

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Seumas Mac a' Phearsain (3)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh 's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 10.00 pm on Sunday, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'Beag air Bheag', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,039. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 4.03 pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 735 corresponds to Litir 1,039. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir.

Bha mi ag innse eachdraidh Sheumais Mhic a' Phearsain, an ceatharnach ainmeil à Bàideanach. Thàinig latha a chrochaidh ri taobh crois na margaidh ann am Banbh air an t-siathamh latha deug dhen t-Samhain anns a' bhliadhna seachd ceud deug (1700).

Thathar ag ràdh anns an ear-thuath, chun an latha an-diugh, gun robh teachdaire **air an rathad a Bhanbh** air muin-eich, le stad-breith. Bha sin a' tighinn bho chùirt nas àirde is nas urramaiche ann an Obar Dheathain. Bha fios aig an t-siorram gun robh e air an rathad. Chunnaic an siorram an teachdaire leis an stad-breith na làimh, ga chrathadh.

Cha robh e deònach feitheamh oir bha e ag iarraidh gum biodh Mac a' Phearsain marbh, agus dh'òrdaich e gum biodh an cloc ann am meadhan Bhanbh air a chur air adhart cairteal na h-uarach. Mar sin, thàinig uair a' chrochaidh – a rèir a' chloc co-dhiù – mus do ràinig an teachdaire meadhan a' bhaile. Bha mòran daoine air an tàmailteachadh mu dheidhinn.

Fhad 's a bha e sa phrìosan, a' feitheamh ri latha a chrochaidh, chruthaich Seumas òran, **a' dèanamh iomradh air** a bhàs. Aig an àm sin, bhiodh cead aig daoine a bha fo bhinn-bhàis òraid a ghabhail mus biodh iad air an cur air a' chroich. Ach, an àite òraid, ghabh Seumas òran, ann am Beurla a thuigeadh muinntir an ear-thuath, agus e a' seinn na fìdhle aig an aon àm. Tha diofar riochdan air briathran an òrain san latha an-diugh, agus seo fear dhiubh:

*Fareweel ye dungeons dark and strang, fareweel, fareweel tae ye,
MacPherson's time will nae be lang on yonder gallows tree*

*Sae rantinly, sae wantonly, sae dauntinly gaed he
He played a tune and he danced it aroon below the gallows tree*

*It was by a woman's treacherous hand I was condemned tae dee
Aboon a ledge at a window she sat, a blanket she threw ow'r me*

*There's some come here tae see me hang, and some tae buy my fiddle
But before that I wid part wi' her I'd brak her through the middle*

*He took the fiddle intae baith o his hands and he brak it ower a stane
Sayin, nay ither hand shall play on thee when I am dead and gane*

*The reprieve was comin' ow'r the Brig o Banff tae set MacPherson free,
But they pit the clock a quarter afore, and they hanged him frae the tree.*

Anns an òran, thathar ag ràdh gun do bhris Seumas fhidheall air clach. Ach dh'aithris cuid gun do thog e an ionnsramaid an-àirde. Dh'fhaighnich e am biodh duine sam bith dhen t-sluagh a bha a' coimhead ga gabhail bhuaithe, air a' chùmhnant 's gun cluicheadh e no i an aon phort oirre aig taigh-aire dha. Cha robh duine deònach an fhidheall a ghabhail air a' chùmhnant sin, le tòrr nàimhdean aig Seumas an làthair. Mar sin, bhris Seumas an fhidheall thairis air a ghlùn. Dh'èigh e nach cluicheadh duine eile i. An uair sin, chaidh a chrochadh gu bàs.

Bha càirdean aig Seumas am measg an t-sluaigh, agus thug fear dhiubh an fhidheall bhriste air ais a Bhàideanach. Tha i a-nise ann an Taigh-tasgaidh Clann Mhic a' Phearsain ann am Baile Ùr an t-Slèibh. Ged a tha an fhidheall briste, tha an t-òran agus an sgeulachd beò, slàn fhathast.

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Faclan na Litreach: Seumas Mac a' Phearsain: *James MacPherson*; ceatharnach: *freebooter*; stad-breith: *reprieve*; Obar Dheathain: *Aberdeen*; ionnsramaid: *instrument*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Thàinig latha a chrochaidh: *the day of his hanging came*; ri taobh crois na margaidh: *beside the mercat cross*; thathar ag ràdh anns an ear-thuath: *it's said in the north-east*; chunnaic an siorram an teachdaire leis an stad-breith na làimh, ga chrathadh: *the sheriff saw the messenger with the reprieve in his hand, shaking it*; cha robh e deònach feitheamh: *he wasn't willing to wait*; gum biodh an cloc air a chur air adhart cairteal na h-uarach: *that the clock be put forward a quarter of an hour*; air an tàmailteachadh: *horrified*; bhiodh cead aig daoine a bha fo bhinn-bhàis òraid a ghabhail: *condemned people would be allowed to give a speech*; mus biodh iad air an cur air a' chroich: *before they were put on the gibbet*; ann am Beurla a thuigeadh muinntir an ear-thuath: *in a language that the people of the north-east would understand*; agus e a' seinn na fìdhle aig an aon àm: *and playing the fiddle at the same time*; air a' chùmhnant 's gun cluicheadh e no i an aon phort oirre aig taigh-aire dha: *on the condition that he or she would play the same tune on it at his wake*; le tòrr nàimhdean aig Seumas an làthair: *with many of James's enemies present*; bhris Seumas an fhidheall thairis air a ghlùn: *James broke the fiddle over his knee*; Taigh-tasgaidh Clann Mhic a' Phearsain ann am Baile Ùr an t-Slèibh: *The Clan MacPherson Museum in Newtonmore*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: air an rathad a Bhanbh air muin-eich: *on the way to Banff on horseback*. Are you familiar with the preposition 'a' ('to') which incurs lenition? Learners often prefer 'gu' (no lenition), but 'a' is very idiomatic. Tha mi a' dol a Phort Rìgh 'I'm going to Portree'. The preposition 'à', with an accent and more open pronunciation, means 'from' and does not incur lenition. Thàinig e à Banbh 'he came from Banff'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a' dèanamh iomradh air a bhàs: *giving an account of his death*.

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