

# 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 493. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 189 corresponds to Litir 493.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Robbie is Anne Northway a bha a’ fuireach ann am bothan anns an t-Srathan air a’ Pharbh. Choisich mi ann as t-fhoghar am-bliadhna còmhla ri caraid agus, an latha mus do ràinig sinn An Srathan, chuir sinn seachad an oidhche ann am bothan eile, beagan mhiltean air falbh. Tha sin ann an àite ris an canar Srath Chailleach, ged nach urrainn dhomh innse dhuibh cò na cailleachan a bha a’ fuireach ann, no cuin.

Tha am bothan ann an Srath Chailleach gu math beag, ìosal is dorch, agus tha e ann an àite a tha eadhon nas iomallaiche na an Srathan. Tha mu sheachd mìle de choiseachd thar mòintich romhad ma tha thu ag iarraidh a dhol ann. Tha e air bruach abhainn – agus chan eil drochaid thar na h-aibhne tuilleadh. **Bha latha na b’ fheàrr aig** Srath Chailleach.

A dh’aindeoin sin, tha an togalach fhèin ann an deagh òrdugh. ’S e Comann Bothain nam Beann as coireach ri sin. Tha iad a’ dèanamh obair mhath air mòran seann togalaichean ann an àiteachan iomallach. Tha na bothain aca fosgailte mar àite-fuirich airson oidhche do dhuine sam bith a thèid nan rathad.

“Seo far an robh e – an Seann Mhadadh Ruadh,” thuir mo charaid nuair a ràinig sinn am bothan.

“Cò bh’ anns a’ Mhadadh Ruadh?” dh’fhaighnich mi, agus dh’innis mo charaid dhomh mun turas a thàinig e don bhothan sin. Bha fear a’ fuireach ann agus cha robh e laghach idir. “Thalla!” thuir e, “chan fhaigh thu àite fuirich an seo!” B’ e an duine sin Seumas MacRuairidh Mac a’ Ghobhainn, agus rinn e a dhachaigh anns a’ bhothan sin airson timcheall air trithead bliadhna.

Bhuineadh Seumas do Dhùn Bhreatainn. Bha e anns an arm anns a’ Ghearmailt an Iar às dèidh a’ chogaidh, ach nuair a thill e a dh’Alba, cha deach cùisean ro mhath dha. Chaill e a bhean ann an tubaist rathaid. Chaidh a chlann a dh’fhuireach cuide rin seana-phàrantan, agus ghluais Seumas don cheann a tuath. Mu dheireadh rinn e a dhachaigh anns an t-seann taigh ann an Srath Chailleach, ged a bha aige ri ochd mìle a choiseachd thar talamh garbh airson faighinn don bhùth. Tha e coltach gun robh e toilichte a bhith a’ fuireach leis fhèin, is fad air falbh bho dhaoine eile.

Airson còig bliadhn' deug, cha robh gnothach aig Comann nam Bothan ris an àite. An uair sin, ann an naoi ceud deug, ochdad 's a h-aon (1981), thàinig stoirm mhòr. Rinn i milleadh air an togalach. Dh'aontaich an Comann **obair-càraidh** a dhèanamh air, nan cumadh Seumas aon seòmar a-mach às na trì aige fosgailte do luchd-coiseachd. Dh'aontaich e ri sin ach cha do chùm e ris a' bhargan. 'S ann tric a bhiodh e a' ruagadh dhaoine a bha ag iarraidh fuireach na h-oidhche, mo charaid nam measg.

Aon turas nochd heileacoptair Ameireaganach taobh a-muigh an taighe oir bidh NATO a' cumail eacarsaichean air a' Pharbh. Bha Seumas a-staigh a' còmhradh ri cìobair. Ach ruith e a-mach le làmhag os a chionn agus theich na h-Ameireaganaich ann an cabhaig!

Dh'fhalbh Seumas – agus chaochail e – anns na naochadan. Ach tha na dealbhan-balla a rinn e fhathast rim faicinn – ma chleachdas tu toirds oir tha am bothan cho dorch eadhon air latha grianach. Àite brèagha a th' ann – airson latha no dhà. Ach trithead bliadhna? 'S e ùine mhòr a tha sin.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Srath Chailleach: *Strathcailleach*; ionaltradh: *grazing*; Thalla!: *Go away!*; eacarsaichean: *exercises*; cìobair: *shepherd*; làmhag: *axe*.  
**Abairtean na Litreach:** anns an t-Srathan air a' Pharbh: *in Strathan at Cape Wrath*; as t-fhoghar am-bliadhna: *in the autumn of this year*; eadhon nas iomallaiche: *even more remote*; tha mu sheachd mìle de chois eachd thar mòintich romhad: *you have about 7 miles of walking across a moor ahead of you*; chan eil drochaid thar na h-aibhne tuilleadh: *there is no longer a bridge across the river*; ann an deagh òrdugh: *in good condition*; do dhuine sam bith a thèid na rathad: *to anybody that passes its way*; an Seann Mhadadh Ruadh: *The Old Fox*; chan fhaigh thu àite fuirich an seo: *you won't get a place to stay here*; Seumas MacRuairidh Mac a' Ghobhainn: *James McRory Smith*; airson timcheall air trithead bliadhna: *for about thirty years*; bhuineadh Seumas do Dhùn Bhreatainn: *James belonged to Dumbarton*; anns a' Ghearmailt an Iar às dèidh a' chogaidh: *in W Germany after the war*; cha deach cùisean ro mhath dha: *things didn't go too well for him*; chaill e a bhean ann an tubaist rathaid: *he lost his wife in a road accident*; a dh'fhuireach cuide rin seana-phàrantan: *to live with their grandparents*; rinn i milleadh air an togalach: *it damaged the building*; nan cumadh X aon seòmar a-mach às na trì aige fosgailte: *if X would keep one of his 3 rooms open*; cha do chùm e ris a' bhargan: *he didn't stick to the bargain*; 's ann tric a bhiodh e a' ruagadh dhaoine: *often he would chase people away*; theich na h-Ameireaganaich ann an cabhaig: *the Americans left quickly*; tha na dealbhan-balla a rinn e fhathast rim faicinn: *the murals he did are still to be seen*; ma chleachdas tu toirds: *if you use a torch*.  
**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Dh'aontaich an Comann **obair-càraidh** a dhèanamh air: *the Association agreed to do repair-work on it. I am often asked why it is obair-càraidh and not obair-chàraidh as might be expected from standard grammatical rules of lenition – that the qualifying element of a compound lenites*

*as an adjective would. We say obair mhòr not obair mòr so why not obair-chàraidh? The only answer I can give, even if it is not satisfactory, is that some feminine nouns show inconsistent lenition in such situations and obair is one of them. Thus we have obair-ghrèis and obair-shnàthaid but obair-dachaigh and obair-taighe.*

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: Bha latha na b' fheàrr aig Srath Chailleach: Strathcailleach *has seen better days.***

\* Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA