

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Clann 'ic Coinnich na Cùile (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 fios@learngaelic.scot. This is Litir 1,185. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 881 corresponds to Litir 1,185.

Tha e iongantach na th' ann de dh' àiteachan air feadh an t-saoghail far a bheil 'MacCoinnich' – no 'Mackenzie' – anns an ainm. Seo agaibh feadhainn dhiubh – *Mackenzie County, Alberta; McKenzie, Tennessee; Point MacKenzie, Alasga; Mackenzie, Guyana; Mackenzie Basin, Sealan Nuadh; Mackenzie, Queensland* agus *Mackenzie Bay* ann an Graonlann. Gun luaidh air Eilean MhicCoinnich far Port na h-Abhainne ann an Ìle!

Tha mi airson sùil a thoirt air dà àite a tha **fada bho chèile** far a bheil 'Mackenzie' air na mapaichean. An toiseach gu costa an ear-thuath Ghraonlainn far a bheil *Mackenzie Bay* – Bàgh MhicCoinnich. Chaidh ainmeachadh an toiseach mar *Mackenzie's Inlet* leis an neach-rannsachaidh Shasannach, Uilleam Scoresby, ann an ochd ceud deug, fichead 's a dhà (1822). Faisg air caogad bliadhna an dèidh sin, chaidh ath-ainmeachadh *Mackenzie Bay* le buidheann de luchd-rannsachaidh Gearmailteach.

Ach cò am MacCoinnich a thug ainm dha? Uill, fear de dh'uaislean na Gàidhealtachd – Sir Seòras Stiùbhart MacCoinnich, an seachdamh tighearna no *baronet* dhen ainm. Bhuineadh e don Chùil ann an Cunndainn, faisg air Srath Pheofhair ann an Ros an Ear. Bha deagh chliù is droch chliù aig Seòras, agus tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu dheidhinn.

Rugadh e ann an seachd ceud deug is ochdad (1780). Bha an teaghlach aige beartach agus fhuair e foghlam prìobhaideach. Rinn e ceum ann an saidheans ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann.

Aig aois fichead, choisinn e cliù dha fhèin am measg luchd-saidheans nuair a dhearbhadh e gu bheil daoimeanan air an dèanamh de charbon. Rinn e deuchainnean air dèanamh stàilinn le bhith a' cothlamadh iarann agus daoimeanan. A rèir aithris, 's ann bho sheudraidh a mhàthar a thàinig na daoimeanan! Mar a thuirt mi, 's e teaghlach beartach a bh' ann, eucoltach ris a' chuid mhòir air a' Ghàidhealtachd.

Bha Seòras na bhall de Chomann Rìoghail Dhùn Èideann – agus tro thìde bhiodh ballrachd aige ann an Comann Rìoghail Lunnainn. Bha e cuideachd na cheann-suidhe air Comann Tuathanais-ghàrraidh na h-Alba.

Ach 's ann ann an creag-eòlas agus mèinn-eòlas a bu motha a thog e cliù. Chaidh e air tursan mara gu ruige Innis Tìle agus na h-Eileanan Fàrach, agus sgrìobh e earrannan dhen leabhar '*Travels in Iceland*'. Anns an leabhar sin, chuir e air adhart mìneachadh air mar a bhios giosaran ag obair. Cha robh e riamh ann an Graonlann,

ach bha e ainmeil mar neach-saidheans agus chaidh *Mackenzie Bay* ainmeachadh air a shon.

An-ath-sheachdain, bheir mi sùil a bharrachd air an teaghlach seo – Clann ’ic Coinnich na Cùile – gu h-àraidh ann an co-cheangal ri Tìr na Banrigh ann an Astràilia. Ach thuirt mi na bu tràithe gun robh droch chliù aig Seòras Stiùbhart MacCoinnich.

’S e a bu choireach ri falmhachadh **Inbhir Lathail** faisg air Ullapul. Thòisich am fuadachadh seo air Latha Fèill Màrtainn ann an ochd ceud deug is naoi-deug (1819) agus lean e greis. Ann am meadhan a’ gheamhraidh, chaidh còrr is caogad teaghlach a chur às an dachannan. Bha e brùideil.

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Faclan na Litreach: Graonlann: *Greenland*; Tìr na Banrigh: *Queensland*; costa an ear-thuath: *the north-east coast*; Seòras Stiùbhart MacCoinnich: *George Steuart Mackenzie*; creag-eòlas: *geology*; mèinn-eòlas: *mineralogy*; giosaran: *geysers*; Clann ’ic Coinnich na Cùile: *the Mackenzies of Coul*; Latha Fèill Màrtainn: *Martinmas*; brùideil: *brutal*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Tha e iongantach na th’ ann de dh’àiteachan air feadh an t-saoghail: *it’s amazing how many places around the world*; gun luaidh air Eilean MhicCoinnich far Port na h-Abhainne ann an Ìle: *without mentioning Eilean MhicCoinnich off Portnahaven in Islay*; tha adhbhar agam airson an dà àite sin a thaghadh: *I have a reason for choosing those two places*; tha a’ Chùil ann an Cunndainn, faisg air Srath Pheofhair ann an Ros an Ear: *Coul is in Contin, near Strathpeffer in Easter Ross*; bha deagh chliù is droch chliù aig Seòras: *George had a good reputation and a bad reputation*; ceum ann an saidheans ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann: *a degree in science in the University of Edinburgh*; choisinn e cliù dha fhèin nuair a dhearbha e gu bheil daoimeanan air an dèanamh de charbon: *he developed a reputation for himself when he proved that diamonds are made of carbon*; dèanamh stàilinn le bhith a’ cothlamadh iarann agus daoimeanan: *the manufacture of steel by amalgamating iron and diamonds*; bho sheudraidh a mhàthar: *from his mother’s jewellery*; Comann Tuathanais-ghàrraidh na h-Alba: *Caledonian Horticultural Society*; tursan mara gu ruige Innis Tìle agus na h-Eileanan Fàrach: *maritime journeys to Iceland and the Faroes*; chaidh còrr is caogad teaghlach a chur às an dachannan: *more than fifty families were put out of their homes*; an dèidh an fhuadachaidh: *after the clearance*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: ’s e a bu choireach ri falmhachadh **Inbhir Lathail** faisg air Ullapul: *it was him that was responsible for the clearing of Inverlael near Ullapool. I’ve used the word for ‘emptying’ here rather than the more usual fuadachadh that tends to be used for the Highland Clearances. Another term in use for the same thing is ruagadh, which is the usual term in Sutherland Gaelic. Whatever term we use, it was a brutal process, and George Steuart Mackenzie’s role in throwing out the native population of Inverlael should be remembered when the man’s life achievements are being assessed.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: dà àite a tha **fada bho chèile**: *two places that are far apart from each other.*

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