

# 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 582. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 278 corresponds to Litir 582.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh gun do rinneadh oidhirp, anns an naoidheamh linn deug, ainm baile Steòrnabhaigh atharrachadh. Cha robh **Fear-casaid a’ Chrùin** ann an Steòrnabhaigh aig an àm, Tòmas Druimeanach, sàsaichte le *Stornoway*. Chan eil fhios agam an robh beachd aige air dreach Gàidhlig an ainm – *Steòrnabhaigh*. ’S dòcha gun robh e coma mu dheidhinn sin. Ach bha e a’ cumail a-mach gun canadh cuid *Stormaway* agus nach robh fuaimneachadh an ainm tarraingeach idir do chlaisneachd nan Gall.

Ach dè an t-ainm a bha an Druimeanach ag iarraidh an àite *Stornoway*? Uill – *Port Royal*. Seadh, *Port Royal*. Carson? Uill mar chuimhneachan air an Rìgh – Uilleam IV – a thadhail air a’ bhaile ann an seachd ceud deug naochad ’s a trì (1793) – fada mus robh e na Rìgh. Bhruidhinn an Druimeanach ri marsantaich ann an Steòrnabhaigh agus bha e dhen bheachd gum biodh an sluagh toilichte mun atharrachadh. Sgrìobh e don uachdaran a bha cuideachd na bhall-parlamaid, Seumas Stiùbhart-MacCoinnich: “..it is you,” sgrìobh e, “that has best right to claim the change from His Majesty though I hope you will do me the justice in intimating to His Majesty ... that it was I, humble individual, that suggested it as a mark of my respect to his Majesty...” Seadh. Saoil an robh muinntir Steòrnabhaigh air an sgreamhachadh mar a bhiodh mòran an-diugh?!

’S dòcha gun robh Tòmas Druimeanach a’ coimhead le farmad thar a’ chuain, oir tha Port Rìoghail – uill Port Rìgh co-dhiù – anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Bha sin air ainmeachadh airson an Rìgh Seumas V a thadhail air a’ bhaile ann an còig ceud deug is dà fhichead (1540). Nan robh e math gu leòr do Phort Rìgh a bhith a’ gabhail ainm **air sàillibh ’s gun robh an Rìgh ann triop**, nach biodh e math gu leòr do Steòrnabhaigh a bhith a’ gabhail *Port Rìoghail* air fhèin?

’S e an duilgheadas a th’ ann gu bheil cuid dhen bheachd gun tàinig atharrachadh air an ainm Sgitheanach. Cluinnear fhathast seann Sgitheanaich a’ gabhail Port Ruigheadh air a’ bhaile, seach Port Rìgh. Mas e Port Ruigheadh a bh’ ann bho thùs, tha sin a’ ciallachadh “*slope harbour*” seach “*king’s harbour*”. Ach chan eil sin cho romansach!

Co-dhiù, cha robh an Druimeanach soirbheachail agus mhair seann ainm Lochlannach Steòrnabhaigh chun an latha an-diugh – anns an dà chànan. Ach chan e amhàin ainm a’ bhaile a bha air aire Fear-casaid a’ Chrùin. Bha e cuideachd dhen bheachd gum bu chòir crathadh a dhèanamh air riaghladh ionadail. ’S dòcha, anns an dòigh sin, gun robh e air thoiseach air mòran eile.

Bha e airson 's gun tigeadh riaghladh nan Eilean Siar, le ùghdarrasan stèidhichte ann an Inbhir Nis is Inbhir Pheofharain, gu ceann. Bha e ag iarraidh gum biodh siorrachd ùr air a cruthachadh, air a riaghladh le ùghdarras stèidhichte ann an Steòrnabhagh. 'S e an t-ainm a bhiodh air an t-siorrachd sin – *Lewis-shire*. Siorrachd Leòdhais. Smaoinich! Ach chan eil mi cinnteach am biodh sin a' gabhail a-steach Na Hearadh. Tha fhios nach biodh na Hearaich riarachtaichte a bhith mar phàirt de Lewis-shire!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Tòmas Druimeanach: *Thomas Drummond*; Steòrnabhagh: *Stornoway*; marsantaich: *merchants*; Port Rìgh: *Portree*; romansach: *romantic*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** gun do rinneadh oidhirp: *that an attempt was made*; ainm baile Steòrnabhaigh atharrachadh: *to change the name of the town of Stornoway*; 's dòcha gun robh e coma mu dheidhinn sin: *perhaps he was indifferent about that*; nach robh fuaimneachadh an ainm tarraingeach idir do chlaisneachd nan Gall: *that the sound of the name wasn't at all attractive to the hearing of [the] Lowlanders*; a thadhail air a' bhaile: *who visited the town*; gum biodh an sluagh toilichte mun atharrachadh: *that the populace would be happy about the change*; sgrìobh e don uachdaran a bha cuideachd na bhall-parlamaid: *he wrote to the landlord who was also a member of parliament*; air an sgreabhachadh: *sickened*; a' coimhead le farmad thar a' chuain: *looking with envy across the sea*; nan robh e math gu leòr do X a bhith a' gabhail ainm: *if it was good enough for X to take a name*; gu bheil cuid dhen bheachd gun tàinig atharrachadh air an ainm Sgitheanach: *that some people think the Skye name was changed*; cha robh an Druimeanach soirbheachail: *Drummond wasn't successful*; mhair seann ainm Lochlannach Steòrnabhaigh: *the old Norse name of Stornoway [has] lasted*; chan e amhàin ainm a' bhaile a bha air aire X: *it wasn't just the name of the town that was a subject of X's attention*; gum bu chòir crathadh a dhèanamh air riaghladh ionadail: *that local government ought to be shaken up*; gun tigeadh riaghladh nan Eilean Siar, le ùghdarrasan stèidhichte ann an Inbhir Nis is Inbhir Pheofharain, gu ceann: *that the government of the Western Isles, by authorities based in Inverness and Dingwall, would come to an end*; 's e an t-ainm a bhiodh air an t-siorrachd sin: *that county would be called*; a' gabhail a-steach Na Hearadh: *taking in Harris*; tha fhios nach biodh na Hearaich riarachtaichte: *I'd say [lit. it's known] that the Harris folk wouldn't be satisfied*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Fear-casaid a' Chrùin: *the Procurator Fiscal*. While there has been some recent creation of new official Gaelic terminology to deal with local and national government and the legal system (as is necessary in all modern languages), this particular one has a long pedigree. It means literally "prosecution-man of the Crown". Today, we use the gender-neutral Neach-casaid a' Chrùin but in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when only males held such a position, "Fear" would have been used. Neach-casaid a' Chrùin or Neach-casaid na Stàite is used for a "Public Prosecutor" in other jurisdictions such as England or the United States.

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** air sàillibh 's gun robh an Rìgh ann triop: *because the king was there on one occasion*.

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA