

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Admiral (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.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 711. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 407 corresponds to Litir 711.

Bha mi a’ bruidhinn mun t-soitheach, an *Admiral*, a sheòl às na h-Eileanan A-muigh gu ruige Quebec ann an ochd ceud deug, caogad ’s a h-aon (1851). Bha ceithir cheud gu leth Barrach air bòrd. Bha an uachdaran, an Coirneal Iain Gòrdan Chluanaidh, air na daoine sin fhuadach. Nuair a ràinig an long Quebec, thug na Barraich athchuinge do na h-ùghdarrasan, le ainmean Eachainn MhicLaomainn à Brèibhig agus seachdad duine eile oirre. Bha iad a’ gearain mun dòigh san deach an làimhseachadh, agus a’ cur ann an cuimhne nan ùghdarrasan gun deach a ghealltainn dhaibh gum faigheadh iad obair is fearann ann an Canada.

Bha na h-ùghdarrasan a’ gabhail iongnadh mu cho bochd ’s a bha na daoine, le glè bheag de dh’aodach orra. Gu dearbh, bha bean an sgiobair air a’ chuid a bu mhotha dhen turas-mara a chur seachad ann a bhith a’ dèanamh aodach do na h-eileanaich le clò sam bith air am faigheadh i grèim. Thàinig e am bàrr gun robh maoir a’ Ghòrdanaich air an t-aodach a thug e seachad a thoirt air ais, oir bha iad dhen bheachd gun robh aodach gu leòr aig an fheadhainn a bha a’ falbh.

Cho luath ’s a bha na daoine a-mach às na taighean aca, bha na togalaichean air an sgrios. Bha cuid de dhaoine air diùltadh a dhol air bòrd an *Admiral* ann an Loch Baghasdal agus bha na maoir air a dhol air an tòir le coin. Bha iad air a dhol don Bhàgh a Tuath ann am Barraigh cuideachd airson daoine a bh’ air diùltadh a dhol a Loch Baghasdal a chur a-null an aghaidh an toil.

Ach cha d’ fhuair iad grèim air a h-uile duine. Air Beinn Bhaslain, bha nigheanan Iain MhicDhùghaill am falach, a’ coimhead air na bha a’ tachairt. Chunnaic iad an athair air a thoirt air falbh. Ann am Buaile nam Bodach, chaidh Mìcheal MacIlleathain, gille sia bliadhn’ deug a dh’aois, am falach air leac air na creagan faisg air làimh. Ach, a’ chuid a bu mhotha de na daoine a chaidh fhuadach leis a’ Ghòrdanach, dh’fhalbh iad thar a’ chuain agus **’s iongantach gun do thill mòran dhiubh idir a dh’Alba.**

Dà bhliadhna às dèidh gun do sheòl an *Admiral* à Loch Baghasdal, bha soitheach eile ann an uisgeachan nan eilean, agus a’ dèanamh air Quebec. Ach tha stòiridh an *Annie Jane* gu tur eadar-dhealaichte. Chan e eileanaich a bha anns na daoine air bòrd. Eucoltach ris na daoine air an *Admiral*, ge-tà, bha a’ chuid a bu mhotha aca a’ dol a dh’fhaighinn bàs anns na h-eileanan.

Cha mhòr nach eil **ochd fichead bliadhna** air a dhol seachad bhon a sheòl an *Annie Jane* à Liverpool – anns an Lùnastal ochd ceud deug, caogad ’s a trì (1853). Coltach ris an *Admiral*, bha timcheall air ceithir cheud duine air bòrd. Bha mòran

dhiubh à Èirinn – à Àird Mhacha, Antram agus Corcaigh. Bha cuideachd mu cheud duine à Galltachd na h-Alba. 'S e luchd-ceàirde a bh' annta – saoir is a leithid, air an robh fèill mhòr ann an Canada.

Bha feadhainn ann cuideachd à Lancashire ann an Sasainn, agus feadhainn a bha rudeigin beartach agus a bha a' dol gu beatha ùr ann an Canada. Innsidh mi dhuibh an-ath-sheachdain mar a thachair dhaibh aig beul a' Bhàigh Siar ann am Bhatarsaigh.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Barrach: *native of Barra*; athchuinge: *petition*; an Coirneal Iain Gòrdan Chluanaidh: *Colonel John Gordon of Cluny*; Buaile nam Bodach: *Balnabodach*; luchd-ceàirde: *tradesmen*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a sheòl às na h-Eileanan A-muigh gu ruige Quebec: *that sailed from the Outer Isles to Quebec*; le ainmean Eachainn MhicLaomainn à Brèibhig agus seachdad duine eile oirre: *carrying the names of Hector Lamont of Brèibhig and seventy others*; a' gearain mun dòigh san deach an làimhseachadh: *complaining about the way in which they were treated*; a' cur ann an cuimhne nan ùghdarrasan: *reminding the authorities*; gun deach a ghealltainn dhaibh gum faigheadh iad obair is fearann: *that it was promised they would get work and land*; a' gabhail iongnadh mu cho bochd 's a bha na daoine: *surprised at how poor the people were*; bha bean an sgiobair air a' chuid a bu mhotha dhen turas-mara a chur seachad: *the captain's wife had spent most of the voyage*; clò sam bith air am faigheadh i grèim: *any cloth she could get hold of*; thàinig e am bàrr: *it became apparent*; gun robh maoir a' Ghòrdanaich air an t-aodach a thug e seachad a thoirt air ais: *that Gordon's agents had taken back the clothes he gave away*; bha na togalaichean air an sgrios: *the buildings were destroyed*; air an tòir le coin: *in pursuit of them with dogs*; an aghaidh an toil: *against their wishes*; am falach: *hiding*; dh'fhalbh iad thar a' chuain: *they went across the ocean*; gu tur eadar-dhealaichte: *completely different*; a' dol a dh'fhaighinn bàs anns na h-eileanan: *going to die on the islands*; bha mòran dhiubh à Èirinn – à Àird Mhacha, Antram agus Corcaigh: *many of them were from Ireland – from Armagh, Antrim and Cork*; saoir is a leithid, air an robh fèill mhòr ann an Canada: *carpenters and the like, who were in great demand in Canada*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Cha mhòr nach eil **ochd fichead bliadhna** air a dhol seachad: *nearly 160 years have elapsed. It might not fit with the 'modern' decimal counting system, but the use of the vigesimal system for counting between 100 and 200 remains useful, and quicker to say than, for example, 'ceud is seasgad bliadhna'*. It is widely understood and still widely used among older native speakers. Here are two other examples: bha seachd fichead duine air bòrd *'there were 140 people on board'*; bha naoi fichead not aice na pòcaid *'she had £180 in her pocket'*.

Gnàthas -cainnt na Litreach: 's iongantach gun do thill mòran dhiubh idir a dh'Alba: *it's unlikely that many of them returned to Scotland*.

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