

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Allt nam Mèirleach (2)

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.maclea@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 647. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 343 corresponds to Litir 647.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Altimarlach – no Allt nam Mèirleach – taobh a-muigh Inbhir Ùige. Fhuair Iain Glas, oighre nan Caimbeulach ann an Gleann Urchaidh, sealbh air oighreachd Clann na Ceàrdaich Chèis ann an Gallaibh. Chaidh sin a dhearbhadh le pannal de luchd-lagha ann an Dùn Èideann. Ach dh’fhàg sin Clann na Ceàrdaich, agus mòran eile, ann an Gallaibh gu math mì-thoilichte. Thòisich nàdar de chogadh os-ìosal, le daoine a’ dèanamh sgrios air togalaichean a’ Chaimbeulaich, agus a’ goid a chuid sprèidh. Agus dhiùlt an sluagh na màil aca a phàigheadh.

Thug a’ Chomhairle Dhìomhair ann an Dùn Èideann cead do dh’Iain Glas gnothaichean a rèiteach le fòirneart. Agus as t-samhradh, sia ceud deug is ochdad (1680), choisich feachd de Chaimbeulaich gu ruige Gallaibh. Bha e fo smachd co-ogha Iain Ghlais, Raibeart Caimbeul à Gleann Liomhann. Thathar ag ràdh gun robh suas ri mìle is ceud duine san fheachd. Bha fios aig na Gallaich gun robh iad a’ tighinn, ge-tà. Agus chuir iad air chois feachd iad fhèin – suas ri mìle is còig ceud duine, a rèir aithrisean. Bu chòir dhomh a ràdh, ge-tà, gu bheil cuid dhen bheachd nach robh na feachdan cho mòr ri sin idir.

Chaidh na Caimbeulaich gu tuath tro thaobh an ear Ghallaibh. Chuir iad seachad oidhche air a’ Bhràigh Mhòr faisg air a’ Mhòr-bheinn. Lean iad orra gu cnoc air a bheil *Hill of Yarrows* an-diugh. Airson ùine mhòr, ’s e *Torran nan Gàidheal* a bh’ aig muinntir an àite air, leis gun robh na Caimbeulaich a’ campachadh air. Nuair a bha iad air a’ chnoc sin, às am faighear sealladh math dhen dùthaich gu tuath, thàinig an ceò a-nuas orra. Cho-dhùin an Caimbeulach gu robh an t-àm ceart airson a dhol a dh’Inbhir Ùige. Ach, fhad ’s a bha iad air an rathad, dh’fhalbh an ceò agus chunnaic luchd-dìon a’ bhaile gun robh na Caimbeulaich a’ tighinn.

Chaidh feachd nan Caimbeulach ann an dà phìos. Nuair a ràinig Clann na Ceàrdaich làrach a’ bhàil, thug na Caimbeulaich ionnsaigh orra bho dhà thaobh. Mar a chaidh an t-sabaid air adhart, bha mòran de Chlann na Ceàrdaich air am putadh air ais don abhainn far an deach am bàthadh. Bha sgrios mhòr ann agus thathar a’ tomhas gun deach suas ri trì cheud de na Gallaich a mharbhadh.

Às dèidh a’ bhatail, chaidh na Caimbeulaich timcheall nan corp, a’ goid rudan bhuapa. Agus ’s e sin as coireach, a rèir beul-aithris, ri ainm an àite – Allt nam Mèirleach. Bha a’ chuid a bu mhotha de na mairbh air an tiodhlacadh air an làraich. Agus chaidh carragh-cuimhne a thogail dhaibh ann an naoi ceud deug ’s a h-aon (1901).

Thathar ag ràdh, air an rathad a Ghallaibh, gun do chruthaich pìobaire nan Caimbeulach, Fionnladh Bàn MacÌomhair, dà phort ainmeil – *Breadalbane Gathering* agus *The Campbells are Coming*. Gu o chionn ghoirid, bhiodh muinntir Inbhir Ùige ga ghabhail mar thàmailt nam biodh **port seach port** dhiubh sin air a chluich anns a' bhaile. Tha mi an dòchas gun robh cuimhne aig muinntir a' Mhòid Nàiseanta air sin an-uiridh!

Agus, bu chòir dhomh a ràdh, **anns an dealachadh**, ged a bhuannaich iad am batail, gun do chaill na Caimbeulaich an iarlachd dìreach bliadhna às dèidh sin. Fhuair Clann na Ceàrdaich air ais i.

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Faclan na Litreach: Altimarlach: *Allt nam Mèirleach*; Clann na Ceàrdaich Chèis: *the Sinclairs of Keiss*; Gallaibh: *Caithness*; A' Chomhairle Dhiomhair: *The Privy Council*; Gallaich: *Caithnessians, Gollachs*; Inbhir Ùige: *Wick*; carragh-cuimhne: *memorial stone*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Chaidh sin a dhearbhadh le pannal de luchd-lagha: *that was confirmed by a panel of lawyers*; thòisich nàdar de chogadh os-ìosal: *a sort of war started covertly*; a' goid a chuid sprèidh: *stealing his livestock*; dhiùlt an sluagh na màil aca a phàigheadh: *the populace refused to pay their rents*; gnothaichean a rèiteach le fòirneart: *to settle the matter with force*; chuir iad air chois feachd iad fhèin: *they themselves established a small army*; tro thaobh an ear Ghallaibh: *through the east of Caithness*; air a' Bhràigh Mhòr faisg air a' Mhòr-bheinn: *at Braemore near Morven*; leis gun robh na Caimbeulaich a' campachadh air: *because the Campbells were camping on it*; às am faighear sealladh math dhen dùthaich gu tuath: *from which is obtained a good view of the country to the north*; thàinig an ceò a-nuas orra: *[the] mist descended upon them*; chunnaic luchd-dion a' bhaile: *the defenders of the town saw*; làrach a' bhlàir: *the site of the battle*; thug X ionnsaigh orra: *X attacked them*; air am putadh air ais don abhainn far an deach am bàthadh: *pushed back to the river where they were drowned*; timcheall nan corp, a' goid rudan bhuapa: *around the bodies, stealing things from them*; 's e sin as coireach, a rèir beul-aithris: *that is the reason, according to oral tradition*; bhiodh X ga ghabhail mar thàmailt: *X would be deeply offended*; ged a bhuannaich iad am batail: *although they won the battle*; gun do chaill X an iarlachd: *that X lost the earldom*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **anns an dealachadh: finally, in parting, in conclusion.** *If you look up 'finally' in a dictionary, you're likely to find the following: mu dheireadh thall, aig a' cheann thall, aig deireadh an latha. However, anns an dealachadh is also a good phrase to remember. If you are concluding a report, as if to say something like 'finally (before I go), I'd like to remind you...', none of the above phrases would do the job, but anns an dealachadh (literally, 'in the parting') would. You'll hear it at the end of some programmes on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal. If the Two Ronnies had spoken Gaelic, they'd have concluded their programme with Anns an dealachadh..!*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach nam biodh **port seach port** dhiubh sin air a chluich: *if either tune were played.*

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