

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 at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 310. Note that Roddy also broadcasts a simplified version – An Litir Bheag – on Monday evenings at 7.00 pm. This is also available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 6 corresponds to Litir 310.*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu choin a bhith a’ dèanamh donnal – uaireannan ris a’ ghealaich, nuair a tha a’ ghealach làn. Uill, tha sin fìor, ach uaireannan bidh coin a’ comhartaich ris a’ ghealaich cuideachd.

Tha seanfhacal againn a tha a’ buntainn air sin: *Cha mhist’ a’ ghealach na coin a bhith [a’] comhartaich rithe.* Cha mhist’ a’ ghealach na coin a bhith comhartaich rithe. Tha sin a’ ciallachadh nach dèan e cron sam bith air a’ ghealaich gu bheil coin a’ comhartaich rithe.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun leabhar ùr aig Ragnall MacIlleDhuibh – *The Gaelic Otherworld* – a tha stèidhichte air dà sheann leabhar le Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul. Chruinnich an Caimbeulach beul-aithris, am measg eile, a bha co-cheangailte ris an droch-shùil.

Nam fasadh pàiste tinn, gun fhios carson, chuireadh a phàrantan a dh’iarraidh cailleach ghlic. Chuireadh a’ chailleach uisge glan ann am bobhla, agus chuireadh i crotag, sin bonn-airgid leth-thastain, anns a’ bhobhla. Bhiodh i gu sgiobalta a’ cur a’ bhobhla bun-os-cionn. Nan leanadh am bonn-airgid ri bonn a’ bhobhla, bhiodh sin a’ ciallachadh gu robh am pàiste air a chronachadh leis an droch-shùil.

An uair sin dè thachradh? Uill, seo mar a mhìnich fear à Tiriodh an gnothach. “Nuair a bha mi nam bhalach,” thuir e, “chaidh mi gu taigh nàbaidh... Bha pàiste anns an taigh a bha uabhasach tinn. Thug cailleach bobhla a bha leth-làn de dh’uisge, chuir i air a glùn e, agus thòisich i air dranndan a dhèanamh os a chionn... An dèidh greis, thòisich a’ chailleach air mèaranaich agus chan fhaca mi a leithid de mhèaranaich a-riamh. Rinn i mèaran an dèidh mèaran gus an robh mi a’ smaoineachadh gu robh i a’ dol a bhàsachadh. Bhogadh spògan a’ chait anns a’ bhobhla, agus snàithlean dearg... an dèidh dha a bhith air a bhogadh anns an uisge cuideachd – bha [an snàithlean] air a chur timcheall amhaich a’ phàiste.”

Tha an Caimbeulach ag innse dhuinn rudeigin inntinneach mu dheidhinn an uisge a bha anns a’ bhobhla. Sgrìobh e gur e “uisge casan an t-sealgair” a dh’fheumadh a bhith ann. Uisge casan an t-sealgair. Mar bu trice, b’ e cat an sealgair a b’ fhasa air am faigheadh na daoine grèim.

’S e an “dranndan” a chuala am balach a’ gheas. Bha a’ chailleach a’ cur an uisge agus an snàithlean fo gheas. Ach carson a bha a’ chailleach a’ mèaranaich? Uill, a rèir choltais, bha sin a’ tachairt nuair a bha tinneas, a bh’ air a’ phàiste, a’ falbh às. Cha robh an tinneas dìreach a’ sgapadh don iarmailt, ge-tà. Bha e a’ dol thairis don chaillich. Is bha an tinneas a’ toirt air a’ chaillich mèaranan mòra a dhèanamh.

Tha mi an dòchas nach eil sibh fhèin a' mèaranaich an-dràsta. Ma tha, chan eil e a' ciallachadh gu bheil tinneas oirbh. 'S e dìreach gu bheil mi air a bhith a' bruidhinn ro fhada. Sguiridh mi a-nise! Beannachd leibh.

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Faclan na seachdainne: luchd-poileataics: *politicians*; Ragnall MacIlleDhuibh: *Ronald Black*; Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul: *John Gregorson Campbell*; stèidhichte: *based*; an droch-shùil: *the evil eye*; crotag: *[silver] sixpence*; nàbaidh: *neighbour*; geas: *spell, charm*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: mu choin a bhith a' dèanamh donnal: *about dogs howling*; uaireannan bidh coin a' comhartaich ris a' ghealaich: *sometimes dogs bark at the moon*; nach dèan e cron sam bith air X: *that it won't damage X at all*; nam fasadh pàiste tinn: *if a child grew ill*; chuireadh i bonn-airgid leth-thastain: *she would put a silver coin worth half a shilling (sixpence)*; nan leanadh am bonn-airgid ri bonn a' bhobhla: *if the silver coin stuck to the bottom of the bowl*; dè thachradh?: *what would happen?*; chuir i air a glùin e: *she put it on her knee*; thòisich i air dranndan a dhèanamh os a chionn: *she started to murmur above it*; chan fhaca mi a leithid de mhèaranaich a-riamh: *I never saw yawning like it*; gus an robh mi a' smaoinachadh gu robh i a' dol a bhàsachadh: *until I thought she was going to die*; uisge casan an t-sealgair: *water of the hunter's foot*; b' e cat an sealgair a b' fhasa air am faigheadh na daoine grèim: *a cat was the hunter which was easiest for the people to find*; nuair a bha tinneas a' falbh às: *when the disease was leaving [the child]*; a' sgapadh don iarmailt: *disappearing into the ether*; tha mi an dòchas nach eil sibh a' mèaranaich an-dràsta: *I hope you are not yawning just now*; gu bheil mi air a bhith a' bruidhinn ro fhada: *that I have been speaking too long*; sguiridh mi a-nise: *I'll stop now*.

Puing-chànain na seachdainne: Bhogadh spògan a' chait anns a' bhobhla, agus snàithlean dearg... an dèidh dha a bhith air a bhogadh anns an uisge cuideachd – bha [an snàithlean] air a chur timcheall amhaich a' phàiste (*the cat's paws were immersed in the bowl, and a red thread ... after it too had been immersed in the water [the thread] was put around the child's neck*). The word *bhogadh* appears twice here, and both are passive verb constructions, but they are not grammatically identical. The first one is the past passive form of *bog* (cf *chuireadh* = *was put*, *rinneadh* = *was made*). *Bhogadh* na spògan (*the paws were immersed*). In some dialects, the “dh” ending is replaced by an “r” in such constructions, ie *bhogar* an snàithlean (*the thread was immersed*). The second occurrence of *bhogadh* is the verbal noun used with the preposition *air* (originally *iar*), meaning “after”, to make it passive. Bha an snàithlean air a bhogadh (*the thread was immersed*); bha na spògan air am bogadh (*the paws were immersed*); bha sinn air ar bogadh (*we were immersed*).

Seanfhacal na seachdainne: Cha mhist' a' ghealach na coin a bhith [a'] comhartaich rithe: *the moon is none the worse for the dogs barking at it*.

* Tha “*Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh*” air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig