

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 roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 487. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 183 corresponds to Litir 487.

Dh’fhàs Sir Uilleam MacFhionghain beartach bhon obair mhalairt a rinn e anns na h-Innseachan agus Afraga an Ear. Bhuineadh e do Cheann Loch Chille Chiarain agus cheannaich e oighreachd ann an Cinn Tìre. Cheannaich e cuideachd oighreachd Srath na h-Àirde ann an ceann a deas an Eilein Sgitheanaich – sgìre le buinteanas eachdraidheil do Chloinn ’ic Fhionghain.

Ann an Cinn Tìre thog e baile beag ris an canar An Clachan. Agus thog e eaglais ann. ’S ann leis an Eaglais Shaoir a bha i. Bha taigh mòr aige a tha a-nise na thaigh-òsta. Agus bha gheat aige. Bhiodh daoine ainmeil a’ cèlidh air. Gu dearbh, bha a’ Bhanrigh Bhictoria a’ **dèanamh deiseil** airson tadhal air nuair a chaochail e – ann an Lunnainn, ann an ochd ceud deug, naochad ’s a trì (1893).

Thug Uilleam tòrr airgid seachad nuair a bha e beò. A dh’aindeoin sin, bha ceudan mhiltean notaichean aige fhathast na sporan nuair a chaochail e. Fortan mòr san linn sin! Am measg na fhuair airgead bhuaithe bha an iomairt airson cathair Cheilteis a stèidheachadh ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. Thuirt am Proifeasair Blackie gun robh ùidh mhòr aig Uilleam ann an Gàidhlig, ged nach urrainn dhomh a bhith cinnteach an robh an cànan aige fhèin.

Ged a phòs e, cha robh clann aige. Chaidh mòran dhen airgead aige a-steach do dh’urras leis an amas cothroman foghlaim a thoirt do dh’fhir òga às a’ Ghàidhealtachd. Chuir **mac a pheathar**, Donnchadh MacNèill, airgead ris an urras cuideachd.

Cheannaich an t-urras àite air a bheil A’ Chill anns a’ Cheann mu Dheas de Chinn Tìre. Bha togalach mòr ann, agus còrr is ceud acaire fearainn. Bha na h-urrairean ag iarraidh sgoil bheag a stèidheachadh anns am biodh gillean a’ faighinn oideachadh ann an Àiteachas agus Einnseanaireachd. Bha i gu bhith do bhalaich à siorrachdan Earra-Ghàidheal is Inbhir Nis, Eileanan Bhòid is Arainn, agus cuideachd bho nas fhaide air falbh air a’ Ghàidhealtachd ’s na h-Eileanan. Ann an naoi ceud deug is còig-deug (1915), dh’fhosgail an *Kintyre Technical School* airson ochd balaich dheug. Bha a’ chiad fheadhainn sin à Cinn Tìre, Diùra, Ìle, Arainn agus Giogha. Bidh sibh a’ mothachadh nach e *Sgoil na Cille* no *Keil School* a bh’ oirre aig an toiseach. Chì sinn fhathast dè as coireach ri atharrachadh a h-ainm.

B’ e a’ chiad mhaighstir-sgoile aca Seumas Mason, a bha a’ teagasg ann an sgoil theicnigeach ann an Goillspidh roimhe sin. Bha e na cheannard eadar naoi ceud deug is còig-deug (1915) agus naoi ceud deug is caogad (1950). Thug e buaidh mhòr air an sgoil. Seo na prionnsabalán a bh’ aige: Bha creideamh a’ gabhail àite mòr ann. Bha cothrom aig a h-uile gille deuchainn a dhèanamh airson faighinn a-steach don oilthigh. Bha na gillean an ìre

mhath gan smachdachadh fhèin. Bha iad air am brosnachadh uallach a ghabhail airson gach rud a rinn iad. Agus rinn iad fhèin an obair-taighe air fad, ach a-mhàin a' chòcaireachd.

