

# 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](mailto:rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 460. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 156 corresponds to Litir 460.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh mun taibhse aig an t-Sairdseant Artair Davies – saighdear dearg a chaidh a mhurt ann am Bràigh Mhàrr ann an seachd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a naoi (1749). Nochd a thaibhse do chiobair, Alasdair Mac a' Phearsain, naoi mìosan às dèidh a bhàis. An ceann ùine bhiodh fianais na taibhse a' nochdadh ann an cùirt-lagha!

Lorg Alasdair an corp ach cha do thiodhlaic e e. Chaidh e a dh'iarraidh comhairle bhon uachdaran, Iain Seathach. Thug Seathach comhairle dha gun a bhith ag innse dad don arm, ach an corp a thiodhlaic anns a' mhonadh.

Cha do thill Alasdair don chorp, ge-tà. Bha e fhathast ri cìobaireachd, a' fuireach anns a' bhothan-àirigh. Beagan làithean às dèidh sin, thill an taibhse don bhothan. An turas seo bha e rùisgte. Bha boireannach cuideachd a' fuireach anns a' bhothan. Thuirte ise, nuair a chunnaic i fear rùisgte a' tighinn a-steach don bhothan, gun do tharraing i còmhdach a leapa thairis oirre is nach fhac' i dad eile!

Dh'iarr taibhse an t-saighdeir air a' chiobair a chorp a thiodhlaicadh. Dh'fhaighnich Alasdair dheth cò am murtair. An turas seo, thug an taibhse dà ainm seachad – Donnchadh Mac a' Chlèirich agus Alasdair Dòmhnallach. Air an làrna-mhàireach cha do rinn Mac a' Phearsain ach a dhol suas don chnàimhneach, còmhla ri caraid, agus a thiodhlaicadh an sin.

Ach cha do mhothaich iad do ghunna is ad an t-saighdeir. Tro thìde chaidh na rudan sin a lorg. Bha “A.R.D” – ciad litrichean ainm Davies – air an ad. Às dèidh rannsachaidh, chaidh Donnchadh Mac a' Chlèirich agus Alasdair Dòmhnallach a chur an grèim. Bha sin as t-Sultain seachd ceud deug, leth-cheud 's a trì (1753), ceithir bliadhna às dèidh a' mhuirt. Bha casaidean air an dithis gun do mhuirt iad an Sàirdseant Davies.

Bha fios aig muinntir an àite gum b' iad na murtairean. Chunnacas bean Dhonnchaidh le fàinne òir Davies oirre às dèidh gun deach an saighdear à fianais. Dh'fhàs Donnchadh beartach **mun aon àm**. Agus bha dithis ann a chunnaic Donnchadh agus fear eile sa mhonadh air an latha sin, agus gunnaichean aca. Thuirte iad gum faca iad an dithis a' bruidhinn ri saighdear mus cuala iad dà bhrag gunna. An uair sin bha an dithis a' coimhead air an t-saighdear, agus e **na shìneadh** anns an fhraoch.

A rèir aithris bha eadhon an luchd-lagha dìon dhen bheachd gun robh Mac a' Chlèirich agus Dòmhnallach ciontach. Cha robh dùil aig mòran, ma bha dùil aig duine, gum faigheadh iad dheth. Ach gu h-annasach is gu h-iongantach, às dèidh ceithir uairean deug de bheachdachadh, rinn an diùraidh an co-dhùnadh gun robh iad neo-chiontach. Cìmar fon ghrèin a rinn iad an co-dhùnadh sin? Uill, bha e co-cheangailte ris a' Ghàidhlig.

Chaidh leigeil le Alasdair Mac a' Phearsain, an cìobair, innse don chùirt dè thuirt an taibhse. Thuirte e gum b' iad Mac a' Chlèirich agus Dòmhnallach na murtairean. Agus dè an

cànan anns an robh an taibhse a' bruidhinn? A' Ghàidhlig, thuirt an cìobair. Ach an robh Gàidhlig aig an t-Sairdseant Davies nuair a bha e beò? Cha robh. Mar sin, an toireadh diùraidh creideas don fhianais aig an taibhse? Uill, cha tug agus, a dh'aindeoin na fianais eile, fhuaradh an dithis a bha fo chasaid neo-chiontach.

Ach an robh an cìobair fhèin cho neo-chiontach sin? An deach an taibhse a "chruthachadh" leis fhèin no le feadhainn eile, airson na ciontaich a chomharrachadh? Ge bith dè an fhìrinn a th' ann, chanainn gun dèanadh e deagh phrògram dràma air an telebhisean!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Artair: *Arthur*; cìobaireachd: *shepherding*; bothan-àirigh: *shieling bothy*; rùisgte: *naked*; beartach: *wealthy*; ciontach: *guilty*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** saighdear dearg a chaidh a mhurt ann am Bràigh Mhàrr: *a redcoat soldier who was murdered in Braemar*; nochd a thaibhse do chìobair: *his ghost appeared to a shepherd*; às dèidh a bhàis: *after his death*; bhiodh fianais na taibhse a' nochdadh ann an cùirt-lagha: *the ghost's evidence would appear in a court of law*; cha do thiodhlaic e e: *he didn't bury it*; comhairle bhon uachdaran: *advice from the landlord*; gun a bhith ag innse dad don arm: *not to tell the army anything*; gun do tharraing i còmhdach a leapa thairis oirre: *that she pulled the bedclothes over her*; Donnchadh Mac a' Chlèirich agus Alasdair Dòmhnallach: *Duncan Clark and Alexander MacDonald*; air an làrna-mhàireach cha do rinn Mac a' Phearsain ach a dhol suas don chnàimhneach: *the next day MacPherson just went up to the skeleton*; cha do mhothaich iad do ghunna is ad an t-saighdeir: *they didn't notice the soldier's gun or hat*; ciad litrichean ainm X: *X's initials*; as t-Sultain: *in September*; bha casaidean air an dithis gun do mhurt iad X: *the pair were accused of murdering X*; gum b' iad na murtairean: *that they were the murderers*; fàinne òir: *gold ring*; às dèidh gun deach an saighdear à fianais: *after the soldier disappeared*; mus cuala iad dà bhrag gunna: *before they heard two gunshots*; gum faigheadh iad dheth: *that they would get off (with it)*; gu h-annasach is gu h-iongantach: *strangely and amazingly*; ceithir uairean deug de bheachdachadh: *14 hours of deliberation*; ciamar fon ghrèin?: *how on earth [lit under the sun]?*; an toireadh diùraidh creideas don fhianais?: *would a jury give credit to the evidence?*; fhuaradh an dithis neo-chiontach: *the pair was found not guilty*; an deach an taibhse a "chruthachadh" leis fhèin: *was the ghost "created" by himself?*; airson na ciontaich a chomharrachadh: *to identify the guilty parties*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** na shìneadh anns an fhraoch: *lying stretched out in the heather*. The verb *sìn* works in a similar way to *seas* and *suidhe* [eg bha e na sheasamh (*he was standing*); bha e na shuidhe (*he was sitting*)]. When the condition, rather than the act, is being described, it combines with the appropriate prepositional pronoun formed from "ann" eg bha mi nam shìneadh (*ie bha mi na mo shìneadh – I was stretched out lit. I was in my stretching out*); bha thu nad shìneadh (*you were stretched out*); bha e na shìneadh (*he was stretched out*); bha i na sìneadh (*she was stretched out*). Plural forms are bha sinn nar sìneadh, bha sibh nur sìneadh and bha iad nan sìneadh.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** mun aon àm: *around the same time*.

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