

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Ailean Dubh Mac Raghnaill (1)

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 1,104. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 800 corresponds to Litir 1,104.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Naomh Meirheard agus Gleann Moireasdan. An t-seachdain seo, bu mhath leam innse dhuibh mu àiteachan timcheall na sgìre sin, a tha co-cheangailte ri cogadh eadar Clann 'ic Coinnich agus na Dòmhnallaich anns an t-seachdamh linn deug.

Anns a' bhliadhna sia ceud deug 's a dhà (1602), ghabh Clann 'ic Coinnich greim air Caisteal an t-Sròim bho na Dòmhnallaich. Tha sin air taobh an iar Rois. Bha oighre Mhic Raghnaill à Lunndaich ann an Gleanna Garadh fiadhaich mu dheidhinn. B' esan Ailean Dubh – Ailean Dubh mac Raghnaill. Chuir e roimhe dìoghaltas a dhèanamh air Cloinn 'ic Coinnich.

Thòisich e le bhith a' dol mun chuairt ann an Dùthaich 'ic Coinnich ann an riochd ceannaiche-siubhail. Mar sin, **fhuaire e deagh eòlas air** dùthaich a nàimhdean. A rèir aithris, anns an t-Sultain sia ceud deug 's a trì (1603), thug e feachd leis à Gleanna Garadh gu ruige an t-Eilean Dubh. Ràinig iad an t-àite faisg air a' Bhlàr Dhubh madainn Didòmhaich, nuair a bha an eaglais làn muinntir an àite – Clann 'ic Coinnich. Chuir na Dòmhnallaich teine ris an eaglais, agus mharbh iad an fheadhainn a dh'fheuch ri teicheadh. Rinn iad tuilleadh sgrios air an rathad dhachaigh.

Chaidh iad tarsainn Ghleann Urchardain agus stad iad air mòinteach eadar Meall Fuar-mhonaich agus Loch Nis. Ge-tà, bha feachd aig Clann 'ic Coinnich air an tòir. Chunnaic iad na Dòmhnallaich agus thàinig iad sìos orra le droch rùn. Mharbh iad tòrr de na Dòmhnallaich, agus 's e Lòn na Fala a chanas daoine ris an àite sin chun an latha an-diugh.

Theich Ailean Dubh le a bheatha. Ràinig e allt air a bheil Allt a' Ghiubhais mar ainm. Bha clais dhomhainn ann. Ruith Ailean mar pheilear, agus leum e thairis air an allt. Dh'fheuch fear de Chloinn 'ic Coinnich leantainn air, ach bha an leum aige goirid. Thuit e an comhair a chùil agus ghabh e grèim air craobh bheag. Thionndaidh Ailean Dubh. Le beum-claidheimh, gheàrr e stoc na craoibhe agus thuit am fear eile gu bonn na claise.

Tha an t-àite far an do leum Ailean Dubh aithnichte chun an latha an-diugh mar **Leum a' Cheannaiche**. Bidh cuimhne agaibh gun robh Ailean a' dol timcheall ann an Siorrachd Rois, a' toirt a' chreidsinn gur e ceannaiche-siubhail a bh' ann. Mar sin, 's e Leum a' Cheannaiche a chuir muinntir Ghleann Urchardain air an àite. Ann an Gleann Moireasdan, bha an t-aon àite aithnichte mar *Leum Ailein Mhic Raghnaill*. Ge-tà, 's e Leum a' Cheannaiche a th' air mapaichean na Suirbhidh Òrdanais.

Cha do chuir sin stad air Clann 'ic Coinnich, ge-tà. Fhuair iadsan tarsainn an uillt aig àite ris an canar Beul-àth nan Clach. Bha Ailean a' tuigsinn nach biodh dol-às aige ach le bhith a' dol a-steach a Loch Nis fhèin. A rèir beul-aithris, bha ceann-cinnidh nam Frisealach à Foithir a' feitheamh ris le bàta. Shnàmh Ailean Dubh a-null don bhàta agus mar sin, fhuair e air falbh bho a nàimhdean.

Cha b' e sin deireadh a' ghnòthaich, ge-tà. Chaidh Ailean Dubh am falach ann an Gleanna Garadh, mar a chluinneas sibh an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Caisteal an t-Sròim: *Strome Castle*; oighre: *heir*; Lunndaidh: *Lundie*; Gleanna Garadh: *Glengarry*; Lòn na Fala [Fola]: *'the damp meadow of the blood'*; comharraichte: *marked*; clais: *gorge*; beum-claidheimh: *a sword-stroke*.

Abairtean na Litreach: cogadh eadar Clann 'ic Coinnich agus na Dòmhnallaich anns an t-seachdamh linn deug: *a war between the MacKenzies and the MacDonalds in the 17th century*; chuir e roimhe dìoghaltas a dhèanamh air X: *he decided to gain revenge on X*; a' dol mun chuairt ann an Dùthaich 'ic Coinnich ann an riochd ceannaiche-siubhail: *going around in the MacKenzie country in the guise of a pedlar*; gu ruige an t- Eilean Dubh: *to the Black Isle*; faisg air a' Bhlàr Dhubh: *near Muir of Ord*; mharbh iad an fheadhainn a dh'fheuch ri teicheadh: *they killed those who tried to flee*; tuilleadh sgrìos air an rathad dhachaigh: *more deprivations on the way home*; mòinteach eadar Meall Fuar-mhonaidh agus Loch Nis: *a moor between Meall Fuarvonie and Loch Ness*; theich X le a bheatha: *X escaped with his life*; thuit e an comhair a chùil agus ghabh e grèim air craobh bheag: *he fell backwards and grabbed a small tree*; a' toirt a' chreidsinn gur e ceannaiche-siubhail a bh' ann: *pretending he was a pedlar*; bha ceann-cinnidh nam Frisealach à Foithir a' feitheamh ris le bàta: *the chief of the Frasers of Foyers was waiting for him with a boat*; shnàmh Ailean Dubh a-null don bhàta: *Ailean Dubh swam over to the boat*; cha b' e sin deireadh a' ghnòthaich, ge-tà: *that wasn't the end of the matter, however*; chaidh X am falach: *X went to hide*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: aithnichte chun an latha an-diugh mar **Leum a' Cheannaiche:** *known to this day as 'the leap of the merchant'. This is a good example of a place-name which can only be understood through a knowledge of historical events (in this case illuminated by William Mackay in his book 'Urquhart and Glenmoriston'). It refers to Ailean Dubh Mac Raghnaill who scouted the Ross-shire country of his enemies while disguised as a pedlar (ceannaiche-siubhail), and who escaped their pursuit by leaping the gorge at this point. And, of course, it is intimately connected to the nearby Lòn na Fala [Lòn na Fola (OS)], although that would not be immediately obvious. I would encourage all of you to take a close interest in your local history, ecology and place-names, and make efforts to find the links between them.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: fhuair e deagh eòlas air dùthaich a nàimhdean: **he obtained good knowledge of the country of his enemies.**

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