

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Murt ann an Srath Spè (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.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 761. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 457 corresponds to Litir 761.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu bhàs poilis aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug ann an Obar Neithich ann an Srath Spè. Bha na h-oifigearan, Iain MacGilleNaoimh agus Tòmas King, air a dhol a dh'iarraidh airgead, a bh' air a chur mar chàin air Ailean MacCaluim airson a bhith ri poidseadh.

Chaidh iad a-steach don taigh far an robh MacCaluim a' fuireach. Bha e dorch. 'S e an geamhradh a bh' ann. Rinn cù Ailein dranndan air MacGilleNaoimh. Bhuail am poileas an cù le a shlait. Aig an dearbh mhionaid, chuala MacGilleNaoimh brag gunna. Dh'èigh MacGilleNaoimh air King, ach cha d' fhuair e freagairt.

Chaidh MacGilleNaoimh don chidsin. Cha mhòr nach do thuit e thairis air rudeigin air an làr. Las am poileas maids airson solas a dhèanamh. Dè chunnaic e ach corp a chompanaich air a' bheul fodha, agus gunna thairis air a chasan.

Aig an dearbh mhionaid, thàinig am post, Alasdair Grannd, don doras. Bha e air MacCaluim fhaicinn, a' teicheadh sìos an rathad. **Bha e casruisgte.** Thug an Granndach agus MacGilleNaoimh sùil gheur air Tòmas King. Bha e gun teagamh marbh. Bha na poilis a-nise a' coimhead airson 'murtair'.

Theich MacCaluim bho bhaile-fearainn gu baile-fearainn ann an Srath Spè, ged a chaidh a chù dhachaigh às aonais. Fhuair e paidhir bhrògan agus theich e thar a' mhonaidh. Chuir na poilis seasgad oifigear a-mach air a thòir. Bha iad a' coimhead taobh Shrath Dheathain.

Dà latha ron Nollaig, dh'inns tuathanach do na poilis gun robh MacCaluim anns a' bhaile-fearainn aige aig Tom a' Chrochaire. Bha e am falach ann an sabhal. An ath mhadainn thàinig ceathrar poileas agus chuir iad MacCaluim an grèim. Chaidh a thoirt don Aghaidh Mhòir agus an uair sin air an trèana a dh'Inbhir Nis. Bha sluagh mòr a' feitheamh aig Stèisean Inbhir Nis. Chunnaic iad fear sgìth, salach air a cheangal ri poileas le **glas-làmh**. Bha ùidh mhòr aig muinntir na Gàidhealtachd anns a' chùis.

Thòisich a' chùis-chùirte air a' chòigeamh latha deug dhen Ghearran, ochd ceud deug, naochad 's a naoi (1899) anns an taigh-chùirte ann an Inbhir Nis – anns a' chaisteal, far a bheil e fhathast. Thuirt an luchd-dìon gun robh MacCaluim air a bhith às a rian nuair a loisg e air a' Chonstabal King. Ach thuirt triùir dhotairean nach robh sin fìor agus gun robh smachd aige air fhèin.

Ged a bha na poilis an dòchas gum faighte ciontach e de mhurt, cha b' e sin beachd an diùraidh. Dh'aontaich an diùraidh le mòr-chuid gun robh MacCaluim ciontach de mharbhadh le coire, seach murt. Thuirt am briteamh, am Morair Trayner,

gun robh an diùraidh air a bhith gu math tròcaireach. Ge-tà, bha a leithid de mharbhadh fhathast na eucoir mhòir. Chuir e binn air MacCaluim de chòig bliadhn' deug anns a' phrìosan.

Chaidh Tòmas King a thiodhlacadh ann an Cladh Obar Neithich. Bha muinntir na Gàidhealtachd air an uabhasachadh le a bhàs agus thog iad dusan mìle not mar thaic do a bhean agus an ochdnar cloinne. Agus chaidh an naidheachd mun chùis cho fada ri Sealán Nuadh, far an do nochd i air prìomh dhuilleag nam pàipearan-naidheachd.

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Faclan na Litreach: Obar Neithich: *Abernethy*; Srath Spè: *Strathspey*; Iain MacGilleNaomh: *John MacNiven*; dranndan: *growl*; brag gunna: *the report of a gun*; dh'èigh: *shouted*; baile-fearainn: *farming settlement, fermtoun*; paidhir bhrògan: *a pair of shoes*; Srath Dheathain: *Strathdon*; sabhal: *barn*; cùis-chùirte: *court case*; luchd-dìon: *defence (legal team)*; britheamh: *judge*; tròcaireach: *merciful*; binn: *sentence*.

Abairtean na Litreach: ag innse dhuibh mu bhàs poilis: *telling you about the death of a policeman*; a bh' air a chur mar chàin air Ailean MacCaluim: *that had been levied as a fine on Allan Macallum*; airson a bhith ri poidseadh: *for poaching*; bhuaill am poileas an cù le a shlait: *the policeman hit the dog with his truncheon*; aig an dearbh mhionaid: *at the very same moment*; cha mhòr nach do thuit e thairis air rudeigin air an làr: *he almost fell over something on the floor*; las X maids: *X lit a match*; corp a chompanaich air a' bheul fodha: *his companion's body face-down*; a' teicheadh sìos an rathad: *fleeing down the road*; gun teagamh marbh: *without doubt dead*; chaidh a chù dhachaigh às aonais: *his dog went home without him*; seasgad oifigear a-mach air a thòir: *sixty officers out in pursuit of him*; don Aghaidh Mhòir agus an uair sin air an tràna a dh'Inbhir Nis: *to Aviemore and then on the train to Inverness*; bha sluagh mòr a' feitheamh: *a large crowd was waiting*; gun robh smachd aige air fhèin: *that he had control of himself*; an dòchas gum faighte ciontach e de mhurt: *hoping he would be found guilty of murder*; cha b' e sin beachd an diùraidh: *that wasn't the jury's opinion*; ciontach de mharbhadh le coire: *guilty of culpable homicide*; chaidh Tòmas King a thiodhlacadh: *Thomas King was buried*; air an uabhasachadh le a bhàs: *horrified by his death*; cho fada ri Sealán Nuadh: *as far as New Zealand*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: air a cheangal ri poileas le **glas-làmh**: *connected to a police officer with handcuffs*. The Gaelic equivalent to the English handcuffs means 'hands-cuff' or 'lock of hands'. You will sometimes hear people say *glas-làimhe* but that would actually only lock 'one hand' (lock of a hand) whereas handcuffs of course lock two hands! So the genitive plural of *làmh* (which is also *làmh*) is employed in the compound. In Inverness English handcuffs were for centuries called *glaslawes*, a borrowing from Gaelic.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Bha e casruisgte: *he was barefooted*.

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