

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Caisteal Ruadh (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 1,140. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 836 corresponds to Litir 1,140.

Chan ann tric a bhios mi a’ toirt na Litreach don Chaisteal Ruadh anns an Eilean Dubh. Tha sin car annasach ann an dòigh, oir tha an t-àite faisg air Inbhir Nis, agus tha e làn eachdraidh. ’S dòcha gur e as coireach gum bi sinn a’ diochuimhneachadh mu dheidhinn nach eil rathad mòr a’ dol ga ionnsaigh. Tha na rathaidean don Chaisteal Ruadh cumhang is sàmhach. Agus tha an caisteal fhèin a-nise na thobhta.

An turas mu dheireadh a bha sinn ann còmhla, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Fhearchar a’ Ghunna a bha a’ fuireach anns an sgìre o chionn fhada. Bha sin ann an Litrichean naoi ceud, naochad ’s a trì (993) gu naoi ceud, naochad ’s a còig (995).

An turas seo, tha mi airson rud no dhà innse dhuibh mun àite fhèin. **Anns a’ chiad dol a-mach**, carson as e *An Caisteal Ruadh* a th’ air an àite – no *Redcastle* ann am Beurla? Uill, tha sin sìmplidh gu leòr. Tha seann chaisteal ann – agus tha e ruadh! Tha e air a thogail de chlach-ghainmhich a tha gu math ruadh. A dh’aindeoin ’s gu bheil e na thobhta, saoilidh mi gu bheil an caisteal gu math brèagha ann an cumadh agus coltas.

Tha e faisg air cladach a tuath Linne Fharair, agus dlùth ri ceann na linne. Tha e ann an suidheachadh sìtheil. Agus tha am fearann mu a thimcheall gu math torrach.

Chaidh daingneach a thogail air an làraich seo o chionn fhada. ’S e Rìgh na h-Alba, Uilleam Garbh mac Eanraig – *William the Lion* – a thog e faisg air deireadh an dàrna linn deug. An robh an togalach sin ruadh mar a tha caisteal an latha an-diugh? ’S iongantach mura robh oir faisg air làimh, tha cuaraidh ann **às am faighte** clach-ghainmhich ruadh. ’S e clach a th’ innte a tha cumanta anns an Eilean Dubh. Agus tha adhbhar eile agam a ràdh gun robh e ruadh. Thig sinn gu sin ann an tiotan.

B’ e ainm caisteal Uilleim *Edirdovar*. Anns a’ Ghàidhlig an latha an-diugh, chanamaid *Eadar Dà Dhobhar*. Nochd e gu tric ann am Beurla mar *Edradour*. Tha sin a’ ciallachadh ‘eadar dà uisge’. Thug an t-eòlaiche, Uilleam MacBhàtair, sùil air an ainm seo airson an leabhair aige *Place Names of Ross and Cromarty*. Cho-dhùin e gum b’ iad an dà uisge Linne Fharair agus Linne Chrombaidh.

Tro thìde, ge-tà, dh’atharraich e a bheachd. Bha e an uair sin a’ smaoinneachadh gun robh an t-ainm a’ dèanamh iomradh air dà allt bheag faisg air a’ chaisteal. Co-dhiù, cha do mhair an t-ainm *Eadar Dà Dhobhar*. Mus robh an ceathramh linn deug a-mach, bhathar a’ gabhail *Reidcastell* air ann am Beurla.

Thairis air na ceudan, bha an caisteal ann an làmhan diofar theaghlaichean. An toiseach bha e leis na Bissets aig an robh fearann air taobh thall na linne. An uair sin, bha e leis na Greumaich. An dèidh sin bha e le Iarlan Rois mus do ghabh an

teaghlach rìoghail, na Stiùbhartaich, grèim air. Thathar a' smaoin eachadh gun deach Màiri, Banrigh na h-Alba, ann sa bhliadhna còig ceud deug, seasgad 's a dhà (1562).

An ceann sia bliadhna eile, bha an Caisteal Ruadh gu bhith ann an làmhan Clann 'ic Coinnich. Agus sin far an tòisich mi an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: An Caisteal Ruadh: *Redcastle*; An t-Eilean Dubh: *The Black Isle*; làn eachdraidh: *full of history*; cumhang is sàmhach: *narrow and quiet*; Linne Fharair: *Beaully Firth*; sìtheil: *peaceful*; Uilleam Garbh mac Eanraig: *William the Lion*; Uilleam MacBhàtair: *William (J) Watson*; Greumaich: *Grahams*.

Abairtean na Litreach: car annasach ann an dòigh: *a little strange in a way*; 's dòcha gur e as coireach gum bi sinn a' dìochuimhneachadh mu dheidhinn: *perhaps what's responsible for us forgetting about it*; nach eil rathad mòr a' dol ga ionnsaigh: *that no major road goes there*; tha an caisteal fhèin a-nise na thobhta: *the castle itself is now a ruin*; air a thogail de chlach-ghainmhich: *built of sandstone*; gu math brèagha ann an cumadh agus coltas: *very attractive in form and appearance*; dlùth ri ceann na linne: *close to the head of the firth*; tha am fearann mu a thimcheall gu math torrach: *the land around it is very fertile*; chaidh daingneach a thogail air an làraich seo o chionn fhada: *a fortress was built on this site a long time ago*; 's iongantach mura robh: *it's likely it was*; thig sinn gu sin ann an tiotan: *we'll come to that in a moment*; cho-dhùin e gum b' iad an dà uisge Linne Fharair agus Linne Chrombaidh: *he concluded that the two waters were the Beaully Firth and the Cromarty Firth*; tro thìde, ge-tà, dh'atharraich e a bheachd: *in time, however, he changed his opinion*; cha do mhair an t-ainm: *the name did not last*; ann an làmhan diofar theaghlaichean: *in the hands of various families*; bha e le Iarlan Rois mus do ghabh an teaghlach rìoghail, na Stiùbhartaich, grèim air: *it was owned by the Earls of Ross until the royal family, the Stewarts, got hold of it*; ann an làmhan Clann 'ic Coinnich: *in the hands of the Mackenzies*; sin far an tòisich mi: *that's where I'll start*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: tha cuaraidh ann às am faighte clach-ghainmhich ruadh: *there is a quarry from which red sandstone would be obtained*. Faigh 'get, obtain' is an irregular verb and this is a passive conditional form of it. And remember that the conditional in Gaelic also represents the past habitual – describing things happening regularly or habitually in the past. Gheibhte means 'would be obtained'. Gheibhte clach às a' chuaraidh 'stone would be obtained from the quarry'. However, the interrogative and dependent form is faighte e.g. am faighte clach às a' chuaraidh? 'would stone be obtained from the quarry?' Tha mi an dùil gum faighte clach às 'I expect that stone was obtained from it'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Anns a' chiad dol a-mach: *in the first instance*.

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