

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*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 [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) This is Litir 405. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 101 corresponds to Litir 405.*

A bheil sibh eòlach air an ainm-àite – *Auchenshuggle* – ann an Glaschu? Tha sin a’ tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig **Achadh an t-Seagail** – *the field of the rye*. Uill, tha cnoc ann an Àird Chlach, eadar Inbhir Narann is Baile nan Granndach, air a bheil *Tomashoggle* (ann am Beurla). Ann an Gàidhlig ’s e sin Tom an t-Seagail – *the hillock of the rye*. ’S e seagal an aon rud a dh’fhàsadh ann, a rèir choltais, oir bha an talamh cho bochd.

Ach fon tom bha sìthichean a’ fuireach. Oidhche a bha seo nochd sìthiche air beulaibh a’ chroiteir a bha ag obrachadh na talmhainn an sin. Dh’iarr e air a’ chroitear min a thoirt dha oir bha e gann de bhiadh. Thug an croitear min dha.

Beagan oidhcheannan às dèidh sin thill an sìthiche. Thug e min shònraichte seachad – nach fhàsadh gann fhad ’s a chumadh an croitear is a’ bhean aige an gnothach dìomhair. Ach air Oidhche Shamhna, thuirt bean a’ chroiteir rudeigin mu “mhin nan sìthichean” nuair a bha daoine eile a-staigh aca agus, anns a’ mhadainn, bha ciste na mine falamh agus cha robh sgeul tuilleadh air min nan sìthichean.

Ann an Àird Chlach tha togalach beag annasach ris an canar Tùr-cluig Àird Chlach no *Ardclach Bell Tower*. Tha e air cnoc os cionn seann eaglais na sgìre, a tha ri taobh Uisge Èireann. ’S e sgìre thorrach a th’ ann agus bhiodh na fineachan à taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd gu tric a’ togail creach innte – a’ goid crodh bho mhuinntir an àite.

Chaidh an tùr a thogail ann an sia ceud deug, caogad ’s a còig (1655). Ged a tha e sean, tha e fhathast ann an deagh òrdugh agus ’s fhiach a dhol ga fhaicinn. Air mullach an togalaich bha an clag. Bhiodh daoine ga sheinn nuair a thigeadh na creachadairean. Bha sin airson rabhadh a thoirt do mhuinntir an àite gun robh cunnart ann. Aig bonn an togalaich, bha cealla dhorch anns am biodh eucoirich – no daoine a bha a’ togail creach – air an cur.

Ged a tha an togalach ann an deagh òrdugh, chan eil an clag ann an-diugh. A rèir beul-aithris, dh’fhàs na fineachan bhon taobh an iar cho seachd searbh sgìth dheth, ’s gun do ghoid feadhainn aca e. Às aonais a’ chluig, cha bhiodh dòigh mhath aig muinntir Àird Chlach airson fios a sgaoileadh gu robh na creachadairean ann.

Chaidh buidheann bheag de chreachadairean ann oidhche dhorch a bha seo. Choisich iad san abhainn an toiseach. Nuair a ràinig iad nàbaidheachd an tùr-chluig, chaidh iad a-mach às an abhainn is chaidh iad suas am bruthach. Ràinig iad an tùr. Gu sgiobalta, shaoraich iad an clag bhon uidheamachd a bha ceangailte ris. Thuit an clag don làr. Is iongantach mura rinn e fuaim mòr!

Co-dhiù, lean iad orra agus chuir iad teine ris an togalach. Feumaidh gu robh an tùr air a dheagh thogail oir, mar a bha mi ag ràdh, tha e fhathast na sheasamh. Fhad ’s a bha an

togalach a' losgadh, agus na lasairean a' soilleireachadh na h-oidhche, roilig na creachadairean an clag sìos am bruthach a dh'ionnsaigh na h-aibhne. Chaidh e a-steach don uisge ann an linne dhorch aig bonn creige.

Bha e ann an sin airson ùine mhòir agus **cò aige tha fios** nach eil e san abhainn fhathast. Oir, a rèir beul-aithris, aig toiseach an fhicheadamh linn, nuair a bhiodh an abhainn a' sruthadh gu làidir, bhiodh muinntir an àite a' cluinntinn fuaim car coltach ri clag a' tighinn bhon uisge.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Àird Chlach: *Ardclach*; Inbhir Narann: *Nairn*; Baile nan Granndach: *Grantown on Spey*; min: *meal*; Oidhche Shamhna: *Halloween*; tùr-cluig: *bell-tower*; Uisge Èireann: *Findhorn River*; clag: *bell*; creachadairean: *plunderers*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** a bheil sibh eòlach air?: *do you know/recognise?*; an aon rud a dh'fhàsadh ann: *the one thing that would grow there*; fon tom bha sìthichean a' fuireach: *under the hill lived fairies*; air beulaibh a' chroiteir: *in front of the crofter*; ag obrachadh na talmhainn: *working the land*; nach fhàsadh gann: *that wouldn't go scarce (ie that wouldn't be used up)*; fhad 's a chumadh X an gnothach dìomhair: *as long as X kept the matter a secret*; nuair a bha daoine eile a-staigh aca: *when they had visitors*; bha ciste na mine falamh: *the meal chest was empty*; bhiodh na fineachan à taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd gu tric a' togail creach innte: *the clans from the West Highlands would often plunder there*; ann an deagh òrdugh: *in good repair*; 's fhiach a dhol ga fhaicinn: *it's worth going to see*; bhiodh daoine ga sheinn: *people would ring it*; cealla dhorch anns am biodh eucoirich air an cur: *a dark cell in which criminals would be put*; cho seachd searbh sgìth dheth: *so sick of it*; 's gun do ghoid feadhainn aca e: *that some of them stole it*; às aonais a' chluig: *without the bell*; shaoraich iad an clag bhon uidheamachd a bha ceangailte ris: *they freed the bell from the equipment connected to it*; is iongantach mura rinn e fuaim mòr: *I reckon it made a big noise (it is surprising if it did not make a big noise)*; lean iad orra: *they continued*; agus na lasairean a' soilleireachadh na h-oidhche: *with the flames lighting up the night*; roilig X an clag sìos am bruthach: *X rolled the bell down the hillside*; a dh'ionnsaigh na h-aibhne: *towards the river*; bhiodh muinntir an àite a' cluinntinn fuaim car coltach ri clag: *the local people would hear a noise rather like a bell*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **Achadh an t-Seagail:** *the field of the rye. Most of our names for crop plants appear to be of Celtic origin eg coirce (oats), eòrna (barley) and cruithneachd (wheat), although the first may be related to the Latin ceres (grain), from which is derived the English cereal. But seagal (rye) has a different pedigree – it comes from the Latin secale. Cabbage appears to have been introduced to Britain by the Romans and the Latin word caulis became càl in Gaelic. However, it appears that the Celts of Britain were growing rye in pre-Roman times so I cannot explain why our ancestors adopted (and adapted) the Latin name. Do any of you have an explanation?*

**Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach:** **cò aige tha fios** (nach eil e san abhainn fhathast): *who knows (that it's not still in the river).*

\* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig.