

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Uilleam Uallas (4)

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 rodgy.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 1,094. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 790 corresponds to Litir 1,094.

Bheir mi an cunntas agam air Uilleam Uallas gu crìch an-diugh. Air an aonamh latha deug dhen t-Sultain, dà cheud deug, naochad 's a seachd (1297), nochd Uallas agus a chompanach Anndra Moireach aig Drochaid Shruighlea, air an taobh tuath dhith. Bha na mìltean shaighdearan cuide riutha.

Bha armailt tòrr na bu mhòtha aig na Sasannaich, ge-tà. Bha iad fo stiùir Iain Uarainn, Iarla Shurraidh, agus Ùisdean Cresingham, agus bha iad a' feitheamh gu deas air an drochaid. Cha robh dòigh eile airson saighdearan a chur tarsainn na h-aibhne ach thar na drochaid, a bha gu math cumhang.

Sheas na h-Albannaich air cnuic, a' feitheamh ris na Sasannaich. An dèidh greis, chuir Uarainn dithis shagartan a-null far an robh Uallas. Tha ùghdar a' chunntais, Aonghas MacCoinnich, ag innse dhuinn gun robh iad a' tairgsinn 'maitheanas dha fhèin 's dha a luchd-leanmhainn nan leigeadh iad sìos an armachd.' Chuir Uallas na sagartan air ais le teachdaireachd do Uarainn nach robh e ag iarraidh ach aon rud – **blàr a thoirt do na Sasannaich agus saorsa aiseag** do dh'Alba.

Chuir sin fearg air cuid de na h-oifigearan Sasannach. Bha iad airson a dhol a-null thar na drochaid agus ionnsaigh a thoirt air armailt Uallais, ged a bha sin cunnartach dhaibh.

Chaidh gnothaichean air adhart gu math dhaibh an toiseach. Sheas na h-Albannaich far an robh iad. Chaidh marc-shluagh tarsainn na drochaid an toiseach – na ceudan aca. Bha iad air an leantainn le saighdearan-coise. Cha tug na h-Albannaich ionnsaigh orra.

Ach cha robh iad dìomhain. Dh'iarr Uallas air buidheann de luchd-sleagha dhol sìos don abhainn gu sàmhach, socair. Nuair a bha leth de dh'armailt nan Sasannach air a dhol tarsainn na drochaid, thug Uallas òrdugh don luchd-sleagha an drochaid a dhùnadh. Chan fhaigheadh an còrr de na Sasannaich a-null. Thug saighdearan Uallais ionnsaigh bhrùideil air an fheadhainn a bh' air a dhol tarsainn na h-aibhne mu-thràth.

Chaidh am marc-shluagh **an comhair an cùil**. Bha iad a-nise am measg nan saighdearan-coise aca fhèin, agus bha buaireadh ann. Dh'fheuch cuid de na ridirean faighinn tarsainn na h-aibhne, ach chaidh am bàthadh. Bha an armachd aca ro throm airson a bhith a' snàmh.

Chaidh an latha leis na h-Albannaich. Bhathar ag ràdh, dhen àireamh mhòr de Shasannaich a chaidh tarsainn na drochaid, nach d' fhuair às beò, ach triùir. Bha Cresingham am measg nam marbh.

Bha Iarla Shurraidh a' coimhead air gnothaichean bho thaobh a deas na h-aibhne. Thomhais e nach robh iad sàbhailte an sin tuilleadh, agus theich an armailt Shasannach gu ruige Bearaig air taobh Shasainn dhen chrìch. Cha b' e sin a-mhàin, ach theich na saighdearan Sasannach bho na caistealan, a bh' air a bhith nan làmhan, ann an ceann a deas na h-Alba.

Lean Uallas orra, le fichead mìle saighdear na chois, thar na crìch. Rinn e miastadh ann an ceann a tuath Shasainn mus do thill e dhachaigh. Thug e mar sin a saorsa a dh'Alba, agus chaidh aithneachadh mar riaghladair na dùthcha. Cha b' e sin deireadh an sgeòil, ge-tà, oir bha Rìgh Eideard Shasainn, a bha ri cogadh thall air tìr-mòr na Roinn Eòrpa, gu math feargach mu na thachair. Ach fàgaidh mi an còrr dhen sgeul gu latha eile.

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Faclan na Litreach: Uilleam Uallas: *William Wallace*; Anndra Moireach: *Andrew [de] Moray*; Drochaid Shruighlea: *Stirling Bridge*; dithis shagartan: *two priests*; dìomhain: *idle*; ionnsaigh bhrùideil: *a brutal attack*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bha na mìltean shaighdearan cuide riutha: *there were thousands of soldiers with them*; fo stiùir Iain Uarainn, Iarla Shurraidh: *under the direction/command of John de Warrene, the Earl of Surrey*; cha robh dòigh eile airson saighdearan a chur tarsainn na h-aibhne: *there was no other way of getting soldiers over the river*; ach thar na drochaid, a bha gu math cumhang: *except across the bridge, that was very narrow*; maitheanas dha fhèin 's dha a luchd-leanmhainn: *forgiveness [a pardon] for himself and his followers*; nan leigeadh iad sìos an armachd: *if they would put down their arms*; chaidh marc-shluagh tarsainn na drochaid: *cavalry crossed the bridge*; air an leantainn le saighdearan-coise: *followed by infantry*; thug Uallas òrdugh don luchd-sleagha an drochaid a dhùnadh: *Wallace ordered his spearmen to close the bridge*; chan fhaigheadh an còrr de na Sasannaich a-null: *the rest of the English couldn't cross*; a bh' air a dhol tarsainn na h-aibhne mu-thràth: *who had already crossed the river*; bha iad a-nise am measg nan saighdearan-coise aca fhèin, agus bha buaireadh ann: *they were now among their own infantry, and there was chaos*; dh'fheuch cuid de na ridirean faighinn tarsainn na h-aibhne, ach chaidh am bàthadh: *some of the knights tried to cross the river, but they were drowned*; nach d' fhuair às beò, ach trìuir: *that only three survived*; am measg nam marbh: *among the dead*; gu ruige Bearaig air taobh Shasainn dhen chrìch: *to Berwick on the English side of the border*; miastadh ann an ceann a tuath Shasainn: *mischievous in the north of England*; a bha ri cogadh thall air tìr-mòr na Roinn Eòrpa: *who was fighting a war on the European continent*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: nach robh e ag iarraidh ach aon rud – **blàr a thoirt do na Sasannaich agus saorsa aiseag** do dh'Alba: *that he only wanted one thing – to wage war on the English and deliver freedom to Scotland. This is the phrase that Angus MacKenzie used in his book. You will be familiar with aiseag meaning 'ferry' ie 'ferry boat', but MacKenzie is using it here in an older sense of 'delivery, delivering'*. Aiseag can mean the act of transferring or delivering something or somebody (as in across a body of water); you will still hear it being used as the verbal noun ag aiseag.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Chaidh am marc-shluagh an comhair an cùil: *the cavalry went backwards*.

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