

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

## le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

### An t-Albannach a Dh'fheuch ris a' Bhanrigh a mhurt (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.maclea@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 1,109. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 805 corresponds to Litir 1,109.*

Pìos bàrdachd dhuibh an toiseach an-diugh – mas e ‘bàrdachd’ a chanas sibh rithe!  
Tha mi cinnteach gum bi fios agaibh cò sgrìobh i.

*God prosper long our noble Queen, And long may she reign,  
Maclean, he tried to shoot her, But 'twas all in vain.  
For God, he turned the ball aside, Maclean aimed at her head,  
And he felt very angry, Because he didn't shoot her dead.*

Aidh, tha sibh ceart. Chaidh na faclan a sgrìobhadh le Uilleam MacGonagail – breabadair Èireannach a bha a' fuireach ann an Dùn Dè. Tha cuid a' cumail a-mach gum b' e am bàrd Beurla a bu mhios' a bh' ann riamh. Duine bochd!

Bha an dàn seo mu dheidhinn mar a dh'fheuch Ruairidh Eideard MacIlleathain ris a' Bhanrigh Bhictoria a mhurt ann an ochd ceud deug, ochdad 'sa a dhà (1882). Seo dà rann eile on dàn, a tha ag innse beachd a' bhàird air MacIlleathain, agus a' Bhanrigh:

*Maclean must be a madman, Which is obvious to be seen,  
Or else he wouldn't have tried to shoot, Our most beloved Queen ...  
Long may she be spared to roam, Among the bonnie Highland floral,  
And spend many a happy day, In the palace of Balmoral.*

Saoil an do sgrìobh Uilleam còir sin ann an dhà-rìreabh? No an robh cuideigin ri plòigh, agus a' cur às a leth gun do sgrìobh e sin?! Co-dhiù, fàgaidh mi sin agaibh fhèin! Tha mi airson crìoch a chur air mo chunntas air Ruairidh MacIlleathain.

Bha e fhèin a' cumail a-mach gun robh e slàn na inntinn, agus gun robh e feargach mun t-suidheachadh anns an robh e. Ach bha e air ùine a chur seachad **ann an taigh-cuthaich mar a bh' aca orra** aig an àm sin. Agus thuirt e ri a phiuthar gun robh murt air choreigin **fa-near dha**.

Bha MacIlleathain gu bhith a' toirt buaidh mhòr air an lagh ann an Sasainn 's a' Chuimrigh. Ged a bha gu leòr dhen bheachd gun robh e às a rian, chaidh casaid a chur às a leth gun robh e ri àrd-cheannairc, a' ciallachadh gun robh iad a' gabhail ris gun robh e slàn na inntinn. Ge-tà, b' e co-dhùnadh an diùraidh gun robh e às a' chiall agus gun robh e mar sin neo-chiontach de dh'àrd-cheannairc no oidhirp air murt. Mar sin chaidh MacIlleathain a chur do Phrìosan Broadmoor, far a bheilear a' cumail daoine cunnartach a tha a' fulang le tinneas-inntinn.

Ge-tà, cha robh a' Bhanrigh toilichte idir. B' e sin an t-ochdamh turas a bha cuideigin air oidhirp a dhèanamh air a beatha. Bha i dhen bheachd nach robh an riaghaltas ga dìon mar bu chòir. Chuireadh lagh ùr tron phàrlamaid a dh'atharraich a'

bhinn – ‘neo-chiontach air sgàth dith na cèille’ – gu ‘ciontach ach a’ fulang le dith na cèille’. Cha robh e gu diofar don neach a bha ciontach. Bhiodh e no i air an cumail ann am prìosan mar Broadmoor fhad ’s a bu bheò iad. Ach bha mòran dhen mhòr-shluagh dhen bheachd gun robh e ceart gum biodh cuideigin a rinn oidhirp air murt air fhaighinn ciontach, seach neo-chiontach.

Agus MacIlleathain fhèin? Chuir e seachad trithead ’s a naoi bliadhna ann am Broadmoor. Chaochail e an sin ann an naoi ceud deug, fichead ’s a h-aon (1921).

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Uilleam MacGonagail : *William McGonagall*; Ruairidh Eideard MacIlleathain: *Roderick Edward Maclean*; às a rian: *insane*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Pìos bàrdachd dhuibh: *a piece of poetry for you*; mas e ‘bàrdachd’ a chanas sibh rithe: *if you [can] call it poetry*; breabadair Èireannach a bha a’ fuireach ann an Dùn Dè: *an Irish weaver who was living in Dundee*; tha cuid a’ cumail a-mach gum b’ e am bàrd Beurla a bu mhios’ a bh’ ann riamh: *some people reckon he was the worst ever poet in the English language*; saoil an do sgrìobh Uilleam còir sin ann an dhà-rìreabh?: *do you reckon that good old William really wrote that?*; tha mi airson crìoch a chur air mo chunntas air X: *I want to finish my account of X*; bha MacIlleathain gu bhith a’ toirt buaidh mhòr air an lagh ann an Sasainn ’s a’ Chuimrigh: *Maclean was to have a big effect on the law in England and Wales*; chaidh casaid a chur às a leth gun robh e ri àrd-cheannairc: *he was accused of being involved in high treason*; b’ e co-dhùnadh an diùraidh gun robh e às a’ chiall agus gun robh e mar sin neo-chiontach: *the decision of the jury was that he was insane and therefore not guilty*; far a bheilear a’ cumail daoine cunnartach a tha a’ fulang le tinneas-inntinn: *where dangerous people are kept who are suffering from mental illness*; an t-ochdamh turas a bha cuideigin air oidhirp a dhèanamh air a beatha: *the eighth time that somebody had made an attempt on her life*; chuireadh lagh ùr tron phàrlamaid a dh’atharraich a’ bhinn: *a new law was put through parliament which changed the verdict*; neo-chiontach air sgàth dith na cèille: *not guilty on the grounds of insanity*; ciontach ach a’ fulang le dith na cèille: *guilty but insane*; fhad ’s a bu bheò iad: *as long as they were alive*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** bha e air ùine a chur seachad ann an taigh-cuthaich mar a bh’ aca orra aig an àm sin: *he had spent time in an asylum as they were called at the time. Actually taigh-cuthaich is a more brutal term than ‘asylum’.* It means ‘house of frenzied madness’ and is closer to a term like ‘madhouse’. So, clearly, it is a term that has largely gone out of use, being replaced by phrases like ospadal-inntinn or ospadal leighis-inntinn.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** gun robh murt air choreigin fa-near dha: *that it was his intention to commit some murder or other.*

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