

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Seumas Mac a' Phearsain (4)

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 1,040. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 4.03 pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 736 corresponds to Litir 1,040. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir.

Thairis air na trì seachdainean a dh'fhalbh, dh'inns mi eachdraidh Sheumais Mhic a' Phearsain, an ceatharnach ainmeil à Bàideanach, agus mar a chaidh a chrochadh gu bàs ann am Banbh anns a' bhliadhna seachd ceud deug (1700). Bidh cuimhne agaibh gun do chuir an siorram ann am Banbh an cloc air adhart cairteal na h-uarach oir bha stad-breith air an rathad airson Seumas a shàbhaladh.

A rèir choltais, thòisich an gnothach suarach seo co-spàirn eadar Baile Bhanbh agus am baile air taobh eile Uisge Dubh-Èireann – An Dùn no *MacDuff*. 'S dòcha gun robh a' cho-spàirn ann roimhe sin, ge-tà. Tha stòiridh eile ann mu Sheumas Mac a' Phearsain. Bha e a' **teicheadh à feadhainn** a bha ag iarraidh a mharbhadh. Leum e a-steach a dh'Uisge Dubh-Èireann airson faighinn air falbh. Bha deis armachd air agus bha e a' giùlan claidheamh mòr a bha air leth trom.

Bha Seumas math air snàmh ach chaill e a bhonaid. Chaidh a bhonaid an sàs ann an cuairt-shruth anns an abhainn. Nuair a thàinig a nàimhdean, chunnaic iad a bhonaid agus bha iad dhen bheachd gun robh Seumas marbh. Ach cha robh. Agus nochd e ann am Banbh air an oidhche sin!

Fhuair mi an naidheachd sin à làrach-lìn Tobar an Dualchais, agus fear Teàrlach Simpson, a bhuineadh don Dùn, agus a dh'inns a chunntas ann an Albais an ear-thuath. Bha Teàrlach dhen bheachd gur e deagh dhuine a bh' ann am Mac a' Phearsain. '*A big powerful chiel,*' mar a thuir e. Bha deagh chliù aig Mac a' Phearsain anns an Dùn.

Lean a' cho-spàirn eadar an dà bhaile airson ùine mhòr, stèidhichte air bàs Mhic a' Phearsain. Nuair a bha Teàrlach òg, cha bhiodh fear à Banbh a' falbh le tè às an Dùn. Agus bhiodh na balaich à Banbh ag èigheachd air na gillean às an Dùn, '*Fa shot the loon?*' (Cò loisg air a' ghille?) Bha sin a' cuimhneachadh tachartas nuair a chaidh gille a mharbhadh le mearachd, agus saighdearan a' losgadh air targaidean.

Bhiodh na balaich às an Dùn an uair sin ag ràdh ris na gillean à Banbh, '*Fa hanged the man afore his time?*' Agus leanadh iad sin leis an rann: '*Banff, it is a burgh toon, a kirk wi'oot a steeple, a load o' muck at ilka door, and damned unceevil people.*' Tha fhios nach biodh muinntir Bhanbh ag aontachadh ri sin!

Nuair a thogadh eaglais anns an Dùn anns an naoidheamh linn deug - 's e *Doune Church* a chanas iad rithe ann am Beurla – chaidh tùr a thogail oirre le cloc ann. Ach chan eil ceithir aghaidhean air a' chloc. Chan eil ann ach na trì. Tha iad ag

ràdh gun tugadh an tè air an taobh siar air falbh gus nach toireadh muinntir an Dùin an uair do mhuinntir Bhanbh.

Agus tha e coltach gun deach an cloc ann am Banbh fhèin a ghluasad gu baile ùr a chaidh a thogail tràth anns an naoidheamh linn deug. 'S e sin Baile Bhainidh no *Dufftown*. Bhathar ga aithneachadh mar 'an cloc a chroch Mac a' Phearsain'. Ged a bha e a' ruith cairteal na h-uarach air thoiseach ann am Banbh fad ùine an dèidh a' chrochaidh, tha mi an dùil an-diugh ann am Baile Bhainidh gun toir e dhuinn an uair cheart.

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Faclan na Litreach: Seumas Mac a' Phearsain: *James MacPherson*; roimhe sin: *before that*; ge-tà: *however*; deis armachd: *suit of armour*; cuairt-shruth: *whirlpool*; nàimhdean: *enemies*; deagh chliù: *a fine reputation*; Baile Bhainidh: *Dufftown*.

Abairtean na Litreach: dh'inns mi eachdraidh Sheumais Mhic a' Phearsain, an ceatharnach ainmeil à Bàideanach: *I told you the story of James MacPherson, the famous freebooter from Badenoch*; bha stad-breith air an rathad airson Seumas a shàbhaladh: *a reprieve was on the way to save James*; thòisich an gnothach suarach seo co-spàirn eadar Baile Bhanbh agus am baile air taobh eile Uisge Dubh-Èireann: *this unfortunate matter started a rivalry between Banff and the town on the other side of the River Deveron*; bha e a' giùlan claidheamh mòr a bha air leth trom: *he was carrying a large sword that was particularly heavy*; à làrach-lìn Tobar an Dualchais: *from the Tobar an Dualchais website*; a bhuineadh don Dùn: *who belonged to MacDuff*; cha bhiodh fear à Banbh a' falbh le tè às an Dùn: *a lad from Banff wouldn't go out with a girl from MacDuff*; nuair a chaidh gille a mharbhadh le mearachd, agus saighdearan a' losgadh air targaidean: *when a lad was killed by mistake, with soldiers firing at targets*; tha fhios nach biodh muinntir Bhanbh ag aontachadh ri sin: *I'm sure that the people of Banff would not agree with that*; chan eil ann ach na trì: *there are only three*; gus nach toireadh muinntir an Dùin an uair do mhuinntir Bhanbh: *that the people of MacDuff wouldn't give the time to the people of Banff*; gun deach an cloc ann am Banbh a ghluasad gu baile ùr: *that the clock in Banff was moved to a new town*; a chaidh a thogail tràth anns an naoidheamh linn deug: *that was built early in the 19th century*; bhathar ga aithneachadh mar 'an cloc a chroch Mac a' Phearsain': *it was recognised as 'the clock that hanged MacPherson'*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Lean a' cho-spàirn eadar an dà bhaile airson ùine mhòr, stèidhichte air bàs Mhic a' Phearsain: *the rivalry between the two towns continued for a long time, based on MacPherson's death*. It's interesting how the town of MacDuff (An Dùn in Gaelic) became a protector of MacPherson's reputation, despite his being a Gael of semi-traveller heritage from Badenoch. One can only presume that he spoke Doric and could communicate freely with the people of the north-east (and compose a song in that language). Do any of know you more about his linguistic abilities?

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a' teicheadh à feadhainn: *fleeing from some people*.

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