

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 573. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 269 corresponds to Litir 573.

Thòisich **An t-Urr** Alexander Pope mar mhinistear ann am Meagrath ann an Gallaibh ann an seachd ceud deug, trithead 's a ceithir (1734). Bha e anns an dreuchd sin fad ceathrad 's a h-ochd bliadhna.

Mar a bha mi ag innse dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh, 's e duine foghainteach làidir a bh' ann. Bhiodh e a' toirt bata leis airson daoine a “bhrosnachadh” a dh'ionnsaigh na h-eaglaise. 'S e “am bàillidh” a chanadh e ris a' bhata.

Bha fear anns an sgìre aig an robh baile fearainn. Bha boireannach a' fuireach aige agus bha dithis chloinne aca, ach cha robh iad pòsta. Latha a bha seo, nochd e mu choinneamh Seisean na h-Eaglaise. Thuir Mgr Pope ris gun robh e na pheacach. Dh'iarr am ministear air a pheacaidhean aideachadh anns an eaglais air an ath Shàbaid. Agus dh'iarr e air gealltainn gun cuireadh e e fhèin fo lagh is ùghdarras na h-Eaglaise.

“Mus dèan mi càil dhen t-seòrsa,” thuir an duine, “faodaidh sibh m' fhiacail mu dheireadh a spìonadh às mo bheul.”

“Chì sinn,” thuir am ministear.

Dh'aontaich an Seisean gun rachadh trìùir de na h-èildearan as làidire gu taigh an tuathanaich madainn na Sàbaid. Bheireadh iad air dhol don Eaglais.

Nuair a thàinig madainn na Sàbaid, rinneadh sin. Chuir na h-èildearan an tuathanach fo smachd. Chuingealaich iad e le ròpan, agus thug iad air dhol don eaglais.

Nuair a ràinig iad an eaglais, dh'iarr Mgr Pope air na h-èildearan an tuathanach a cheangal ri being. Aig deireadh an t-searmoin thuir e ris an duine bhon chùbaid, “Thuir thu gum faodamaid an fhiacail mu dheireadh a spìonadh às do bheul mus biodh tu far a bheil thu. Ach, a bhleigeird bhochd, càite a bheil thu a-nis?!” 'S e ministear cruaidh a bh' ann.

Bha Alexander Pope fada an aghaidh deoch làidir. Latha a bha seo, thàinig an tè a bha a' ruith an taigh-sheinnse thuige. Bha sianar choigreach a-staigh aice. Bha iad air cus òl agus bha iad a-nise a' sabaid. Bha an t-eagal oirre gun dèanadh iad sgrios.

Dh'iarr am ministear oirre àradh a chur ri balla an taighe agus cuinneagan a lionadh le uisge. Chaidh e suas air a' mhullach leis na cuinneagan, thug e air falbh gu leòr dhen tughadh agus dhòirt e an t-uisge air na drongairean a bha fodha. Thàinig na drongairean a-mach, deiseil airson sabaid leis. Ach bha am ministear a' feitheamh riutha air an talamh, agus “am bàillidh” na làimh. Cha robh aon duine aca deònach aghaidh a thoirt air a' mhinistear agus theich iad.

Tha stòiridh eile ann cuideachd mu thuras a bha feadhainn ag òl ann am bothan faisg air an eaglais air an t-Sàbaid. Dh'iarr Mgr Pope orra sgaoileadh ach dhiùlt iad. Bha dusan neach anns a' ghràisg agus thilg fear dhiubh botal a dh'ionnsaigh ceann a' mhinistear. Thug am ministear slaic mhòr leis a' bhàillidh air ceann an fhir eile agus thuit e don talamh. Rinn e an aon rud air ceathrar no còignear eile mus do sgaoil iad.

Tha e coltach gun do thagh Mgr Pope èildearan **a rèir cho làidir 's a bha iad**, chan ann a rèir cho diadhaidh 's a bha iad! 'S e sin, co-dhiù, an cliù aige. Ach dh'fhàg e dìleab Ghàidhlig Ghallach a tha inntinneach. Bheir sinn sùil air sin an ath sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Meagrath: *Reay (parish)*; Gallaibh: *Caithness*; dreuchd: *job, position*; foghainteach: *brave, valorous*; bata: *stick*; being: *bench*; cùbaid: *pulpit*; cuinneagan: *water pails*; gràisg: *gang, mob*.

Abairtean na Litreach: aig an robh baile fearainn: *who had a farm*; bha dithis chloinne aca, ach cha robh iad pòsta: *they had two children, but they weren't married*; mu choinneamh Seisean na h-Eaglaise: *in front of the Church Session*; gun robh e na pheacach: *that he was a sinner*; a pheacaidhean aideachadh: *to admit his sins*; air an ath Shàbaid: *on the next Sabbath*; dh'iarr e air gealltainn gun cuireadh e e fhèin fo lagh is ùghdarras na h-Eaglaise: *he asked him to promise that he would place himself under the law and authority of the Church*; mus dèan mi càil dhen t-seòrsa: *before I do anything of the like*; faodaidh sibh m' fhiacail mu dheireadh a spionadh às mo bheul: *you can pull the last tooth out of my mouth*; trìùir de na h-èildearan as làidire: *three of the strongest elders*; bheireadh iad air dhol: *they would make him go*; chuingealaich iad e le ròpan: *they restrained him with ropes*; deireadh an t-searmoin: *the end of the sermon*; a bhleigeird bhochd: *you pitiful scoundrel*; fada an aghaidh deoch làidir: *strongly opposed to alcoholic drink*; an tè a bha a' ruith an taigh-sheinnse: *the woman who ran the pub*; sianar choigreach: *six strangers*; àradh a chur ri balla an taighe: *to put a ladder against the wall of the house*; thug e air falbh gu leòr dhen tughadh: *he took away enough of the thatch*; dhòirt e an t-uisge air na drongairean a bha fodha: *he poured the water on the drunkards who were below him*; cha robh X deònach aghaidh a thoirt air Y: *X wasn't willing to stand against Y*; chan ann a rèir cho diadhaidh 's a bha iad: *not according to how devout they were*; dìleab Ghàidhlig Ghallach: *a Caithnessian Gaelic legacy*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Thòisich **An t-Urr** Alexander Pope mar mhinistear...: *Rev Alexander Pope started as a minister...* Gaelic writers are often unsure as to whether or not to put a full stop to indicate an abbreviation, as there seems to be a lack of unanimity on the matter in the English-speaking world (one sees *Rev.* and *Rev*). The latest edition of the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions (Oct 2009 – or is it Oct. 2009?!) gives us some guidance. All the examples they give, with one exception, omit the full stop eg *An t-Oll*, *An Dr* agus *Mgr* – the exception being *àir. for no. (number)*, presumably to ensure there is no confusion with the preposition *air*.

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: **a rèir cho làidir 's a bha iad**: *according to how strong they were*.

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