

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## An Admiral (1)

*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](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 710. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 406 corresponds to Litir 710.*

Dà shoitheach. Na h-aon eileanan. Dà bhliadhna eatarra. Agus dà sgeul eadar-dhealaichte. Tha mi a’ dol a thoirt cunntas dhuibh de dhà luing ann am meadhan an naoidheamh linn deug. An fheadhainn a sheòl air tè dhiubh, bha iad cho eòlach ’s a ghabhadh air Barraigh ’s Bhatarsaigh agus na h-eileanan timcheall orra. Ach **gheibheadh iad bàs** fada bho na h-àiteachan sin. An fheadhainn a sheòl air an t-soitheach eile, cha robh eòlas sam bith aig a’ mhòr-chuid dhiubh air na h-eileanan. Ach sin far an d’ fhuair cuid mhath dhiubh bàs. Seo cunntas dhen *Admiral* agus an *Annie Jane*.

Ged a sheòl an *Admiral* às na h-Eileanan an Iar ann an ochd ceud deug, caogad ’s a h-aon (1851), tha a sgeul a’ tòiseachadh deichead roimhe sin, nuair a fhuair an Coirneal Iain Gòrdan Chluanaidh sealbh air an eilean. Nam biodh sibh a’ dèanamh liosta de dh’uachdarain air a’ Ghàidhealtachd a bha iochdmhor is carthannach, cha bhiodh an Gòrdanach oirre.

Bhuineadh e do Shiorrachd Obar Dheathain, agus bha fearann mòr anns a’ cheàrnaidh sin de dh’Alba aig a theaghlach. Bhathar ag ràdh mu sheanair gum biodh a h-uile tasan air an d’ fhuair e grèim a’ steigeadh ri chorrigan. Bhathar ag ràdh gun robh athair a’ diùltadh, na sheann aois, faighinn a-mach às an leabaidh oir chosgadh e cus dha! Bhathar ag ràdh cuideachd gum biodh an Coirneal fhèin a’ dol a-mach às an rathad aige airson slighe-shiubhail a sheachnadh nam biodh cìs oirre.

Ach bha an Coirneal deònach airgead mòr a chosg nam faiceadh e gun tigeadh prothaid mhath às. Ann an ochd ceud deug, trithead ’s a h-ochd (1838), cheannaich e seann oighreachd Chlann Raghnaill ann an Uibhist. Cheannaich e Barraigh, agus na h-eileanan timcheall air, goirid às dèidh sin.

An toiseach, cha robh e ro dhona mar uachdaran, ged a chuir e às do chuid de chroitean air an taobh an iar, a’ dèanamh tuathanasan dhiubh. Ach, ann an ochd ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a sia (1846), thàinig gaiseadh a’ bhuntàta. Cha b’ fhada gus an robh an riaghaltas a’ càineadh a’ Ghòrdanaich airson a bhith coma mu shluagh, agus iad a’ fulang gu dona le acras.

Dhìon e e fhèin. Bha e a’ call airgid, thuirt e, ann a bhith a’ dèanamh cobhair air na daoine. Bha ‘fuasgladh’ aige. Bhiodh e a’ fuadachadh nan daoine. Eadar na bliadhnaichean ceathrad ’s a h-ochd (1848) agus caogad (1850), chaidh na ceudan a chur a Ghlaschu, Dùn Èideann is Inbhir Nis.

Bha am fuadach a bu mhotha ann sa bhliadhna caogad ’s a h-aon (1851). Chuir an Coirneal Gòrdan còig soithichean air dòigh airson mìle is seachd ceud duine a chur

a-null a Quebec. Dh' iarr am bàillidh aige air an fheadhainn a chaidh ainmeachadh à Barraigh, ceithir cheud gu leth duine, a dhol a Loch Baghasdal ann an Uibhist a Deas airson falbh air an *Admiral*. Mura nochdadh iad, bhiodh càin luach dà nota air gach duine aca.

Sgrìobh am bàillidh ris na h-ùghdarrasan ann an Quebec, ag ràdh gun robh an Gòrdanach air faraidhean nan daoine a phàigheadh. Sgrìobh e gun robh e air aodach is brògan a thoirt dhaibh, agus gun robh e air biadh is uisge a cheannach dhaibh **airson na bhòidse**. Ach, mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain, cha robh cùisean buileach cho fàbharach sin.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Barraigh: *Barra*; Bhatarsaigh: *Vatersay*; an Coirneal Iain Gòrdan Chluanaidh: *Colonel John Gordon of Cluny*; sealbh: *ownership*; prothaid: *profit*; bàillidh: *factor*; Loch Baghasdal: *Lochboisdale*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** dà shoitheach: *two vessels*; na h-aon eileanan: *the same islands*; dà bhliadhna eatarra: *two years between them*; dà sgeul eadar-dhealaichte: *two different stories*; de dhà luing: *of two ships*; sin far an d' fhuair cuid mhath dhiubh bàs: *that's where most of them died*; deichead roimhe sin: *a decade before that*; liosta de dh' uachdarain a bha iochdmhor is carthannach: *a list of landlords that were compassionate and charitable*; bhuineadh e do Shiorrachd Obar Dheathain: *he belonged to Aberdeenshire*; gum biodh a h-uile tastan air an d' fhuair e grèim a' steigeadh ri chorragan: *that every shilling he got hold of would stick to his fingers*; a' dol a-mach às an rathad aige airson slighe-shiubhail a sheachnadh nam biodh cìs oirre: *going out of his way to avoid a travelling route if there were a tax on it*; seann oighreachd Chlann Raghnaill: *the old estate of Clanranald*; gaiseadh a' bhuntàta: *potato blight*; airson a bhith coma mu shluagh, agus iad a' fulang gu dona le acras: *for not caring about his people who were suffering badly from hunger*; bhiodh e a' fuadachadh nan daoine: *he would clear the people*; càin luach dà nota: *a £2 fine*; gun robh an Gòrdanach air faraidhean nan daoine a phàigheadh: *that Gordon had paid the people's fares*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** gun robh e air biadh is uisge a cheannach dhaibh **airson na bhòidse**: *that he had bought food and water for them for the voyage*. Bhòidse 'voyage' does not inflect in the standard way. 'The voyage' is a' bhòidse; it is clearly a feminine noun. Thus one would expect the genitive singular form (following airson, a compound preposition) to be na bòidse. However, it is actually na bhòidse. The reason is simple – it is a borrowing from English (itself a borrowing from French), and the initial 'bh' stands for the 'v' in voyage. Thus, the 'bh' is retained in all the inflected forms. Bhòt 'vote' works in a similar way; it retains its lenition in all cases. In Irish Gaelic, because of the irregular inflection, they borrowed the English 'v' as well – 'vote' is vótáil. We retain the traditional Gaelic representation of 'v' as 'bh' but we have to remember that we don't inflect such words in the normal fashion.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Ach **gheibheadh iad bàs** fada bho na h-àiteachan sin: *but they would die a long way from those places*.

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