

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Cidhe a' Chaisteil Ruaidh

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,357. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,053 corresponds to Litir 1,357. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

A bheil sibh eòlach air Linne Fharair? *The Beaully Firth* – an linne-mhara eadar Drochaid Cheasaig agus A' Mhanachainn, siar air Inbhir Nis.

Aig ceann an iar-thuath Linne Fharair, tha an Caisteal Ruadh. Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu dheidhinn ann an Litrichean mìle, ceud is ceathrad (1140) agus mìle, ceud, ceathrad 's a h-aon (1141). Aig a' Chaisteal Ruadh, tha rudeigin annasach. 'S e cidhe a th' ann, ach cidhe neo-àbhaisteach. Tha e caol, dìreach agus uabhasach fhèin fada. Tha e a' stobadh a-mach gu muir, pìos mòr mòr bhon chladach.

An-uiridh, chaidh mi air chuairt gu ceann a-mach a' chidhe. Tha e còmhdaichte an-diugh le feur agus iomadh lus fiadhain eile, agus tha an talamh gu math garbh. Ach tha e follaiseach mar a chaidh a thogail le mac an duine. Ann an cuid de dh'àiteachan tha na clachan spaideil. Bha iad air an dèanamh ann an cumadh ceàrnaichte a dh'aona-ghnothach.

Ach carson a chaidh cidhe a thogail an sin? Chan eil an cladach glan idir. Tha oitirean **làthaich** a' cuairteachadh a' chidhe. Eadhon aig an làn, cha bhiodh doimhneachd mhòr uisge ann. Chanainn gun robhar a' dreideadh sliغه a leigeadh le bàtaichean no bàirdsean faighinn a-mach 's a-steach don chidhe. Agus dè bha na soithichean sin a' giùlan? Bha clach-ghainmhich ruadh bho chuaraidh faisg air a' chidhe. Feumaidh gun robh a' chlach luachmhor.

Tha, agus bha, clach bho chuaraidh a' Chaisteil Ruaidh a' nochdadh ann an grunn àiteachan ann an sgìre Inbhir Nis agus san Eilean Dubh. Am measg sin, tha a' chathair-eaglais anns a' Chananaich, an t-seann mhanachainn ann an Inbhir Nis, seann mhanachainn 'ic Shimidh agus an Caisteal Ruadh fhèin, **a tha a-nise na thobhta**.

Ach nuair a bhathar a' togail thogalaichean ùra, gu tric bhite a' cleachdadh chlachan bho sheann togalaichean. Is cinnteach gu bheil clach a' Chaisteil Ruaidh ri lorg, mar sin, ann an iomadh togalach ann an Inbhir Nis.

Air na fìor sheann mhapaichean, chan eil sgeul air a' chidhe. Ach tha e air a' mhapa aig Aaron Arrowsmith a chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an ochd ceud deug 's a seachd (1807). Bha dà dhiofar bhuidheann an sàs ann a bhith ga thogail.

Anns a' chiad dol a-mach, nuair a bha feachdan pàrlamaideach Chrombail ann an Inbhir Nis ann am meadhan an t-seachdamh linn deug, thog iad dùn no *citadel* aig a' chala. Fhuair iad clach airson sin bhon Chaisteal Ruadh. Agus thog iad an cidhe aig a' Chaisteal Ruadh airson a' chlach a thoirt a-null don làraich-thogail.

Aig toiseach an naoidheamh linn deug roghnaich an fheadhainn a bha a' togail a' Chanàil Chailleannaich clach bhon Chaisteal Ruadh a chleachdadh airson sin. Agus leudaich iad an cidhe. Thog iad loidhne-rèile airson a' chlach a thoirt don chidhe bhon chuaraidh. 'S e eich a bha a' slaodadh nan carbadan.

Aig an toiseach, bha an canàl ag aoidion. Anns na ceathradan dhen naoidheamh linn deug, bha clach bhon Chaisteal Ruadh air a cleachdadh airson obair-càraidh air ballachan a' chanàil. Taobh a-staigh trithead bliadhna on uair sin, chaidh an cuaraidh a dhùnadh. Bha an cidhe air a chleachdadh airson greis mar raon-losgaidh aig na *Ross-shire Volunteers*. Ach a-nise, 's e àite sìtheil a th' ann a tha math airson coimhead air eòin.

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Faclan na Litreach: Linne Fharair: *Beaully Firth*; An Caisteal Ruadh: *Redcastle*; cidhe neo-àbhaisteach: *an unusual pier*; doimhneachd: *depth*; a' giùlan: *carrying*; clach-ghainmhich ruadh: *red sandstone*; san Eilean Dubh: *on the Black Isle*; feachdan pàrlamaideach Chrombail: *Cromwell's parliamentary forces*; loidhne-rèile: *railway*; obair-càraidh: *repair work*; raon-losgaidh: *firing range*.

Abairtean na Litreach: an linne-mhara eadar Drochaid Cheasaig agus A' Mhanachainn: *the firth between the Kessock Bridge and Beaully*; tha e a' stobadh a-mach gu muir: *it sticks out into the sea*; chaidh mi air chuairt gu ceann a-mach a' chidhe: *I went for a walk to the far end of the pier*; air an dèanamh ann an cumadh ceàrnaichte: *made in a squared shape*; chanainn gun robhar a' dreideadh slighe: *I would say that a route was [being] dredged*; a leigeadh le bàtaichean no bàirdsean faighinn a-mach 's a-steach: *that would permit boats or barges to get in and out*; a' chathair-eaglais anns a' Chananaich: *the cathedral in Fortrose*; seann mhanachainn 'ic Shimidh: *the priory at Beaully*; bhite a' cleachdadh chlachan: *stones would be used*; bha dà dhiofar bhuidheann an sàs ann a bhith ga thogail: *two different groups were involved in building it*; airson a' chlach a thoirt a-null don làraich-thogail: *to take the stone over to the building site*; roghnaich an fheadhainn a bha a' togail a' Chanàil Chailleannaich clach bhon Chaisteal Ruadh a chleachdadh: *those that were building the Caledonian Canal chose to use stone from Redcastle*; leudaich iad an cidhe: *they extended the pier*; 's e eich a bha a' slaodadh nan carbadan: *it's horses that were pulling the carriages*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Tha oitirean làthaich a' cuairteachadh a' chidhe: *banks of fine mud surround the pier. As the location is Ross-shire, I have given the Ross-shire pronunciation of làthach which is làghach (this admittedly is from Wester Ross and I can't be certain of how the word was pronounced on the Black Isle). As the word is (presumably) pronounced làthach in many places, this is the standardised spelling but dialectally it has become làghach which is actually easier to say. The famous mountain Liathach in Wester Ross is locally pronounced Liaghach (or Liaghaich) for the same reason.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: an Caisteal Ruadh fhèin, a tha a-nise na thobhta: *[The] Redcastle itself, which is now a ruin.*

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