

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 rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 406. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 102 corresponds to Litir 406.

O chionn fhada bha fear air an robh Calum Beag mar ainm a’ fuireach ann an Àird Chlach. Bha taigh aige faisg air Uisge Èireann, far a bheil an talamh àrd, garbh ag èirigh bhon talamh ìosal, thorrach. Tha ainm sònraichte air a’ cheàrnaidh sin ann am Beurla – *The Streens*. Tha mi cinnteach nach cuir e iongnadh sam bith oirbh nuair a dh’innseas mi dhuibh gur ann bhon Ghàidhlig a thàinig an t-ainm.

Gu mionaideach tha na *Streens* – no *Streens of Findhorn* – a’ ciallachadh pàirt dhen abhainn – sin Uisge Èireann, no *the Findhorn River*. Agus seo na sgrìobh an sàr-eòlaiche, Uilleam MacBhàtair, mun ghnòthach: *Na Srianai bh, the Streens of Findhorn, the Bridles, dative-locative plural of srian, a bridle – a graphic and appropriate name for this remarkable gorge*. Leis gu bheil an tuiseal tabhartach iolra, *the dative plural*, air a dhol à bith ann an Gàidhlig, chanainn gur e *Na Srianan* a bu nàdarraiche a ghabhadh sinn air an àite sin an-diugh. Agus, gu dearbh, ’s e sin a th’ aig Iain Mac an Tàilleir air an liosta aigesan de dh’ainmean-àite, a ghabhas leughadh air an eadar-lìon: *Na Srianan. “The Restraint” referring to narrows in the River Findhorn*.

Co-dhiù, air ais gu Calum Beag. Bha Calum cliùiteach – no ’s dòcha mì-chliùiteach – airson nam plòighean a bh’ aige, agus e a’ goid sprèidh. Bhiodh e tric a’ faighinn grèim air mart, a bha le cuideigin eile, agus a’ teicheadh leis gu àite faisg air an taigh aige fhèin. Cha chumadh e a h-uile pìos dhen fheadhail dha fhèin, ge-tà. Bha e gu math fialaidh – do mhuinntir nan Srianan co-dhiù. Agus mar sin fhuair e taic gu leòr bho mhuinntir an àite.

Nuair a bha e na ghille, bha Calum ag obair mar bhuachaille do dh’Fhear Chaladair aig Caisteal Chaladair. Latha samhraidh a bha seo, bha e a’ buachailleachd treud de chrodh Gàidhealach nuair a thàinig còmhlan de cheatharnaich a-nuas air. Chuir iad an grèim e. Thòisich na ceatharnaich air slighe a dh’ionnsaigh taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd. **Bha an crodh ann an toiseach**, an uair sin Calum, **leis na creachadairean aig an deireadh**. Dè fon ghreìn a bha Calum a’ dol a dhèanamh?

Uill, bha breacan air a bhiodh aithnichte don a h-uile duine anns an sgìre. Thòisich e air mìrean dhen bhreacan a ghearradh dheth is a leigeil don talamh. Cha do mhothaich na ceatharnaich do na bha e a’ dèanamh. Air an làrna-mhàireach bha muinntir Chaladair a-muigh, a’ coimhead airson a’ chruidh, nuair a lorg fear pìos breacain. Thuig e gur e pìos de bhreacan Chalum a bh’ ann. Chaidh dàrna pìos a lorg agus mar sin **lean iad an rathad a ghabh Calum is na ceatharnaich**.

Fhuair iad lorg orra ann an ceann shuas Srath Èireann. Bha na ceatharnaich, agus am prìosanach, nan suidhe ann an lagan, a’ ròstadh mart. Fhuair muinntir Chaladair an crodh air

ais agus fhuair Calum Beag duais bhon uachdaran airson na rinn e. Ge-tà, cha b' fhada gus am biodh e fhèin a' goid crodh!

Nuair a chaochail a phàrantan, fhuair Calum an taigh aca anns na Srianan. Bha sin ann an àite ris an canar *Straneorn* ann am Beurla. Tha mi a' dèanamh dheth gur e sin Srath an Eòrna. Phòs Calum tè bhon talamh ìosal ach bha i gu math dìleas dha a thaobh na dòigh-beatha aige. Lean Calum air le bhith a' faighinn grèim air sprèidh a bhuineadh do dhaoine eile. Bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air a bheatha anns an ath Litir.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Àird Chlach: *Ardclach*; Uisge Èireann: *Findhorn River*; ceàrnaidh: *locality*; mì-chliùiteach: *infamous*; sprèidh: *livestock*; mart: *cow, steer*; fialaidh: *generous*; Caisteal Chaladair: *Cawdor Castle*; phòs: *married*.

Abairtean na Litreach: fear air an robh Calum Beag mar ainm: *a man called wee Calum*; ag èirigh bhon talamh ìosal, thorrach: *rising from the low, fertile country*; nach cuir e iongnadh sam bith oirbh: *that it won't surprise you at all*; seo na sgrìobh an sàr-eòlaiche, Uilleam MacBhàtair: *this is what the expert, William J Watson, wrote*; air a dhol à bith: *has become extinct*; chanainn gur e X a bu nàdarraiche a ghabhadh sinn air: *I'd say that it is X that we would most naturally call*; airson nam plòighean a bh' aige: *for his ploys*; a bha le cuideigin eile: *which belonged to somebody else*; cha chumadh e a h-uile pìos dhen fheòil dha fhèin: *he wouldn't keep all the meat to himself*; bha e a' buachailleachd treud de chrodh Gàidhealach: *he was tending a herd of Highland cattle*; thòisich na ceatharnaich air slighe a dh'ionnsaigh taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd: *the caterans started on a route towards the West Highlands*; thòisich e air mìrean dhen bhreacan a ghearradh dheth: *he started to cut small pieces of the plaid*; chaidh dàrna pìos a lorg: *a second piece was found*; ann an ceann shuas Srath Èireann: *at the upper end of Strathdearn*; nan suidhe ann an lagan, a' ròstadh mart: *sitting in a hollow, roasting a cow, steer*; duais bhon uachdaran: *a reward from the laird*; ge-tà, cha b' fhada gus am biodh e fhèin a' goid crodh: *however, it wasn't long until he would be stealing cattle himself*; nuair a chaochail a phàrantan: *when his parents died*; bha i gu math dìleas dha a thaobh na dòigh-beatha aige: *she was very loyal to him with regard to his way of life*; lean X air le bhith a' faighinn grèim air sprèidh a bhuineadh do dhaoine eile: *X continued to capture livestock which belonged to other people*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Bha an crodh ann an toiseach, leis na creachadairean aig an deireadh:** *the cattle were at the front, with the plunderers at the rear. Note the use of toiseach for front and deireadh for rear. In a boat, the toiseach is the bow, while the stern is the deireadh. We say ann an toiseach a' chàir for "in the front of the car" and ann an deireadh a' chàir for "in the rear of the car". Both of these nouns commonly appear in their genitive forms as adjectives. For example an animal's front legs are casan toisich; its rear legs are casan deiridh.*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: **lean iad an rathad a ghabh Calum is na ceatharnaich:** *they followed the route that Calum and the caterans took. Gabhaidh mi an rathad mòr: I'll take the main road.*

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