

# *Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh*

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at 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, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \**

Bha uaireigin, a reir beul-aithris, fear ann a bha a’ fuireach air eilean ann an loch no ’s dòcha anns an abhainn ann an Gleann Dochar ann am Braghaid Albainn air an robh Taileachd mac Cuilgeadain mar ainm. Bha leannan-sìthe aige ach cha b’ esan an aon fhear aig an robh ùidh anns a’ bhoireannach bhrèagha a bha sin. Chuala Fionn mac Cumhail mu a deidhinn agus chaidh esan don àite airson coinneachadh rithe. Bu mhòr a chord e ris a bhith na cuideachd.

Dh’fhàs an dithis fhear eudach mu chèile agus, gus nach biodh iad a’ sabaid air a son, chuir a’ bhan-sìthe farpais air dòigh eatarra – farpais lèim. Leum Taileachd bhon eilean gu talamh tioram air tir-mòr, agus rinn Fionn an dearbh rud, agus a cheart cho sgiobalta. An uair sin thuir Taileachd, ‘Leumaidh mi a-rithist ach an comhair mo chùil an turas seo. Mura dean thu fhèin an aon rud, ’s e mi-fhìn a bhuannaicheas.’

Leum Taileachd an toiseach, agus rinn e an gnothach, an comhair a chùil. Ach nuair a leum Fionn, ’s ann a thuit e ann an uisge domhainn – suas gu amhaich. Mus d’ fhuair e cothrom faighinn a-mach, gheàrr Taileachd a cheann dheth. Theich Taileachd an uair sin le ceann Fhinn na chois gus an do ràinig e abhainn ann an Raineach far an do chuir e air stob e air tom faisg air àth ris an canadh daoine bho sin a-mach Àth Chinn.

Nuair a fhuair na Fianna, na gaisgich aig Fionn, lorg air a chorp, agus e as aonais a chinn, thug iad air falbh e agus thiodhlaic iad e aig ceann Loch Tatha ann an àite ris an canar an-diugh Cill Fhinn. Chaidh iad an uair sin an tòir air ceann a’ ghaisgich agus lorg iad e aig Àth Chinn. Chuir fear aca corrag fo fhiacail ann an claigeann Fhinn – fiacail an eòlais – agus fhuair iad fios mar sin gu robh Taileachd am falach ann an uamh air Beinn Eallair. Chaidh iad don bheinn agus fhuair iad greim air.

‘A bheil thu a’ gabhail aithreachas airson Fionn a mhurt?’ dh’fhaighnich iad dheth. ‘Chan eil,’ fhreagair Taileachd, ‘mura gabh Goll aithreachas airson geur-leanmhainn a dhèanamh air Clann Chuilgeadain.’ Airson sin a ràdh, chaidh a làmh cheart a ghearradh dheth. Agus an uair sin a làmh cheàrr.

‘A bheil thu a’ gabhail aithreachas airson Fionn a mhurt?’ dh’fhaighnich na Fiann’ a-rithist. ‘Cha gabh mi aithreachas,’ fhreagair Taileachd, ‘mura gabh Goll aithreachas airson geur-leanmhainn a dhèanamh air Clann Chuilgeadain.’ Tharraing na daoine eile tè de chasan dheth an uair sin le clobha mòr iarainn agus phronn iad a chas eile le leacan cruaidh a thog iad far na beinne creagaich.

Agus chuir iad a’ cheist a-rithist. ‘A bheil thu a’ gabhail aithreachas airson na rinn thu air Fionn?’ Ach fhuair iad an dearbh fhreagairt bho Thaileachd agus loisg iad a shùilean le leann goileach. Chuir iad a’ cheist a-rithist agus, airson an turas mu dheireadh, dhiùlt Taileachd aithreachas a ghabhail. B’ e sin e. Chuir na Fianna an uair sin an cuid sleaghan tro chridhe Thaileachd.

Agus sin mar a fhuair Fionn mac Cumhail bàs ann an Gleann Dochar is mar a fhuair a mhurtair bàs air Beinn Eallair, is mar a fhuair Cill Fhinn ainm. Uill, a rèir beul-

aithris co-dhiù. Ach ann an sgìrean eile, thathar a' cumail a-mach gu bheil Fionn agus a chàirdean air an tiodhlacadh acasan. Is tha cuid ag ràdh nach eil iad marbh nas mò, ach gu bheil iad dìreach nan suain, is iad a' feitheamh cothrom èirigh a-rithist.

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**Faclan na seachdainne:** Gleann Dochart: *Glen Dochart*; Braghaid Albainn: *Breadalbane*; leannan-sìthe: *fairy sweetheart*; eudach: *jealous*; a' bhan-sìthe: *the fairy woman*; farpais-lèim: *jumping contest*; Raineach: *Rannoch*; tom: *hillock*; àth: *ford*; Cill Fhinn: *Killin (in reality almost certainly not named for Fionn!)*; clobha: *tongs*; leacan: *slabs*.

**Abairtean na seachdainne:** cha b' esan an aon fhear aig an robh ùidh ann an X: *he wasn't the only man who had an interest in X*; bu mhòr a chòrd e ris a bhith na cuideachd: *he greatly enjoyed being in her company*; agus a cheart cho sgiobalta: *and just as nimbly*; 's e mi-fhìn a bhuannaicheas: *it is myself that will win*; 's ann a thuit e ann an uisge domhainn: *he fell in deep water*; gheàrr Taileachd a cheann dheth: *Taileachd cut his head off*; le ceann Fhinn na chois: *with Fionn's head (along with him)*; ris an canadh daoine bho sin a-mach Àth Chinn: *which people called from then on the Ford of (the) Head*; agus e as aonais a chinn: *and it (the body) without its head*; fo fhiacail ann an claigeann Fhinn: *under a tooth in Fionn's skull (head)*; am falach ann an uamh air Beinn Eallair: *hiding in a cave on Ben Alder*; a bheil thu a' gabhail aithreachas airson X?: *do you repent/regret X?*; chaidh a làmh cheart a ghearradh dheth: *his right hand was cut off*; phronn iad a chas eile: *they crushed his other leg*; loisg iad a shùilean le leann goileach: *they burned his eyes with boiling beer*; chuir iad an cuid sleaghan tro X: *they put their spears through X*; gu bheil Fionn agus a chàirdean air an tiodhlacadh acasan: *that Fionn and his friends are buried in their area (lit. at them)*; gu bheil iad dìreach nan suain: *that they are merely asleep*.

**Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne:** Leumaidh mi a-rithist ach an comhair mo chùil an turas seo: *I'll jump again but backwards this time*. Comhair is a feminine noun which means a direction or tendency. In the example above it refers to a movement in a particular direction ie literally 'in the direction of my back'. You will notice that because comhair is also a noun, the second noun is in the genitive case: in cùil both the 'ù' and the 'l' are slenderised compared with the nominative cùl. In the second example in the Litir, 'rinn e an gnothach, an comhair a chùil', he managed it, backwards, the possessive adjective is now the masculine third person singular. Compare this with thuit i an comhair a cùil (she fell backwards), thuit thu an comhair do chùil (you fell backwards). The equivalent describing forward motion for the first person singular (commonly used for falling forwards headfirst) is an comhair mo chinn using the genitive of ceann, head, eg thuit mi an comhair mo chinn. Or thuit e an comhair a chinn (he fell forwards, headlong). An alternative for the same type of movement would be eg thuit mi an comhair mo bhedil, using the genitive of beul, mouth. If you want to say I fell sideways you would say, 'thuit mi an comhair mo thaoibh'. Hopefully you won't have to say any of them too often!

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne:** mura gabh Goll aithreachas airson geur-leanmhainn a dhèanamh air Clann Chuilgeadain: *if Goll does not repent for his persecution of Clann Chuilgeadain (ie Taileachd's family)*. Tha X a' dèanamh geur-leanmhainn air Y: *X is persecuting Y*.

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