

# 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.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 570. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 266 corresponds to Litir 570.*

Ann an Siorrachd Pheairt, faisg air **Àth Maol Ruibhe**, tha Gleann Cuaich. Anns a’ ghleann tha loch air a bheil Loch Fraochaidh. Ciamar a fhuair an loch ainm? A bheil e co-cheangailte ris an lus – fraoch? Uill, ’s dòcha nach eil, co-dhiù a rèir beul-aithris.

Tuigidh sibh gur e ainm boireann a th’ ann an Heather. Ach, ann am beul-aithris, ’s e ainm fireann a th’ ann am Fraoch. Cha bhiodh e iomchaidh Fraoch a bhith air boireannach mar ainm oir tha am facal cuideachd a’ ciallachadh “fearg”! Anns an stòiridh thraidiseanta seo ’s e Fraoch ainm fir. Tha mi a’ dol a dh’innse dhuibh *Mar a Fhuair Loch Fraochaidh Ainm*.

Bha boireannach uaireigin a’ fuireach anns an sgìre. ’S e Maoidh an t-ainm a bh’ oirre. Ghabh i trom ghaol air Fraoch – Fraoch Mac Maathaich, am fear a bu mhaisiche san Fhèinn. Bha nighean aig Maoidh. ’S e Aoirlinn an t-ainm a bh’ oirre. Bha i air leth maiseach. Thug Fraoch a ghràdh do dh’Aoirlinn agus phòs iad. Bha Maoidh feargach. Chuir i roimhpe cur às do Fhraoch.

Dh’fhàs Maoidh tinn. Thuirt i nach robh ann ach aon nì a bhiodh na leigheas dhi. Seo mar a dh’aithris i a’ chùis: “Fon ghrèin chan eil leigheas, mo thruaighe, ach caorann an Eilein Fhuair, ’s gun duine ga bhuain ach Fraoch.”

B’ e an t-Eilean Fuar eilean bòidheach anns an loch. Anns an eilean bha craobh-chaorainn a’ fàs. Ach cha b’ urrainn do dhuine dhol faisg air a’ chraoibh oir bha biast mhòr a’ fuireach aig a bonn.

Ach bha Fraoch misneachail is gaisgeanta. Shnàimh e a-mach don eilean. Lorg e a’ chraobh-chaorainn. Aig a bonn bha a’ bhiast – ach bha i na cadal. Shràic Fraoch geugan far na craoibhe agus dh’fhalbh e leatha. Thug e do Mhaoidh iad.

Cha robh dùil aig Maoidh gun tilleadh Fraoch. Bha i an dòchas gun cuireadh a’ bhiast às dha. Nuair a chunnaic i an geug caorainn, cha robh i taingeil idir. Thuirt i ri Fraoch nach robh i sàsaichte leis a’ gheug. Bha i ag iarraidh na craoibhe gu lèir.

Thill Fraoch don eilean. Bha a’ bhiast na suain aig bonn na craoibhe. Spìon Fraoch a’ chraobh-chaorainn às an talamh. Agus dh’fhalbh e leatha. Ach dhùisg a’ bhiast. Thug i ionnsaigh air Fraoch. Cha robh sgian aig Fraoch. Ghleac e fhèin is a’ bhiast gus an do thuit iad marbh air a’ chladach.

Chaidh Aoirlinn don loch. Nuair a chunnaic i Fraoch marbh, **thuit i na neul** air an fheur. Nuair a thàinig i thuige, seo na thuirt i:

’S duibhe na fitheach bàrr d’ fhuilt,  
’S gile na ’n gruth caoin do chneas,  
’S deirge na ’n caorann do dhà ghruaidh,

'S truagh nach robh sgian aig Fraoch.

Togamaid a-nise an cuan Fhraoich,  
Corp an laoich an caisil-chrò;  
O 's truagh nach ann an còmhrag laoch  
A thuit Fraoch mun d' phronn mi deòir.

Nuair a chuala Maoidh mu bhàs Fhraoich, fhuair i ùrachadh na cridhe. Dh'fhàg a dosgainn i. Agus chaidh ainm a' ghaishgich a thoirt don loch, ris an canar Loch Fraochaidh chun an latha an-diugh.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Siorrachd Pheairt: *Perthshire*; Àth Maol Ruibhe: *Amulree*; Gleann Cuaich: *Glen Quaich*; Loch Fraochaidh: *Loch Freuchie*; fraoch: *heather*; fireann: *masculine*; ainm fir: *a man's name*; uaireigin: *at one time*; misneachail: *confident*; gaisgeanta: *heroic*; shnàimh e: *he swam*; geugan: *branches*; na suain: *slumbering*; dhùisg: *wakened*; ghleac: *struggled*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** gur e ainm boireann a th' ann an X: *that X is a feminine name*; cha bhiodh e iomchaidh X a bhith air boireannach mar ainm: *it wouldn't be appropriate to call a woman X*; ghabh i trom ghaol air: *she fell madly in love with*; air leth maiseach: *extremely beautiful*; chuir i roimhe cur às do Fhraoch: *she decided to kill Fraoch*; aon nì a bhiodh na leigheas dhi: *one thing that would cure her*; mo thruaighe: *[an expression of woe]*; ach caorann an Eilein Fhuair, 's gun duine ga bhuaireach Fraoch: *except the rowan of the cold island, and nobody plucking it except Fraoch*; bha biast mhòr a' fuireach aig a bonn: *a great beast was living at its base*; nuair a thàinig i thuige: *when she came around*; 's duibhe na fitheach bàrr d' fhuilt: *blacker than a raven is the top of your hair*; 's gile na 'n gruth caoin do chneas: *whiter than the smooth curds is your skin*; 's deirge na 'n caorann do dhà ghruaidh: *redder than the rowan berry are your two cheeks*; 's truagh nach robh sgian aig X: *it's a pity X had no knife*; togamaid a-nise an cuan Fhraoich: *let us now pick up in Fraoch's loch*; corp an laoich an caisil-chrò: *the body of the hero on a wicker bier*; 's truagh nach ann an còmhrag laoch a thuit X: *it's a pity it wasn't in a battle between [of] champions that X fell*; mun d' phronn mi deòir: *before I shed tears*; fhuair i ùrachadh na cridhe: *she was renewed in her heart*; dh'fhàg a dosgainn i: *her liability to cause trouble left her*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **Àth Maol Ruibhe:** *Amulree*. *The Gaelic form of this name is surely as good an example as we can get of why we should encourage bilingual signage. What does "Amulree" mean to anyone (unless of course, you're local and in the know)? Unless you've heard it, would you even know how to pronounce it? Is it AM-ul-ree or am-UL-ree or am-ul-REE? Once you see the Gaelic (whose pronunciation is beyond dispute) you realise that here is a place dedicated to one of our most famous saints – Maol Rubha – who established a monastery in Applecross in 673 AD and who worked in many parts of Scotland. It means something! And the pronunciation of the anglicised form becomes fairly obvious too. The ford, now bridged, would have been crossed by countless thousands of cattle as this was a meeting point of droving roads.*

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** **thuit i na neul:** *she fell in a [her] swoon.*

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