

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An t-Albannach Fiadhaich (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.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 1,171. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 867 corresponds to Litir 1,171.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Sheumas Mac a’ Phearsain, a bha ri mèirle ann an Tìr na Banrigh anns an naoidheamh linn deug. Bhuineadh e don Ghàidhealtachd bho thùs. Thòisich e ri eucoir nuair a bha e ag obair aig fear a-muigh air an dùthaich. Bha Mac a’ Phearsain a’ rùsgadh chaorach dha. Dhiùlt am fear seo Mac a’ Phearsain a phàigheadh. Thuir e gun robh an t-Albannach gun fheum mar lomadair, agus gun robh e a’ dèanamh cron air na caoraich.

Thill Mac a’ Phearsain le gunna agus fhuair e an t-airgead aige anns an dòigh sin. An uair sin, dh’fhalbh e fhèin agus a dhithis charaidean à Brisbane, agus ghoid iad stuth bho thaigh-seinnse. Dh’fheuch an t-òstair ri stad a chur orra. Chuir Mac a’ Phearsain peilear tro a bheul. Gu fortanach, cha do chaochail e.

Chuir na poilis seachdadaidh ’s a còig notaichean air adhart mar dhuais **airson fiosrachadh a bheireadh na mèirlich gu ceartas**. Cha robh fios aig duine cò bh’ anns an triùir. Ach chaidh tuairisgeul a dhèanamh de Mhac a’ Phearsain mar seo: bha e còig troighean agus ochd òirlich a dh’àirde, bha falt bàn agus sùilean gorma aige, agus sròn Ròmanach.

Leis gun robh na poilis ann an Tìr na Banrigh air a thòir, dh’fhalbh Mac a’ Phearsain gu ruige Cuimrigh Nuadh a Deas. Chaidh e astar mòr air muin-eich – còrr is mìle gu leth mìle. Thòisich e air eich a ghoid. Ge-tà, bha mèirlich eile air a bhith ag obair anns an sgìre sin agus bha còmhlain de phoilis a’ gluasad timcheall, a’ coimhead air an son. Chunnaic na poilis Mac a’ Phearsain agus mhothaich iad gun robh e gun fheusag – rud a bha annasach aig an àm. Loisg iad air, ach bha e air each luath agus theich e.

Ceala-deug an dèidh sin, lorg dithis phoileas Mac a’ Phearsain. An turas seo, cha robh each aige ach bha na h-oifigearan air muin-eich. Loisg iad air a chèile agus chaidh Mac a’ Phearsain a leòn na ghàirdean. Ruith an t-Albannach gu boglach far nach b’ urrainn do na h-eich leantainn air agus fhuair e air falbh. Aig an ìre seo, cha robh fios aig na poilis cò bh’ ann. Bha iad a’ gabhail ‘*the Scottish bushranger*’ air no ‘*Scotchie, the highwayman*’.

Anns a’ Ghearran, ochd ceud deug, seasgad ’s a còig (1865), chaidh Mac a’ Phearsain a chur an grèim. Bha e a’ campachadh ann an coille faisg air abhainn, a’ leughadh pàipear-naidheachd, nuair a thàinig buidheann de phoilis air gun fhiosta dha. An toiseach, thuir e gur e John Bruce a bh’ air mar ainm. Ach mu dheireadh, dh’aidich e gum b’ e Ailpean Mac a’ Phearsain a bh’ air. Bha sin firinneach. B’ e ainm slàn Seumas Ailpean Mac a’ Phearsain.

Fhuair na poilis a-mach bhuaithe gun robh e ioma-chànanach agus gun robh e eòlach air feallsanachd Voltaire agus Paine. Cha robh cus na aghaidh ann an Cuimrigh Nuadh a Deas. Ge-tà, thàinig fios bho Thìr na Banrigh gun robh na poilis an sin ga shireadh. **Chaidh a chur air bòrd soitheach** ann an Sydney airson turas a ghabhail, fo chùram poilis, gu ruige ceann a tuath Tìr na Banrigh. An robh dreuchd Mhic a' Phearsain mar mhèirleach gu bhith seachad? Cha robh idir, mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Seumas Mac a' Phearsain: *James McPherson*; mèirle: *robbery*; Tìr na Banrigh: *Queensland*; an trìùir: *the three (men)*; tuairisgeul: *description*; Cuimrigh Nuadh a Deas: *New South Wales*; feallsanachd: *philosophy*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bha X a' rùsgadh chaorach dha: *X was shearing sheep for him*; dhiùlt am fear seo X a phàigheadh: *this man refused to pay X*; gun fheum mar lomadair: *useless as a shearer*; ghoid iad stuth bho thaigh-seinnse: *they stole material from a pub*; dh'fheuch an t-òstair ri stad a chur orra: *the publican tried to stop them*; peilear tro a bheul: *a bullet through his mouth*; gu fortanach, cha do chaochail e: *fortunately, he did not die*; chuir na poilis seachdad 's a còig notaichean air adhart mar dhuais: *the police put forward £75 as a reward*; còig troighean agus ochd òirlich a dh'àirde: *five feet and eight inches high*; astar mòr air muin-eich: *a big distance on horseback*; bha còmhlain de phoilis a' gluasad timcheall, a' coimhead air an son: *groups of police were moving around, looking for them*; mhothaich iad gun robh e gun fheusag: *they noticed that he had no beard*; rud a bha annasach aig an àm: *something that was strange at the time*; loisg iad air, ach bha e air each luath agus theich e: *they fired upon him, but he was on a fast horse and he fled*; ceala-deug an dèidh sin: *a fortnight after that*; chaidh X a leòn na ghàirdean: *X was wounded in his arm*; boglach far nach b' urrainn do na h-eich leantainn air: *a marsh where the horses could not follow him*; gun fhiosta dha: *without him knowing*; dh'aidich e gum b' e Ailpean Mac a' Phearsain a bh' air: *he admitted that his name was Alpin McPherson*; fo chùram poilis: *in the custody of a police officer*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Chaidh a chur air bòrd soitheach:** *he was put on board a vessel. In theory I might have said air bòrd soithich, using the inflected genitive singular form of the noun following air bòrd, and we would certainly say air bòrd an t-soithich 'on board the vessel' with the article. However, it doesn't feel quite natural to say air bòrd soithich; it might come across as hyper-correct and a bit 'bookish'. So I plumped for air bòrd soitheach. Some Gaelic scholars might disagree and scold me!*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **airson fiosrachadh a bheireadh na mèirlich gu ceartas:** *for information that would bring the robbers to justice.*

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