

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Eas Bhictoria

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. This is Litir 863. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 559 corresponds to Litir 863.

O chionn ghoirid chaidh mi seachad air eas air a bheil ‘Victoria Falls’ mar ainm. ‘O, nach math dhut, a Ruairidh,’ tha sibh ag ràdh, ‘a bhith thall ann an Afraga ann am meadhan a’ gheamhraidh.’ Nise, a chàirdean, chan ann mar sin a bha e idir. Cha robh mi ann an Afraga. Gu dearbh, cha do dh’fhàg mi Alba.

Càite a bheil Victoria Falls ann an Alba, ma-tha? Uill, tha eadar Ceann Loch Iù agus Geàrrloch ann an Ros an Iar. Tha e ann an Abhainn Garbhaig faisg air Slèiteadal ri taobh Loch Ma-ruibhe.

Ach carson fon ghrèin a tha eas le ainm Beurla ann am meadhan dùthaich far a bheil na h-ainmean-àite **cha mhòr gu lèir** ann an Gàidhlig no Lochlannais? Uill, tha e a’ cuimhneachadh cuspair an ainm – a’ Bhanrigh Bhictoria – agus turas a rinn i don sgìre ann an ochd ceud deug, seachdad ’s a seachd (1877).

Chan eil e uile-gu-lèir soilleir carson a chaidh a’ Bhanrigh ann. Bha i measail air a’ Ghàidhealtachd, ceart gu leòr, agus bhiodh i a’ cur seachad mòran ùine ann am Both Mhoireil. Agus as t-Sultain ochd ceud deug, seachdad ’s a seachd (1877), dh’fhàg i Both Mhoireil. Chaidh i fhèin, is buidheann bheag air an tràna gu ruige Obar Dheathain, an uair sin Inbhir Nis, Inbhir Pheofharain agus mu dheireadh a dh’Ach’ na Sìne.

Bha dhà no thrì cheud duine a’ feitheamh rithe ann an Ach’ na Sìne. ’S e sluagh mòr a bha sin ann an sgìre far nach robh mòran a’ fuireach. Ach cuimhnicheamaid gum b’ e Bhictoria Banrigh na h-Ìmpireachd agus Ban-ìmpire nan Innseachan. Bha i rudeigin ainmeil!

Chaidh a’ bhuidheann a thoirt ann an coidse le eich gu ruige Ceann Loch Iù, far an d’ fhuair iad eich ùra aig an taigh-seinnse. Bha fhathast deich mìle aca ri dhol chun a’ chinn-uidhe aca. Ach b’ e sin am pìos a bu bhòidhche dhen turas – mar a tha an-diugh. A bheil àite nas brèagha ann an Alba na Loch Ma-ruibhe, leis na beanntan àrda is coilltean àlainn? Chunnaic a’ Bhanrigh bogha-froise dùbailte os cionn an locha. ’S beag an t-iongnadh gun robh i air a beò-ghlacadh leis an àite.

Ràinig a’ Bhanrigh Taigh-òsta Thealldhadal goirid an dèidh seachd uairean feasgar. Rinn iad glè mhath oir **bha iad air Both Mhoireil fhàgail** air a’ mhadainn sin fhèin, goirid an dèidh naoi uairean. Bha na rathaidean-iarainn air diofar mòr a dhèanamh don ùine a thug e a bhith a’ siubhal bho àite gu àite.

Airson beagan làithean bha a’ Bhanrigh stèidhichte ann an Taigh-òsta Thealldhadal, ged a thug i coidse timcheall na sgìre gu bailtean eile – leithid Gheàrrloch agus Thoirbheartain. Agus thug i turas air bàta a dh’Eilean Ma-ruibhe air

Loch Ma-ruibhe. Ach rinn i mearachd an latha sin. 'S e Latha na Sàbaid a bh' ann agus bha mòran anns an sgìre gu math mì-thoilichte gun robh i, nam beachd-san, a' briseadh na Sàbaid.

Am biodh a' Bhanrigh toilichte gun deach a h-ainm a chur air an eas air Abhainn Garbhaig goirid an dèidh a turais? Chan eil fhios a'm. A rèir choltais, thuirt i nach robh e cho drùidhteach idir ris na h-easan aice fhèin aig Both Mhoireil! Biodh sin mar a bhitheadh e. 'S e 'Victoria Falls' a th' air an eas chun an latha an-diugh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Ceann Loch Iù: *Kinlochewe*; Geàrrloch: *Gairloch*; Ros an Iar: *Wester Ross*; Slèiteadal: *Slattadale*; Loch Ma-ruibhe: *Loch Maree*; uile-gu-lèir: *entirely*; Taigh-òsta Thealldhadal: *Loch Maree Hotel (ie 'Talladale' Hotel)*; rathaidean-iarainn: *railway lines (old-fashioned term)*; mearachd: *mistake*.

Abairtean na Litreach: seachad air eas: *past a waterfall*; nach math dhut: *isn't that good for you (slightly ironic)*; thall ann an Afraga ann am meadhan a' gheamhraidh: *over in Africa in the middle of winter*; chan ann mar sin a bha e idir: *that's not how it was at all*; gu ruige Obar Dheathain, an uair sin Inbhir Nis, Inbhir Pheofharain agus mu dheireadh a dh'Ach' na Sine: *to Aberdeen, then Inverness, Dingwall and finally to Achnasheen*; cuimhnicheamaid gum b' e Bhictoria Ban-ìmpire nan Innseachan: *let's remember that Victoria was Empress of India*; bha i rudeigin ainmeil!: *she was somewhat well-known!*; far an d' fhuair iad eich ùra: *where they got new horses*; beanntan àrda is coilltean àlainn: *high mountains and beautiful woods*; bogha-froise dùbailte os cionn an locha: *a double rainbow above the loch*; 's beag an t-iongnadh gun robh i air a beò-ghlacadh leis an àite: *it's hardly surprising she was captivated by the place*; gun robh i, nam beachd-san, a' briseadh na Sàbaid: *that she was, in their opinion, breaking the Sabbath*; gun deach a h-ainm a chur air an eas: *that her name was given to the waterfall*; nach robh e cho drùidhteach idir ris na h-easan aice fhèin aig Both Mhoireil: *that it wasn't nearly as impressive as her own falls at Balmoral*; biodh sin mar a bhitheadh e: *be that as it may*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha iad air Both Mhoireil fhàgail air a' mhadainn sin fhèin: *they had left Balmoral on that same morning*. This is a way to create the pluperfect verbal form ie referring to something that happened earlier than the time being considered, when the time being considered is already in the past. We use the past tense of the verb 'to be' and the preposition air, a modern of iar 'after'; we are literally saying 'they were after leaving Balmoral'. Here is a couple of other examples: bha iad air a dhol craicte roimhe sin 'they had gone crazy before that'; bha mi air dealbh a thogail dheth leis a' chamara, a' dearbhadh gun robh e ann 'I had taken a picture of him with the camera, proving that he was there'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: far a bheil na h-ainmean-àite cha mhòr gu lèir ann an Gàidhlig no Lochlannais: *where the place-names are almost entirely in Gaelic or Norse*.

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