

# 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 565. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 261 corresponds to Litir 565.*

Bu mhath leam uirsgeul sònraichte innse dhuibh an t-seachdain seo. Tha e mu dheidhinn treun-laoch Gàidhealach air an robh *Conlaoch* mar ainm. 'S e Albannach a bh' ann. Gaisgeach eireachdail treun le buinteanas don Eilean Sgitheanach.

'S e ainm an uirsgeil *Bàs Chiuinlaoich* no, ann am Beurla, *The Death of Conlaoch*. Tha e air innse an dà chuid ann an Alba agus Èirinn. Tha mi a' dol a stèidheachadh mo sgeòil-sa air na chaidh a chruinneachadh à beul-aithris ann an Alba.

Nuair a bha e na dhuine òg, dh'fhàg Cù Chulainn a dhachaigh ann an Ulaidh. Thàinig e a dh'Alba, don Eilean Sgitheanach, far an do dh'ionnsaich e sgilean sabaid aig a' bhanrigh ghaisgeil, Sgàthach. Bha ise a' fuireach ann an Caisteal Dhùn Sgàthaich ann an Slèite. Chithear an tobhta dhen chaisteal aice fhathast.

'S e treun-laoch a bh' ann an Cù Chulainn. Dh'ionnsaich e bho Sgàthach mar a chleachdadh e an *gath-bolg* no *fiery dart*. 'S e ball-airm iongantach marbhtach a bh' anns a' gath-bholg. A bharrachd air a bhith na ghaisgeach le buill-airm, bha Cù Chulainn tarraingeach do na boireannaich. Fhuair e dlùth ri bana-ghaisgeach Albannach air an robh Aoife agus dh'fhàg e trom i. Ach thill e a dh'Èirinn.

Mus do dh'fhalbh e, gheall e do dh'Aoife gun tilleadh e uaireigin agus gum pòsadh e i. Ach cha do thill. B' fheudar do dh'Aoife an gille aca a thogail leatha fhèin. Chuir i “Conlaoch” air a' ghille mar ainm.

Fhuair an gille trèanadh bho a mhàthair a mhair seachd bliadhna ann an Dùn Tuilm ann an ceann a tuath an Eilein Sgitheanaich. Agus mar a thachair do Chù Chulainn roimhe, chuir e seachad ùine ann an Dùn Sgàthaich ann an Slèite. B' e sin an t-àite a b' ainmeile far an ionnsaich e treun-laoch òga na sgilean a bhiodh a dhìth orra air blàr a' chatha.

Rinn Aoife cinnteach gum biodh a h-uile lùth-chleas aig Conlaoch 's a bh' aig Cù Chulainn. Ach dh'fhàg i aon rud a-mach a dh'aona-ghnothach. Cha do dh'ionnsaich Conlaoch mar a chleachdadh e an *gath-bolg*. Rinn Aoife sin oir bha i ag iarraidh Cù Chulainn a pheanasachadh **airson a bhith a' dèanamh mealladh-dòchais oirre**.

Dh'iarr i air Conlaoch dhol a dh'Èirinn, gun a bhith ag innse do dhuine sam bith cò e. Thuirt i gun robh i ag iarraidh gun toireadh e Cù Chulainn a dh'Alba leis. Bha fios aice gum marbhadh Cù Chulainn a mhac leis a' gath-bholg, agus gun cuireadh sin troimhe-chèile e. B' e sin an dìoghaltas aice.

Ràinig Conlaoch Èirinn. Thachair e ri Conall, oide Chù Chulainn. Thug e a bhuill-airm bho Chonall agus chuibhrich e e. Chuala Cù Chulainn mu dheidhinn agus thàinig e.

Dh'fhaighnich e de Chonlaoch cò e. Dhiùlt Conlaoch innse. Thòisich an dithis air sabaid. Ach rinn Cù Chulainn a' chùis air Conlaoch leis a' gath-bholg. Nuair a bha e a' bàsachadh, dh'inns Conlaoch ainm do Chù Chulainn. Bha fios aig Cù Chulainn gun robh e air a mhac fhèin a mharbhadh agus, gu dearbh, bha e troimhe-chèile.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** uirsgeul: *fable, legend*; treun-laoch: *strong hero*; Bàs Chiuinlaovich: *The Death of Conlaoch*; Ulaidh: *Ulster*; a' bhanrigh ghaisgeil: *the heroic queen*; Caisteal Dhùn Sgàthaich: *Dunscaith Castle*; tarraingeach: *attractive*; lùth-chleas: *physical skill*; oide: *foster-father*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** gaisgeach eireachdail treun le buinteanas don Eilean Sgitheanach: *a brave, handsome champion who belonged to the Isle of Skye*; an dà chuid: *both*; tha mi a' dol a stèidheachadh mo sgeòil-sa: *I am going to base my story*; na chaidh a chruinneachadh à beul-aithris: *what was collected from oral tradition*; chithear an tobhta: *the ruin can be seen*; mar a chleachdadh e an gath-bolg: *how he would use the fiery dart*; ball-airm iongantach marbhtach: *an amazing deadly weapon*; dh'fhàg e trom i: *he left her pregnant*; gheall e do dh'Aoife gun tilleadh e uaireigin: *he promised to Aoife that he would return some time*; gum pòsadh e i: *that he would marry her*; b' fheudar do dh'Aoife an gille aca a thogail leatha fhèin: *Aoife had to raise their son himself*; na sgilean a bhiodh a dhìth orra air blàr a' chatha: *the skills they would need on the battlefield*; dh'fhàg i aon rud a-mach a dh'aona-ghnothach: *she omitted one thing deliberately*; bha i ag iarraidh Cù Chulainn a pheanasachadh: *she wanted to punish Cuchullin*; gun cuireadh sin troimhe-chèile e: *that that would cause him great mental turmoil*; chuibhrich e e: *he bound him (in chains)*; dhiùlt Conlaoch innse: *Conlaoch refused to say*; gun robh e air a mhac fhèin a mharbhadh: *that he had killed his own son*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *Do any of you possess any tradition relating to the story in the text – “The Death of Conlaoch”? If you have had the story (or any other relating to Cuchullin or Sgàthach in Scotland) passed down in your family in any way, I'd love to hear from you. Are parents and teachers in Skye, in particular, telling youngsters this story? If not, they should be – it's part of their cultural heritage! In Sgàthach, Aoife (the sister of Sgàthach according to some) and her son Conlaoch we have three famous Sgitheanaich belonging to this mythic and heroic age of the Gaels. We have a strong tradition of Sgàthach being in Dùn Sgàthaich (Dunscaith) in Sleat but how strong is the tradition of Aoife being in Dun Tuilm (Duntulm) in Trotternish? If you have any information on this legend, please let me know.*

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** *airson a bhith a' dèanamh mealladh-dòchais oirre: for deceiving her.*

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