

# 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](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 572. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 268 corresponds to Litir 572.*

An cuala sibh riamh mun Urramach Alexander Pope? Bha e na mhinistear ann am Meaghrath ann an Gallaibh anns an ochdamh linn deug. Bha Gàidhlig aige – gu dearbh, ’s e coitheanal Gàidhlig a bh’ aige.

Chan eil mi cinnteach dè chanadh muinntir an àite ris ann an Gàidhlig. Tha ainm athar air a chlàradh ann am Beurla mar Hector Paip agus Hector Pope. Ach, leis nach eil mi cinnteach mu dheidhinn sin, canaidh mi Alexander Pope. Ach tha aon rud cinnteach – nuair a thathar a’ bruidhinn air dualchas Gàidhlig Ghallaibh chan urrainn Mgr Pope fhàgail an dàrna taobh.

Thogadh e ann an Loth ann an Cataibh. Bha athair na mhinistear anns an Eaglais Easbaigich. Ach chaidh Alexander a-null gu Eaglais na h-Alba. Rinn e ceum ann an diadhachd ann an Obar Dheathain. A bharrachd air a’ Ghàidhlig, bha comas aige anns na cànanan clasaigeach.

’S e duine foghainteach làidir a bh’ ann agus bhiodh e a’ seasamh ùghdarras le bata a chumadh e na dhòrn. Bhiodh e a’ cleachdadh a’ bhata air muinntir a’ choitheanail airson am “brosnachadh” a dh’ionnsaigh na h-eaglaise. Nam faiceadh e daoine ri spòrs no dibhearsain air an t-Sàbaid, rachadh e a-mach leis a’ bhata airson an iomain don eaglais. Bha ainm aige air a’ bhata – “am bàillidh”.

Seo stòiridh a chaidh a chlàradh mu dheidhinn, ged nach urrainn dhomh dearbhadh co-dhiù tha e fìor gus nach eil. Bha fear **dom b’ ainm** Dòmhnall air iomall na sgìre a bha a’ diùltadh a-muigh no mach a dhol don eaglais. Bha am ministear air fios a chur thuige gu tric, ag iarraidh air dhol don mhansa. Ach dhiùlt Dòmhnall. Mar sin, chuir Mgr Pope roimhe dhol a chèilidh air Dòmhnall.

Latha a bha seo, chaidh am ministear gu taigh Dhòmhnail. Ràinig e an taigh anmoch feasgar agus cha do dh’inns e do Dhòmhnall cò e. Bhiodh na Gàidheil a’ toirt cuid na h-oidhche do dhuine sam bith air an robh feum, agus fhuair am ministear fàilte is furan.

Chuir an dithis am feasgar seachad còmhla ann an deagh shunnd, le seachas gu leòr. **Thàinig an t-àm airson a dhol a laighe** agus thuirt Mgr Pope, “Feumaidh tu ùrnaigh a ghabhail, a Dhòmhnail.”

“Cha dèan mi sin,” fhreagair Dòmhnall.

“Feumaidh tu,” thuirt Mgr Pope. “Bheir mi ort a dhèanamh, agus air do ghlùinean.”

“Huh,” arsa Dòmhnall. “Cha b’ urrainn do eadhon Mgr Pope, am ministear, toirt orm ùrnaigh a ghabhail, làidir ’s ged a tha e.”

“Is mise Mgr Pope,” thuirt am ministear. “Agus leis gur e peacach rag-mhuinealach a th’ annad, tha mi a’ toirt òrdugh dhut dhol air do ghlùinean no bidh thu a’ gabhail aithreachas.”

Bha Dòmhnall feargach. Sheas e an aghaidh a’ mhinisteir. Rinn an dithis sabaid len dùirn. Agus ’s e Mgr Pope a thug buaidh. Ghèill Dòmhnall dha agus ghabh e ùrnaigh.

Thàinig atharrachadh air Dòmhnall air an oidhche sin. Thòisich e air a dhol don eaglais is dh’èirich e gu bhith na èildear. Thathar ag ràdh gun robh spèis mhòr aige don mhinistear agus aig a’ mhinistear dhasan.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Meagrath: *Reay (parish)*; Gallaibh: *Caithness*; coitheanal: *congregation*; Loth: *Loth*; Cataibh: *Sutherland*; foghainteach: *brave, valorous*; dhiùlt: *refused*; anmoch feasgar: *late in the afternoon*; seachas: *chat*; ùrnaigh: *prayer*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** An cuala sibh mun Urramach Alexander Pope?: *have you heard of the Rev Alexander Pope?*; dè chanadh muinntir an àite ris: *what the local people called him*; tha ainm athar air a chlàradh: *his father’s name is recorded*; nuair a thathar a’ bruidhinn air dualchas Gàidhlig Ghallaibh: *when the Gaelic heritage of Caithness is being spoken of*; chan urrainn X fhàgail an dàrna taobh: *X can’t be left out*; anns an Eaglais Easbaigich: *in the Episcopalian Church*; ceum ann an diadhachd ann an Obar Dheathain: *a divinity degree in Aberdeen*; na cànanan clasaigeach: *the classical languages*; bhiodh e a’ seasamh ùghdarrais le bata a chumadh e na dhòrn: *he would back up his authority with a stick he kept in his fist*; airson am “brosnachadh”: *to “encourage” them*; nam faiceadh e daoine ri spòrs no dibhearsain air an t-Sàbaid: *if he saw people involved in sports or fun on the Sabbath*; rachadh e a-mach airson an iomain don eaglais: *he would go out and drive them to church*; a’ diùltadh a-muigh no mach: *refusing outright*; ag iarraidh air dhol don mhansa: *asking him to go to the manse*; chuir X roimhe dhol a chèilidh air Y: *X decided to go and visit Y*; a’ toirt cuid na h-oidhche do dhuine sam bith: *giving a night’s lodging to anybody*; bheir mi ort a dhèanamh, agus air do ghlùinean: *I’ll force you to do it, and on your knees*; làidir ’s ged a tha e: *strong and all as he is*; leis gur e peacach rag-mhuinealach a th’ annad: *since you are a stubborn sinner*; sabaid len dùirn: *fighting with their fists*; ghèill X dha: *X submitted to him*; gu bhith na èildear: *to be an elder*; gun robh spèis mhòr aige don mhinistear: *that he greatly respected the minister*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Thàinig an t-àm airson a dhol a laighe: *the time came to go to bed. This is only one way of referring to “going to bed” in Gaelic [note that I am referring here only to sole occupancy of said item of furniture for the purposes of sleep]. Although laighe means “lie down”, tha mi a’ dol a laighe means “I’m going to bed (to sleep)”*; you might use the word *norrage* if you want to indicate you’re just going to have a short nap or forty winks. Other phrases meaning “I’m going to bed/sleep” are *tha mi a’ dol innte*, *tha mi a’ dol a leabaidh*, *tha mi a’ dol a chadal*.

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** fear dom b’ ainm Dòmhnall: *a man called Donald*.

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