

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. This is Litir 464. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 160 corresponds to Litir 464.

Áit bhreá lá ar bith sa bhliain is ea Gleann Cholm Cille. An do thuig sibh sin ceart gu leòr? 'S e sin Gàidhlig na h-Èireann. 'S e àite brèagha a th' ann an Gleann Cholm Cille latha sam bith dhen bhliadhna. Agus tha mi a' creidsinn gu bheil sin fìor.

Tha Gleann Cholm Cille air taobh an iar Thìr Chonaill ann an Èirinn agus bha mi ann as t-Earrach am-bliadhna airson beagan Gaeilge ionnsachadh. Tha ionad-foghlaim sa ghleann air a bheil Oideas Gael mar ainm. Bidh iad a' dèanamh chlasaichean do luchd-ionnsachaidh – mar a tha leithid Sabhal Mòr Ostaig agus Ionad Chalum Chille Ìle a' dèanamh ann an Alba. 'S e àite fìor mhath a th' ann.

Tha iomadach rud ann an Gleann Cholm Cille a tha aithnichte do Ghàidheal à Alba. Am measg sin tha an dualchas co-cheangailte ris an naomh – Colm Cille no Calum Cille mar a **theirear** ann an Alba. Ach dè dìreach an ceangal a th' aig Calum Cille ris a' ghleann? Uill, rugadh e ann an Tìr Chonaill agus tha e coltach, **aig a' char as lugha**, gun robh e a' searmonachadh ann. Agus seo agaibh stòiridh à beul-aithris a tha ag innse mu rudeigin a thachair nuair a bha e a' searmonachadh anns an sgìre.

Tha e a' tòiseachadh anns a' chòigeamh linn AC, mu cheud bliadhna mus do rugadh Calum Cille. Bha Naomh Pàdraig ag iompachadh muinntir na h-Èireann gu Crìosdachd. Theich na deamhain as miosa anns an eilean gu ruige an gleann seo airson faighinn air falbh bho Phàdraig. Thog iad ceò draoidheil agus rinn iad an abhainn na sruth teine gus nach fhaigheadh Crìosdaidh sam bith ann. Cha robh comas aig Pàdraig faighinn cuidhteas nan droch spioradan ach thuirt e gun tigeadh fear na b' fheàrr às a dhèidh agus gum biodh esan a' dèanamh a' ghlinn na àite beannaichte. B' e am fear sin Calum Cille.

Latha a bha seo bha Calum Cille a' searmonachadh ann an taobh an iar-dheas Thìr Chonaill. Thilg deamhan slat cuilinn a-mach às a' ghleann. Bhuail i ann am fear de luchd-leantainn an naoimh, fear air an robh Cearc mar ainm. Chun an latha an-diugh, thathar a' gabhail *Srath na Circe* air an àite mar chuimhneachan air. Bha mise a' smaoinachadh gun robh Srath na Circe a' ciallachadh “*The Strath of the Hen*” ach tha fios agam a-nise gun robh mi ceàrr!

Bha Calum Cille feargach. Thilg e an t-slat air ais. Far an do bhuail i san talamh, thòisich craobh cuilinn air fàs. Chuir sin eagal air na deamhain agus theich iad. Ruith Calum Cille às an dèidh, a' tilgeil chlachan orra. Lean na deamhain orra, a' ruith nan deann. Chaidh iad a-steach don mhuir ann an àite ris an canar *Screig na nDeamhan* – no Creag nan Deamhan. Bha smachd aig Calum Cille agus Crìosdachd air a' ghleann.

Tha cuid a' cumail a-mach gun do rinn Calum Cille na deamhain nan èisg – seòrsa ris an canar *dallóga caocha*. Cha chreid mi nach e sin an *dallag* againne – no *dogfish*. Tha muinntir an àite a' smaoineachadh gu bheil na h-èisg sin dall ann an aona sùil. Tha cuid eile ag ràdh gun do rinn an naomh na deamhain nan ròin, seach nan dallagan. Bidh na ròin a' faighinn dìoghaltas air muinntir an àite le bhith a' reubadh lìn nan iasgairean.

Chan e, ge-tà, Calum Cille an aon duine a cheanglas Gleann Cholm Cille agus Alba ri chèile – mar a chì sinn an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Tìr Chonaill: *Donegal*; ionad-foghlaim: *educational establishment*; rugadh e: *he was born*; a' searmonachadh: *preaching*; beul-aithris: *oral tradition*; feargach: *angry*; theich iad: *they fled*; dallag: *dogfish*.

Abairtean na Litreach: latha sam bith dhen bhliadhna: *any day of the year*; tha mi a' creidsinn gu bheil sin fìor: *I believe that's true*; airson beagan Gaeilge ionnsachadh: *to learn a bit of Irish Gaelic*; a tha aithnichte do: *which is familiar to*; tha an dualchas co-cheangailte ris an naomh: *the heritage connected to the saint*; rudeigin a thachair: *something that happened*; anns a' chòigeamh linn AC: *in the 5th Century AD [AD is also used]*; bha Naomh Pàdraig ag iompachadh muinntir na h-Èireann gu Crìosdachd: *Saint Patrick was converting the people of Ireland to Christianity*; theich na deamhain as miosa gu ruige an gleann seo: *the worst demons fled to this glen*; thog iad ceò draoidheil: *they raised a magic mist*; rinn iad an abhainn na sruth teine: *they turned the river into a stream of fire*; gus nach fhaigheadh Crìosdaidh sam bith ann: *so that no Christian could get there*; cha robh comas aig X faighinn cuidhteas nan droch spioradan: *X wasn't able to get rid of the bad spirits*; gun tigeadh fear na b' fheàrr às a dhèidh: *that a better man would come after him*; gum biodh esan a' dèanamh a' ghlinn na àite beannaichte: *that he would make [be making] the glen a blessed place*; thilg deamhan slat cuilinn: *a demon threw a stick of holly*; bhuail i ann am fear de luchd-leantainn an naoimh: *it struck one of the saint's followers*; mar chuimhneachan air: *in his memory*; thòisich craobh cuilinn air fàs: *a holly tree started to grow*; às an dèidh, a' tilgeil chlachan orra: *after them, throwing stones at [on] them*; lean na deamhain orra, a' ruith nan deann: *the demons continued on, running at speed*; tha cuid a' cumail a-mach gun do rinn Calum Cille na deamhain nan èisg: *some people maintain that St Columba made the demons into fish*; bidh na ròin a' faighinn dìoghaltas air X le bhith a' reubadh lìn nan iasgairean: *the seals gain their revenge on X by ripping the fishermen's nets*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: aig a' char as lugha: *at the (very) least. There are a number of expressions involving aig a' char as ... Just remember that the adjective which comes at the end must be in its comparative form. Here are some other examples:* gheibh e fichead dolair aig a' char as motha (*he'll get \$20 at most*), bidh mi air ais aig meadhan-oidhche aig a' char as anmoiche (*I will be back midnight at the latest*), bidh e ann airson bliadhna aig a' char as giorra (*he'll be there for a year at the very least, shortest*); caillidh e ceithir corrigan aig a' char as fheàrr (*he'll lose four fingers at best*).

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: mar a **thairear** ann an Alba: *as is said in Scotland [a passive verbal form]*.

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