

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Iain Moireasdan, Fiosaiche Pheididh (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 874. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 570 corresponds to Litir 874.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Urramach Iain Moireasdan, ministear Pheididh aig deireadh an ochdamh linn deug. Faisg air Eaglais Pheididh tha bàgh mòr eu-domhainn. Aig ìsle-mhara bidh tràigh mhòr làthaich ann. Bha clach mhòr air a’ chladach air an robh ‘**Clach an Àbain**’. Latha a bha seo – Latha na Sàbaid a bh’ ann – bha am ministear a’ searmonachadh. ‘A pheacachaibh gun ghràs,’ bha e ag èigheachd ris a’ choitheanal, ‘mura seachain sibh ur droch dhòighean, sguabaidh Dia sibh don àite far nach fhaighear tròcair. Agus mar chomharra gu bheil mi ag innse na fìrinn, thèid Clach an Àbain – mòr is trom ’s ged a tha i – thèid a gluasad pios mòr a dh’ionnsaigh na mara gun duine a làmh a chur oirre!’

Thug e sia air fhichead bliadhna, ach thachair e. Bha an tachartas ainmeil gu leòr ’s gun do chuir an Suirbhidh Òrdanais fios mu dheidhinn air na mapaichean aca. Tha mapa air mo bheulaibh an-dràsta a chaidh a dhèanamh o chionn còrr is ceud bliadhna. Tha ‘Clach an Àbain’ comharraichte air a’ mhapa. Pios air falbh bhuaipe, nas fhaisg’ air an tiùrr, tha seo sgrìobhte: ‘*Site of Clach an Àbain AD 1799*’.

Bha an dà-shealladh aig a’ mhinistear agus chunnaic e gum biodh a’ chlach air a gluasad. Thachair e air an oidhche air an fhicheadamh latha dhen Ghearran, seachd ceud deug, naochad ’s a naoi (1799). Bha i air a togail agus air a toirt air falbh bhon tìr timcheall air dà cheud is trì fichead slat.

Bha cuid ag ràdh gur e crith-thalmhainn a ghluais i. Ach tha beachd eile ann. ’S e an geamhradh a bh’ ann. Bha reothadh mòr air a bhith ann. Agus bha reòth-leac timcheall na cloiche. ’S e sin a’ Ghàidhlig air ‘*sheet of ice*’ – reòth-leac. Bha timcheall air troigh gu leth – faisg air leth-cheud ceudameatair – de thighead anns an deigh.

Co-dhiù, bha iad dhen bheachd gun deach an reòth-leac a thogail leis an tìde-mhara agus gun do thogadh a’ chlach leatha. Bha stoirm mhòr ann. Agus, eadar a’ ghaoth agus tràghadh na mara, chaidh a’ chlach a ghluasad thar a’ chladaich. Nuair a dhùisg daoine an ath mhadainn cha robh Clach an Àbain far an robh i air a bhith an oidhche roimhe. Agus chuimhnich iad fàidheadaireachd a’ mhinistear. Tro thìde, bhiodh cuid ag ràdh gur e Coinneach Odhar a rinn an fhàidheadaireachd sin ach tha e coltach gur e an t-Urramach Iain Moireasdan a rinn e.

Latha a bha seo, bha crodh aig Mgr Moireasdan ag ionaltradh air Bràigh Chùil Lodair. Chuir am ministear sgagal a-mach a choimhead orra. Nuair a thill e don mhansa, thuir an sgagal gun robh na beathaichean gu lèir ann an deagh rian.

‘Am faca tu gu lèir iad?’ dh’fhaighnich am ministear dheth.

‘Chunnaic,’ fhreagair an sgagal.

‘Uill, chan fhaca,’ thuirt am Moireasdanach. ‘Tha an gamhainn donn na laighe air a dhruim dìreach **ann an leithid seo de dhìg**, agus dà chois briste aige. Thoir cairt is each, agus feadhainn eile, leat agus thoir dhachaigh e. Dèan ùrnaigh agus iarr air an Tighearna maitheanas a thoirt dhut oir bha thu ag innse breug dhomh.’

Bha am ministear ceart. Bha an sgalag ag innse breug dha. Agus nuair a chaidh e don dig, bha an gamhainn donn ann dìreach mar a ‘chunnaic’ am ministear.

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Faclan na Litreach: a’ searmonachadh: *preaching*; Iain Moireasdan: *John Morrison*; Peitidh: *Petty*; crith-thalmhainn: *earthquake*; reothadh: *freeze*; reòth-leac: *ice-sheet*; tràghadh: *ebbing*; Bràigh Chùil Lodair: *the upland of Culloden*; sgalag: *servant*, *lackey*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Faisg air Eaglais Pheitidh tha bàgh mòr eu-domhainn: *near Petty Church there is a large shallow bay*; aig ìsle-mhara bidh tràigh mhòr làthaich ann: *at low tide there is a large bay of fine mud*; a pheacachaibh gun ghràs: *graceless sinners (vocative)*; mura seachain sibh ur droch dhòighean: *if you don’t avoid your bad ways*; sguabaidh Dia sibh don àite far nach fhaighear tròcair: *God will sweep you away to the place of no mercy*; mar chomharra gu bheil mi ag innse na firinn: *as a sign that I am speaking the truth*; mòr is trom ’s ged a tha i: *despite it being large and heavy*; thèid a gluasad pìos mòr a dh’ionnsaigh na mara: *it will be moved a good distance seawards*; gun duine a làmh a chur oirre: *without anyone touching it*; nas fhaisg’ air an tiùrr: *closer to the high tide mark*; bha an dà-shealladh aig a’ mhinistear: *the minister had the second sight*; dà cheud is trì fichead slat: *260 yards*; bha timcheall air troigh gu leth de thighead anns an deigh: *the ice was about a foot and a half thick*; chuimhnich iad fàidheadaireachd a’ mhinisteir: *they remembered the minister’s prophecy*; gun robh na beathaichean gu lèir ann an deagh rian: *that all the beasts were in fine fettle*; am faca tu gu lèir iad?: *did you see them all?*; agus dà chois briste aige: *with two of his legs broken*; dèan ùrnaigh agus iarr air an Tighearna maitheanas a thoirt dhut: *say a prayer and ask the Lord to forgive you*; ag innse breug: *telling a lie*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Clach an Àbain:** *‘the stone of the backwater’*. As far as I am aware, the word àban was only ever recorded from the Inverness dialect. There are three places where it occurs in a place name – at Dochfour, Petty and in Inverness itself – remembered in Abban Street (Sràid an Àbain). If ice moved it in 1799, it probably wasn’t for the first time. It was probably a glacial erratic moved there in a very much larger ice-sheet thousands of years ago.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Tha an gamhainn donn na laighe air a dhruim dìreach **ann an leithid seo de dhìg**: *the brown stirk is lying on its back in this particular ditch*.

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