

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 585. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 281 corresponds to Litir 585.

Bha an t-Albannach Griogair MacGriogair an sàs ann am foill. Chruthaich e dùthaich mhacmeanmnach – Poyais air Bàgh Honduras ann am Meadhan Ameireagaidh. Bha e a’ cumail a-mach gun robh tiotal aige – *His Serene Highness Gregor I, Prince of Poyais*. An robh e às a rian? Cha chreid mi gun robh. Ach bha e breugach.

Chuir e oifisean air dòigh ann an Dùn Èideann is Glaschu. Reic e fearann annta. Airson trì tastain agus trì sgillinn, gheibheadh duine acaire fearainn ann am Poyais. Ann an ochd ceud deug is dhà air fhichead (1822), fhuair e iasad luach dà cheud mìle not – às leth “Riaghaltas Poyais”. Chlò-bhuail e airgead Phoyais ann an Dùn Èideann. Air na notaichean bha slughairm Ghàidhlig – tè nan Griogarach – *’S Rìoghail mo Dhream*. Cheannaich mòran de na h-Albannaich a bha a’ falbh a Phoyais an t-airgead ùr le airgead math Albannach. Cha robh luach sam bith anns an airgead ùr aca.

Dh’fhoillsich MacGriogair leabhar air an robh *Sketch of the Mosquito Shore, including the Territory of Poyais*. B’ e “ùghdar” an leabhair Captain Thomas Strangeways. Mhol Strangeways an dùthaich. Bha i beartach, le airgead is òr gu leòr fon talamh. Cha robh galairean tropaigeach ann idir. Pàrras a rèir choltais. Nach robh duine sam bith amharasach? B’ e an aon rud a bha fìor anns an leabhar, ’s dòcha, na faclan “Mosquito Shore”.

As t-fhoghar ochd ceud deug is dhà air fhichead (1822), dh’fhàg soitheach Lunnainn le seachdadh duine air bòrd. Nam measg bha dotairean is luchd-lagha a fhuair gealltanais gum faigheadh iad dreuchdan ann an seirbheis chatharra Phoyais. Trì mìosan an dèidh sin, sheòl long eile à Port Lìte ann an Alba. Bha dà cheud duine air bòrd.

Dè lorg iad aig ceann thall an turais-mhara? Lorg coille mhòr mhòr le corra baile beag anns an robh dùthchasaich a’ fuireach. Cha robh tuineachas Eòrpach ann idir. Cha robh sgeul air òr no airgead. Bha na mosgiotothan uabhasach. Cha robh ann am Poyais ach rud a bhuineadh do mhacmeanmna MhicGriogair. Dh’fhàg na longan na daoine air tìr agus dh’fhalbh iad.

Cha deach cùisean gu math. Chaidh feadhainn dhen luchd-tuineachaidh a-mach air a chèile. Dh’fhuiling feadhainn galairean tropaigeach. **Chuir** aon duine, a bh’ air a chuid airgid gu lèir a chosg air a’ ghnòthach, **a làmh na bheatha fhèin**.

Às dèidh dà mhìos chaidh cobhair a dhèanamh orra. Thugadh iad gu ruige British Honduras. Ach chaochail feadhainn anns an ospadal an sin. A-mach à dà cheud gu leth neach-tuineachadh, cha robh air fhàgail beò ach timcheall air seasgad.

Chaidh fios a chur don riaghaltas ann an Lunnainn. Chuir iadsan soithichean bhon Chabhlaich Rìoghail a-mach airson stad a chur air còig longan eile a bh’ air an slighe gu ruige

Poyais. Thug na pàipearan-naidheachd ann an Lunnainn slaic mhòr air MacGriogair. Ghabh cuid “penniless adventurer” air.

Shaoileadh tu gum biodh an fheadhainn a mhair beò, agus a thill a Bhreatainn bho Mheadhan Ameireagaidh, fiadhaich le Griogair MacGriogair airson am mealladh. Ach, gu h-iongantach, cha robh cuid aca deònach coire a chur air MacGriogair idir. Bha iad a’ coireachadh nan comhairleach is luchd-sgaoilidh fiosrachaidh aige, seach am “prionnsa” fhèin.

Ach cha robh sgeul air MacGriogair. Bha esan air teicheadh bho Bhreatainn. Bha e a-nise anns an Fhraing. A’ cumail a chinn sìos? **Cha robh, gu dearbh**, mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Griogair MacGriogair: *Gregor MacGregor*; Meadhan Ameireagaidh: *Central America*; breugach: *lying, untruthful*; chlà-bhuail: *printed*; sluagh-ghairm: *slogan*; ùghdar: *author*; galairean tropaigeach: *tropical diseases*; Pàrras: *Paradise*; amharasach: *suspicious*; luchd-lagha: *lawyers*; tuineachas: *colony*.

Abairtean na Litreach: an sàs ann am foill: *involved in deceit*; an robh e às a rian?: *was he out of his mind?*; cha chreid mi gun robh: *I don’t think so*; trì tastain agus trì sgillinn: *three shillings and three pence*; gheibheadh duine acaire fearainn: *a man would get an acre of land*; tè nan Griogarach: *the MacGregors’ one*; ’S Rìoghail mo Dhream: *my race is royal*; b’ e an aon rud a bha fìor: *the only thing that was true was*; gealltanais gum faigheadh iad dreuchdan ann an seirbheis chatharra Phoyais: *a promise that they would get jobs in the Poyais civil service*; sheòl long eile à Port Lìte: *another ship sailed from the Port of Leith*; aig ceann thall an turais-mhara: *at the [far] end of their maritime journey*; a bhuineadh do mhacmeanmna MhicGriogair: *that belonged to MacGregor’s imagination*; dh’fhàg na longan na daoine air tìr: *the ships left the people on land*; cha deach cùisean gu math: *matters didn’t go well*; chaidh feadhainn dhen luchd-tuineachaidh a-mach air a chèile: *some of the settlers fell out with each other*; chaidh cobhair a dhèanamh orra: *they received help*; thugadh iad gu ruige X: *they were taken to X*; chaochail feadhainn anns an ospadal: *some died in [the] hospital*; soithichean bhon Chabhlach Rìoghail: *vessels from the Royal Navy*; thug na pàipearan-naidheachd slaic mhòr air X: *the newspapers heavily criticized X*; shaoileadh tu gum biodh an fheadhainn a mhair beò..fiadhaich: *you’d think that the survivors..would be angry*; a’ coireachadh nan comhairleach is luchd-sgaoilidh fiosrachaidh aige: *blaming his advisers and publicists*; bha esan air teicheadh: *he had fled/left*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Chuir** aon duine, a bh’ air a chuid airgid gu lèir a chosg air a’ ghnothach, **a làmh na bheatha fhèin**: *one man, who had spent all his money on the venture, committed suicide*. We sometimes use euphemisms to describe painful matters like suicide and here’s an example. Suicide is fèin-mhurt but we would rarely say “rinn e fèin-mhurt”. Similarly we could say “chuir e às dha fhèin” but that might be taken as a bit hard-hitting and lacking in sympathy for the victim (we might use it to describe Adolf Hitler’s death, for example, but not that of an acquaintance who had a troubled life). Chuir e a làmh na bheatha fhèin is a softer way of describing a suicide. For a female we would say chuir i a làmh na beatha fhèin.

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: A’ cumail a chinn sìos? **Cha robh, gu dearbh**: *keeping his head down? Certainly not*.

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