

# 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](mailto:rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 545. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 241 corresponds to Litir 545.*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh bha sinn ann am Bun Ilidh ann an Cataibh. An-diugh, agus anns na beagan seachdainean romhainn, bu mhath leam ur toirt air chuairt tro Chataibh is Gallaibh is Dùthaich MhicAoidh, agus sinn a’ toirt sùil air eisimpleirean de bheul-aithris bho na sgìrean sin.

Bu mhath leam tòiseachadh ann an Cataibh ann an Gleann Loth. Tha an gleann sin a’ ruigsinn a’ chladaich beagan deas air Bun Ilidh. Ann an Gleann Loth tha tursa – sin clach a tha na seasamh leatha fhèin, a’ stobadh a-mach às an talamh. Tha a’ chlach seo gu math mòr is drùidhteach. Tha i suidhichte air leathad os cionn a’ ghlinne. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ oirre Clach Mhic Mhìos. Sin M-H-I-O-S. Clach Mhic Mhìos.

Nise, chan eil mi cinnteach dè is ciall don ainm sin. Ach, anns an sgìre sin, thathar a’ cumail a-mach gu bheil e a’ ciallachadh “the stone of the month-old son”. Clach Mhic Mhìos. Agus seo an stòiridh a thathar ag innse, a tha a’ mìneachadh mar a fhuair i a h-ainm.

Bha gort ann uaireigin. Cha robh biadh gu leòr aig na daoine. Choisich boireannach a bha seo suas Gleann Loth don àite iomallach sin, leis an amas a leanabh fhàgail ann. Bha cùisean cho duilich dhaibh ’s nach robh biadh gu leòr aca airson an leanabh a chumail beò. Feumaidh gun robh an gille mìos a dh’aois.

Chuir am boireannach an leanabh air an fhraoch. Gun a bhith a’ coimhead às a dèidh, ruith i air falbh a dh’ionnsaigh na beinne a b’ fhaisge – Beinn Mhealaich. Gu h-obann, chuala i, air a cùlaibh, sgreuchail mar gun robh fearg air cuideigin. Chaidh clach mhòr a thilgeil – le cuideigin no rudeigin. Thuit a’ chlach don talamh faisg air a’ bhoireannach. Is tha a’ chlach fhathast ann – na seasamh an àirde. Agus dè thachair don bhoireannach? Uill, chan eil cuimhne aig duine.

Mus fhàg sinn sgìre Bhun Ilidh, seo agaibh **naidheachd** bheag mu chroitear ann an Srath Chill Donain a bha ri mèirle. Bhiodh e a’ goid fhàdan bho na cruachan-mònach aig croitearan eile anns an t-srath. Ach bha e seòlta. Bhiodh e dìreach a’ goid fhàdan bho na cruachan a b’ fhaide air falbh bho na taighean. Mar sin, chan fhaca duine e. Bha cuid de na croitearan dhen bheachd gur e rud **os-nàdarrach** a bh’ ann, agus gur iad na sìthichean a bha ri mèirle. Air sàillibh sin, cha do rinn iad dad mu dheidhinn.

Ach bha aon chroitear eadar-dhealaichte bho chàch. Cha robh esan a’ creidsinn gur e rud os-nàdarrach a bh’ ann idir. Bha esan dhen bheachd gur e cuideigin às an àite fhèin a bu choireach. Chuir e plana an gnìomh airson an duine sin aithneachadh is a pheanasachadh.

Chaidh e don chruaich-mhònaich a b' fhaide air falbh bhon taigh aige. Thug e a-mach grunn fhàdan. Thug e am meadhan a-mach às na fàdan. Agus chuir e fùdar-gunna a-steach don toll anns gach fear aca. Chuir e air ais anns a' chruaich iad. Taobh a-staigh beagan làithean, mhothaich an croitear gun robh cuid de na fàdan a dhìth.

Air an oidhche sin, bha am mèirleach na shuidhe an tac an teine. Thilg e fàd no dhà don teine. Gu h-obann bha spreadhadh mòr ann. Chaidh cliath an teine a thilgeil a-mach air doras an taighe. Ma thuirt am mèirleach dad, feumaidh gur e “Breitheanas an Tighearna” a bh' ann! Agus cha do ghoid e aon fhàd eile airson a chòrr de a bheatha!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Bun Ilidh: *Helmsdale*; Cataibh: *Sutherland, particularly East Sutherland*; Gallaibh: *Caithness*; Dùthaich MhicAoidh: *The Mackay Country (of N Sutherland)*; Gleann Loth: *Glen Loth*; tursa: *standing stone*; gort: *famine*; seòlta: *cunning*; spreadhadh: *explosion*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** clach a tha na seasamh leatha fhèin: *a stone that is standing by herself*; dè is ciall don ainm sin: *what that name means*; an stòiridh a thathar ag innse: *the story that is told*; leis an amas a leanabh fhàgail ann: *with the aim of leaving the baby there*; gun a bhith a' coimhead às a dèidh: *without looking after (behind) her*; sgreuchail mar gun robh fearg air cuideigin: *screaming as if somebody were angry*; bhiodh e a' goid fhàdan bho na cruachan-mònach aig croitearan eile: *he would steal peats from the peat-stacks of other crofters*; a b' fhaide air falbh bho na taighean: *farthest away from the houses*; gur iad na sìthichean a bha ri mèirle: *that it was the fairies that were doing [the] stealing*; gur e cuideigin às an àite fhèin a bu choireach: *that it was somebody from the place itself who was responsible*; chuir e plana an gnìomh airson an duine sin aithneachadh is a pheanasachadh: *he set in train a plan to identify and punish that person*; chuir e fùdar-gunna a-steach don toll: *he put gunpowder into the hole*; gun robh cuid de na fàdan a dhìth: *that some of the peats were missing*; chaidh cliath an teine a thilgeil a-mach air doras an taighe: *the fire-grate was thrown out of the house's door*; feumaidh gur e “Breitheanas an Tighearna” a bh' ann: *it must have been “The Judgement of the Lord”*; airson a chòrr de a bheatha: *for the rest of his life*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** seo agaibh **naidheachd** bheag mu chroitear ann an Srath Chill Donain a bha ri mèirle: *here's a wee anecdote about a crofter in the Strath of Kildonan who was thieving. We think of naidheachd as meaning “news” (eg pàipear-naidheachd, na naidheachdan on the radio) and indeed that is the origin of the word – nuaidheachd, related to nuadh (“new”); nuaidheachd is to be found in Dwelly's dictionary, and the modern Irish is nuacht, which retains the older vowel sound. But naidheachd in casual conversation is also used to mean “tidings” or “anecdote”. “Tha naidheachd agam dhut” might mean “I have news for you” or “I have an anecdote to tell you”. Of course, it might simply be worthless gossip!*

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** gur e rud **os-nàdarrach** a bh' ann: *that it was a supernatural occurrence*.

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