

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Clach na h-Aifrinn (2)

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 1,382. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,078 corresponds to Litir 1,382. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha sinn a' toirt sùil air Clach na h-Aifrinn ann an Gleann Ruaidh ann am Bràigh Loch Abar. Mar a bha mi ag innse dhuibh, chaidh a' chlach a ghluasad don àite, ri taobh an rathaid, far a bheil i an-diugh. Agus rinn cuideigin snaigheadh oirre. Tha trì rudan snaighte oirre – cailis, abhlan agus na litrichean I-H-S.

Tha na rudan sin co-cheangailte ris an aifreann anns an Eaglais Chaitligich. Tha am facal *cailis* – agus a' Bheurla *chalice* – a' tighinn bhon Laidinn *calix*, a' ciallachadh 'copan-fiona'. Anns an aifreann, tha am fion, a th' air a mheasgachadh le uisge coisrigte anns a' chailis, a' riochdachadh fuil Chrìosda. Tha an ìomhaigh de chailis air Clach na h-Aifrinn gu math soilleir eadhon an-diugh.

Os cionn na cailise air Clach na h-Aifrinn tha ìomhaigh de dh'abhlan coisrigte no aran sàcramaideach. Bidh muinntir coitheanail a' faighinn an abhlain a bharrachd air an fhòn mar phàirt dhen aifreann.

Tha na litrichean I-H-S a' riochdachadh Ìosa leis na ciad trì litrichean de a chiad ainm. Ann an Laidinn, bhite an dùil I-E-S a bhith ann airson 'Jesus' ach bha I-H-S stèidhichte air an t-seann aibidil Ghreugais **a cheart cho math** ris an Laidinn. Tha Caitligich air feadh an t-saoghail ag aithneachadh I-H-S mar shamhla de dh'Ìosa Crìosd.

Mar sin, eadhon ged nach biodh a' chlach air a cur gu feum tuilleadh airson aifreann, tha na h-ìomhaighean a th' oirre ag innse dhuinn gur e sin dha-rìreabh Clach na h-Aifrinn agus gun robh aifrinnean air an cumail na cois ann an Gleann Ruaidh fada air ais.

Agus cò rinn an snaigheadh oirre? Uill, **a rèir choltais**, b' e fear Dòmhnall Caimbeul Mac a' Phearsain. 'S ann às a' ghleann a bha e. 'S e sgoilear na Gàidhlig a bh' ann. Thathar a' smaoineachadh gun do rinn e na h-ìomhaighean timcheall na bliadhna ochd ceud deug is seachdad (1870).

Chan eil fios againn cuin mu dheireadh a bha aifreann air a chumail an cois na cloiche. Chan eil uiread de dhaoine a' fuireach ann an Gleann Ruaidh an-diugh an coimeas ris na bh' ann san naoidheamh linn deug – agus ghluais na seirbheisean creideimh don eaglais ann an Drochaid Ruaidh.

Ach tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu rudeigin iongantach a chaidh a lorg anns an allt far an robh Clach na h-Aifrinn suidhichte an toiseach. B' e sin soitheach-aifrinn no, mar a chanar ri a leithid ann am Beurla, a mass cruets. Bha na soitheachan sin a' cumail uisge no fion ann a bhiodh mar phàirt dhen aifreann. Chaidh soitheach dhen t-seòrsa a lorg anns an allt sin le fear Aonghas Camshron timcheall na bliadhna ochd ceud deug is ochdad (1880).

Tha an soitheach gu math beag agus air a dhèanamh de dh'airgead. Air an taobh dheth, tha an litir 'A' air a snaigheadh. Tha sin a' seasamh airson 'aqua', a' sealltainn gun robhar ga chleachdadh airson uisge, seach fion. Bha an soitheach air a dhèanamh anns na tritheadan dhen naoidheamh linn deug ann am Baile Atha Cliath ann an Èirinn.

Tha dùil gun robh an soitheach air a chleachdadh leis an aon sagart a bha a' dèanamh na h-aifrinn an cois na cloiche. Nach iongantach sin! Ma tha ùidh agaibh, chì sibh an soitheach ann an Taigh-tasgaidh Taobh an Iar na Gàidhealtachd anns a' Ghearasdan.

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Faclan na Litreach: Clach na h-Aifrinn: *The Mass Stone*; Gleann Ruaidh: *Glen Roy*; Bràigh Loch Abar: *Brae Lochaber*; Dòmhnall Caimbeul Mac a' Phearsain: *Donald Campbell MacPherson*; soitheach-aifrinn: *mass vessel (cruet)*; Aonghas Camshron: *Angus Cameron*.

Abairtean na Litreach: rinn cuideigin snaigheadh oirre: *somebody carved on it*; cailis, abhlan agus na litrichean I-H-S: *a chalice, a (consecrated) wafer and the letters I-H-S*; tha am fion, a th' air a mheasgachadh le uisge coisrigte anns a' chailis, a' riochdachadh fuil Chrìosda: *the wine, which is mixed with consecrated water in the chalice, represents the blood of Christ*; ìomhaigh de dh'abhlan coisrigte no aran sàcramaideach: *an image of a consecrated wafer or sacramental bread*; a' riochdachadh Ìosa leis na ciad trì litrichean de a chiad ainm: *represent Jesus with the first three letters of his first name*; tha Caitligich air feadh an t-saoghail ag aithneachadh I-H-S mar shamhla de dh'Ìosa Crìosd: *Catholics throughout the world recognise I-H-S as a symbol of Jesus Christ*; eadhon ged nach biodh a' chlach air a cur gu feum tuilleadh airson aifreann: *even should the stone not be used again for mass*; gun robh aifrinnean air an cumail na cois: *that mass was held in its vicinity*; tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu rudeigin iongantach a chaidh a lorg: *I want to tell you about something amazing that was found*; anns an allt far an robh X suidhichte an toiseach: *in the burn where X was situated originally*; a' sealltainn gun robhar ga chleachdadh airson uisge, seach fion: *showing that it was used for water, rather than wine*; anns na tritheadan dhen naoidheamh linn deug: *in the 1830s*; Baile Atha Cliath ann an Èirinn: *Dublin in Ireland*; ma tha ùidh agaibh: *if you are interested*; chì sibh X: *you can see X*; Taigh-tasgaidh Taobh an Iar na Gàidhealtachd anns a' Ghearasdan: *The West Highland Museum in Fort William*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **a rèir choltais: apparently.** *Literally, this means ‘according to appearance’. The word coltas means ‘appearance’ (the ‘t’ is pronounced or not according to dialect). But the noun is here commanded by the compound preposition a rèir which takes (as with all compound prepositions) the genitive case. Thus coltas becomes coltais. However, you will also hear coltais lenited to choltais, probably because the genitivisation with the article would give us a’ choltais. Both a rèir coltais and a rèir choltais are acceptable – go with whatever is used in your community or by your teacher or friends.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **a cheart cho math ris an Laidinn: just as much as the Latin.**