

# 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.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 544. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 240 corresponds to Litir 544.*

Thairis air na bliadhnaichean tha mi air tighinn tarsainn air dà chraobh air a bheil ainm Gàidhlig, gun ainm Beurla a bhith orra. Tha *Craobh an Tillidh* ann an Rat Mhurchais faisg air an Aghaidh Mhòir. 'S e sin a' chiad chraobh a chitheadh na buachaillean is cìobairean nuair a thilleadh iad bho na monaidhean len cuid sprèidh.

Gu sear air sin, thairis air na beanntan, tha *Craobh an Òir*. Sin far an do chuir uachdaran ciste òir ann an dìomhaireachd anns an t-seann aimsir. Nuair a chladhaich e a' chiste suas, thugadh an t-ainm air a' chraobh. No 's e sin an stòiridh co-dhiù. Ma tha sibh fhèin eòlach air craobh air a bheil ainm Gàidhlig b' fhìor thoigh leam cluinntinn bhuaibh.

Bha mi ann an Cataibh o chionn ghoirid, ann am Bun Ilidh. Chuala mi mu dheidhinn craobh anns an sgìre air a bheil, no air an robh, *The Làmh Tree*. 'S e làmh am facal Gàidhlig air am bi sibh uile eòlach. Cha d' fhuair mi a-mach dè a' Ghàidhlig a bh' air a' chraobh bho thùs, ach tha mi a' dèanamh dheth gur e *Craobh na Làimhe* a bhiodh ann. Tha e inntinneach gur e *The Làmh Tree* a th' aig daoine, seach *The Hand Tree*.

Bha a' chraobh a' fàs faisg air seann drochaid air an rathad mhòr gu deas air Bun Ilidh làimh ri – mas urrainn dhomh sin a ràdh – Loids Ghartaidh. Tha stòiridh ann, a tha beò ann am beul-aithris na sgìre, a tha a' mìneachadh mar a fhuair a' chraobh a h-ainm.

Iomadh bliadhna air ais bha gille ag obair anns an loids mar **chonbhair**. 'S e sin neach a bhios a' coimhead às dèidh nan con. Cha robh olc sam bith sa ghille ach bha e crotach. Air sàillibh sin, bha eagal air na bana-shearbhantan òga roimhe. Bha aon tè – banarach a bh' innte – air an robh Annabel. Bha i a' fuireach cuide ri a pàrantan ann an taigh faisg air an loids. Gach oidhche, às dèidh dhi a' bhleoghann a dhèanamh, bhiodh i a' falbh dhachaigh tarsainn na drochaid.

Oidhche a bha seo bha fìor dhroch shìde ann. Bha gèile is uisge mòr ann. Agus bha tuil san allt. Chaidh an drochaid a sguabadh air falbh leis an tuil. Bha fios aig a' chonbhair air na thachair agus chaidh e a-mach a chur fios air Annabel nach robh an drochaid ann. Stad e faisg air an allt. Chaidh e an taic craobh airson beagan fasgaidh fhaighinn.

Nuair a ràinig Annabel an t-àite, chuir an conbhair a làmh a-mach airson stad a chur oirre dhol faisg air an allt. Bha i a' smaoinichadh gun robh an gille a' toirt

ionnsaigh oirre. Ruith i air falbh aig peilear a beatha a dh'ionnsaigh na drochaid. Thuit i don allt agus chaidh a bàthadh.

Air an làrna-mhàireach lorgadh an gille marbh aig bonn na craoibhe. Bhathar a' smaoinichadh **gun tàinig cuairt air**. Ach bha lorg làimhe loisgte air a' chraoibh. Bha daoine ag ràdh gun tug an conbhair mallachd air a' chraoibh mus do chaochail e. Às dèidh sin, cha d' rachadh duine faisg air a' chraoibh. Chaidh rathad eile a dhèanamh eadar an loids agus an t-allt.

Agus a bheil i fhathast ann – Craobh na Làimhe? Chaidh mi a choimhead air a son. Tha mòran chraobhan anns an àite a-nise agus cha d' fhuair mi lorg air seann tè le lorg làimhe oirre. Agus chuala mi às dèidh làimh gun do thuit i ann an stoirm mòran bhliadhnaichean air ais. Is mòr am beud.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Craobh an Tillidh: *the tree of the returning*; Craobh an Òir: *the tree of the gold*; Cataibh: *Sutherland*; Bun Ilidh: *Helmsdale*; Loids Ghartaidh: *[West] Garty Lodge*; banarach: *milking maid*; mallachd: *curse*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** tha mi air tighinn tarsainn air dà chraoibh: *I've come across two trees*; a chitheadh na buachaillean is cìobairean: *that the herdsmen and shepherds would see*; bho na monaidhean len cuid sprèidh: *from the hills with their livestock*; far an do chuir uachdaran ciste òir ann an dìomhaireachd: *where a laird put a kist of gold in secret*; thugadh an t-ainm air a' chraoibh: *the tree was named*; làimh ri: *close to*; cha robh olc sam bith sa ghille ach bha e crotach: *there was no harm in the lad but he was a hunchback*; bha eagal air na bana-shearbhantan òga roimhe: *the young female servants were scared of him*; às dèidh dhi a' bhleoghann a dhèanamh: *after she had done the milking*; chaidh an drochaid a sguabadh air falbh leis an tuil: *the bridge was washed away by the flood*; chaidh e an taic craobh: *he leaned against a tree*; gun robh an gille a' toirt ionnsaigh oirre: *that the lad was attacking her*; ruith i air falbh aig peilear a beatha: *she ran away at great speed*; chaidh a bàthadh: *she was drowned*; bha lorg làimhe loisgte air a' chraoibh: *there was a hand-print burned onto the tree*; cha d' rachadh duine faisg air a' chraoibh: *nobody would go near the tree*; a choimhead air a son: *to look for it [fem]*; is mòr am beud: *great is the pity*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** bha gille ag obair aig an loids mar **chonbhair**: *there was a lad working at the lodge as a dog-handler or "dog-boy"*. If you're familiar with the map of Gaelic Scotland, you'll know the word conbhair. There are at least five features on the 1:50,000 OS maps, all in Highland Council area, which carry the word in their name eg Sgùrr nan Conbhairean (*the peak of the dog-handlers*) near Glen Affric and Allt Loch Càrn nan Conbhairean (*the burn of the loch of the rocky hill of the dog-handlers*) on the eastern boundary of Assynt. I can't emphasize strongly enough how much Gaelic – vocabulary, grammar and cultural heritage – can be derived from an intimate knowledge of the Highland landscape. Get to know your maps!

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** Bhathar a' smaoinichadh **gun tàinig cuairt air**: *it was thought he took a fit/turn*.

*Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinichadh le MG ALBA*