

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

'Iain Spàinnteach' (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 906. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 602 corresponds to Litir 906.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Iain Spàinnteach, Iain MacDhòmhnail à Cnòideart. Air an t-siathamh latha deug dhen Ghiblean, seachd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a sia (1746), sheòl e fhèin is oifigearan Èireannach a-mach à Dunkirk, anns an Fhraing. Bha iad a' dèanamh air Alba. Bha iad a' dol a thoirt taic do na Seumasaich.

An do mhothaich sibh don cheann-latha? An latha a sheòl iad, b' e sin Latha Blàr Chùil Lodair. Nuair a ràinig Iain agus buidheann de dh'oifigearan Èireannach Loch a' Bhraoin, bha ar-a-mach nan Seumasach seachad. Bha na fineachan air sgaoileadh. Bha bràthair athair Iain marbh. Agus bha am Prionnsa fhèin am falach.

Nuair a chuala iad mu Bhlàr Chùil Lodair, thill an caiptean Frangach don Fhraing. Ach chuir e Iain MacDhòmhnail agus oifigear Èireannach gu tìr le mìle gu leth not airson a' Phrionnsa. Bha an t-airgead ann an màileid. Bha Iain a-nise ann an dùthaich 'ic Coinnich. Chaidh e gu taigh aig fear air an robh 'Cailean Dearg'. Thug iad deoch-slàinte don Phrionnsa.

Ach bha an taigh a' sìor-lionadh le daoine. Bha Iain a' gabhail dragh mun airgead aige agus thug e sùil air a' mhàileid grunn tursan. Ach chan fhac' e **gun robh càil às an rathad**.

Chaidh a' mhàileid a chur air each. Dh'fhalbh iad gu Ach Dà Dhòmhnail agus taigh aig MacCoinnich eile, *nephew* do Chailean Dearg. 'S ann an uair sin a fhuair iad a-mach gun robh cuideigin air briseadh a-steach don mhàileid le sgian, agus mìle not a ghoid.

Thill Iain agus an t-oifigear Èireannach, an Caiptean Lynch, gu taigh Chailein Deirg. Dh'iarr Iain air Cailean an t-airgead a thilleadh dha. Cuimhnicheamaid nach robh Iain ach ochd bliadhn' deug a dh'aois. Ach 's e saighdear a bh' ann agus bha e deiseil is deònach an gunna aige a chur gu feum.

Bha eadar fichead is trithead duine còmhla ri Cailean Dearg, ge-tà. Bha iad uile armaichte. Thuirt Cailean nach robh càil a dh'fhios aige mun airgead. B' fheudar do dh'Iain agus Lynch falbh air ais a dh'Ach Dà Dhòmhnail.

Chaidh iad an uair sin a choinneachadh ri Camshron Loch Iall agus feadhainn a bha dileas don Phrionnsa. Bha còig ceud not fhathast aig Iain airson a' Phrionnsa. Thug e an t-airgead seachad agus lean e fhèin is Lynch orra a Chnòideart. Mu dheireadh, fhuair Lynch air ais don Fhraing ann an soitheach Frangach.

Sa gheamhradh às dèidh sin, thill Iain gu dùthaich 'ic Coinnich – e fhèin is fear eile – feuch faighinn a-mach dè thachair don mhìle not. Bha e ann an Toirbheartan nuair a thachair e ri fear a bha a' gabhail cuairt a-muigh. Dh'inns am

fear eile dha mu mar a chaidh mìle not a ghoid bho dhithis oifigearan Seumasach a' bhliadhna roimhe. B' iad na mèirlich Cailean Dearg agus dithis eile.

Dh'aidich am fear gun robh e an làthair nuair a thachair a' mhèirle. Bha e air comhairle a thoirt do Chailean Dearg an dithis oifigearan – fear Èireannach agus fear MacDhòmhnail – a mharbhadh.

‘A bheil fios agad cò ris a tha thu a’ bruidhinn?’ thuirt Iain.

‘Ri caraid agus fear dhen chinneadh agam fhèin,’ fhreagair am fear eile.

‘Ist a bhleigeird!’ thuirt Iain. ‘Is mise am fear MacDhòmhnail sin!’ Agus innsidh mi dhuibh de thachair an uair sin nuair a bheir mi an eachdraidh gu crìch an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Cnòideart: *Knoydart*; sheòl e: *he sailed*; Blàr Chùil Lodair: *The Battle of Culloden*; Loch a' Bhraoin: *Loch Broom*; am falach: *in hiding*; màileid: *portmanteau*; dùthaich 'ic Coinnich: *MacKenzie country*; Ach Dà Dhòmhnail: *Dundonell*; cuimhnicheamaid: *let's remember*; armaichte: *armed*; Camshron Loch Iall: *Cameron of Locheil*; mèirlich: *thieves*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Air an t-siathamh latha deug dhen Ghiblean: *on 16th April*; an do mhothaich sibh don cheann-latha?: *did you notice the date?*; bha ar-a-mach nan Seumasach seachad: *the Jacobite rebellion was over*; bha na fineachan air sgaoileadh: *the clans had scattered*; thug iad deoch-slàinte don Phrionnsa: *they drank the Prince's health*; bha an taigh a' sìor-lìonadh: *the house was continually filling*; thug e sùil air a' mhàileid grunn tursan: *he examined the portmanteau several times*; gun robh cuideigin air briseadh a-steach don mhàileid le sgian: *that somebody had broken into the portmanteau with a knife*; dh'iarr Iain air Cailean an t-airgead a thilleadh dha: *John asked Colin to return the money to him*; bha e deiseil is deònach an gunna aige a chur gu feum: *he was ready and willing to use his gun*; b' fheudar do X falbh air ais: *X had to go back*; lean e fhèin is Lynch orra a: *he and Lynch continued to*; feuch faighinn a-mach dè thachair don mhìle not: *to try to find out what happened to the thousand pounds*; ann an Toirbheartan nuair a thachair e ri fear a bha a' gabhail cuairt a-muigh: *in Torridon when he met a man who was out taking the air*; gun robh e an làthair: *that he was present*; bha e air comhairle a thoirt do: *he had advised*; cò ris a tha thu a' bruidhinn: *who you are speaking to*; fear dhen chinneadh agam fhèin: *one of my own clansmen*; ist a bhleigeird: *be quiet, you scoundrel*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: MacCoinnich eile, *nephew* do Chailean Dearg: *another MacKenzie, a nephew of Red Colin*. With relation to nieces and nephews, Gaelic is more specific than English and doesn't have a generic term ie we would say for a nephew in this case mac bràthair Chailein or mac piuthar Chailein depending on the relationship. But as Spanish John's account is in English, he doesn't specify the exact relationship, so I have employed the generic English term. The same applies to 'uncle' and 'aunt'. In the text we have Bha bràthair athair Iain marbh. This translates as 'John's paternal uncle was dead'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: chan fhac' e **gun robh càil às an rathad:** *he didn't see that there was anything amiss*.

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