach san Dubh-bhruach. Dh’fhalbh e a-mach leis an amas a bhith a’ sealg nam fiadh. Ach air an fheasgar sin cha do thill e dhachaigh. Chaidh daoine a-mach ga lorg. Thàinig buidheann de shaighdearan à Gleann Sidh airson taic a thoirt. Ach cha d’ fhuair iad lorg air a chorp.

Chaidh naoi mìosan seachad. Anns an Ògmhios seachd ceud deug is leth-cheud (1750), bha cìobair air an robh Alasdair Mac a’ Phearsain a’ fuireach na h-oidhche ann am bothan-àirigh pìos beag air falbh bhon bhaile. Ann am meadhan na h-oidhche nochd taibhse anns a’ bhothan. Dh’iarr an taibhse air Alasdair falbh a-mach. Nuair a bha iad a-muigh, thuirt an taibhse gum b’ esan Artair Davies. Cha tuirt e càil mu a bhàs ach thuirt e gun robh e ag iarraidh a bhith air a thiodhlacadh gu dòigheil. Dh’fhaighnich an cìobair dheth cò bha air a mhurt. Ach dhiùlt taibhse an t-saighdeir a’ cheist a fhreagairt. Ach bha e a’ gabhail

dragh mu a chnàimhneach. Sheall e do dh'Alasdair cà' robh a chnàimhneach anns a' mhonadh.

Nuair a bha solas an latha ann, chaidh an cìobair don àite a chaidh a chomharrachadh dha. Agus lorg e an cnàimhneach. Bha falt fhathast air, agus aodach. Bha e follaiseach gur e corp Davies a bh' ann. Dè bha Mac a' Phearsain a' dol a dhèanamh? Agus ciamar a thàinig e gu bhith, gun do nochd fianais bhon taibhse ann an cùirt-lagha? Tha mi duilich, ach tha an ùine air ruith orm, agus feumaidh sin feitheamh chun na h-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Pàdraig Grannd: *Peter Grant*; Blàr Chùil Lodair: *The Battle of Culloden*; gasta: *nice*; bucaill: *buckles*; sìoda: *silk*; Gleann Sìdh: *Glenshee*; cìobair: *shepherd*; bothan-àirigh: *shieling bothy*; taibhse: *ghost*; cùirt-lagha: *court of law*.

Abairtean na Litreach: thairis air a' cheala-deug a dh'fhalbh: *over the last fortnight*; bha e a-muigh leis a' Phrionnsa: *he was out with the [Bonnie] Prince [Charlie]*; bha e air a bhith doirbh dha: *it would have been difficult for him*; grunn saighdearan dearga: *a few redcoat soldiers*; nach biodh ar-a-mach eile ann: *there would be no other rebellion*; air sàilleabh sin, thachair rud iongantach: *because of that, an amazing thing happened*; cùis-chùirte anns an do nochd fianais bho thaibhse: *a court case in which evidence from a ghost appeared*; an coimeas ri muinntir an àite, bha e gu math beartach: *compared to the locals he was very wealthy*; putanan airgid air a phèitean: *silver buttons on his waistcoat*; bhiodh e a' giùlain dà sporan: *he would carry two purses*; an dàrna sporan: *the first [lit. the second] sporan*; òr luach còig-deug gu leth gini: *gold worth fifteen and a half guineas*; a' crathadh an sporain sin mar spòrs: *shaking his sporan for fun*; rudeigin faoin: *somewhat naive*; a' fulaing mèirle: *suffering a robbery*; mus biodh an ùine aige a-mach: *before his time was up*; cha do thill e: *he didn't return*; cha d' fhuair iad lorg air a chorp: *they didn't find the body*; a bhith air a thiodhlacadh gu dòigheil: *to be buried properly*; cà' robh a chnàimhneach: *where his skeleton was*; don àite a chaidh a chomharrachadh dha: *to the place that was [had been] pointed out to him*; bha falt fhathast air, agus aodach: *there was still hair on it, and clothes*; ciamar a thàinig e gu bhith?: *how did it come to be?*; tha an ùine air ruith orm: *I've run out of time*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: às dèidh Chùil Lodair: *after Culloden. I've used the same sort of shorthand for "The Battle of Culloden" in Gaelic as is used in English. But notice the lenition of Cùil. The reason is that the place name is in the genitive case following the compound adjective às dèidh. The lenition here is a marker of the genitive. Other similar examples of genitive lenition in place names (where there is no article present) are muinntir Bharraigh (the people of Barra), muinntir Ghlaschu (of Glasgow), muinntir Shasainn (of England), muinntir Bhreatainn (of Britain), muinntir Chill Mhearnaig (of Kilmarnock), muinntir Cheann Phàdraig (of Peterhead), muinntir Dhùn Èideann (of Edinburgh).*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: bha am farmad air feadhainn ris: *some were envious of him*.

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