Rinn iad a' ghàirnealaireachd cuideachd – a' cur is a' buain bhuntàta, coirce is eile. Agus bha spòrs gu leòr air a' chlàr-ama – ball-coise, criogaid, lùth-chleasachd agus snàmh sa mhuir.

Ach thàinig atharrachadh mòr air an sgoil anns an Dùbhlachd naoi ceud deug, fichead 's a ceithir (1924). Chaidh i na smàl agus chaidh an togalach a sgrios. Bha an sgoil air fàs gu còrr is leth-cheud sgoilear agus ceathrar thidsearan – no *maighstirean* mar a bh' aca orra. Dh'fhàg an sgoil A' Chill ach 's ann an uair sin, mar a chì sinn, a ghabh i an t-ainm *Keil School*.

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Faclan na Litreach: Sir Uilleam MacFhionghain: *Sir William MacKinnon*; Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain: *Campbeltown*; Cinn-Tìre: *Kintyre*; Srath na h-Àirde: *Strathaird*; gheat: *yacht*; A' Chill: *Keil*; urrasairean: *trustees*; Giogha: *Gigha*; gàirnealaireachd: *gardening*, lùth-chleasachd: *athletics*; an Dùbhlachd: *December*.

Abairtean na Litreach: buinteanas eachdraidheil do Chloinn 'ic Fhionghain: *historical connections to the MacKinnons*; 's ann leis an Eaglais Shaoir a bha i: *it belonged to the Free Church*; bha ceudan mhiltean notaichean aige fhathast na sporan: *he still had hundreds of thousands of pounds [lit. "in his purse"]*; am measg na fhuair airgead bhuaithe: *among [those] who received money from him*; leis an amas cothroman foghlaim a thoirt do dh'fhir òga: *with the aim of giving young men opportunities*; còrr is ceud acaire fearainn: *more than a hundred acres of land*; oideachadh ann an Àiteachas agus Einnseanaireachd: *instruction in Agriculture and Engineering*; Eileanan Bhòid is Arainn: *the isles of Bute and Arran*; chì sinn fhathast dè as coireach ri atharrachadh a h-ainm: *we shall see yet what was responsible for the change of her name*; sgoil theicnigeach ann an Goillspidh: *a technical school in Golspie*; thug e buaidh mhòr air an sgoil: *he had an enormous influence on the school*; an ìre mhath gan smachdachadh fhèin: *pretty much disciplined themselves*; air am brosnachadh uallach a ghabhail: *encouraged to take responsibility*; an obair-taighe air fad, ach a-mhàin a' chòcaireachd: *all the domestic duties except cooking*; a' cur is a' buain: *planting and harvesting*; chaidh i na smàl agus chaidh an togalach a sgrios: *it caught fire and the building was destroyed*; còrr is leth-cheud sgoilear agus ceathrar thidsearan: *more than fifty students and four teachers*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Chuir mac a pheathar, Donnchadh MacNèill, airgead ris an urras: *his nephew ("the son of his sister")*, Duncan MacNeill, put money into the trust. *English has borrowed words from other languages much more promiscuously than Gaelic. A quarter of its vocabulary derives from French origins, and this includes the words nephew, niece, uncle and aunt. In Gaelic we have "officially" adopted just two of them from English – uncail and antaidh – and they are only used sparingly. We normally specify the exact relationship eg nighean mo bhràthar or nighean mo pheathar for "my niece". You will hear people use the words "nephew" and "niece" in Gaelic conversation but they're not in the dictionaries. Is it time to accept them as part of our language? If so, how would we write them? Nefiu? Nios? The latter is also a dialectal variant of neas, a weasel!*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: bha a' Bhanrigh Bhictoria a' dèanamh deiseil airson tadhal air nuair a chaochail e: *Queen Victoria was preparing to visit him when he died.*

** Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA*