

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. This is Litir 595. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 291 corresponds to Litir 595.

Tha Bàrd Loch Abar, Iain Dòmhnallach, am measg nan laoch a chaidh a chlàradh le Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba, agus a nochdas air làrach-lìn Thobar an Dualchais. 'S e dìreach a ghuth a chluinneas sibh; chan eil na stòiridhean aige ann an cruth sgrìobhte.

Ach tha mi fhìn air dà naidheachd bheag aige a chur ann an sgrìobhadh. Tha mi a' dol gan aithris agus faodaidh sibh èisteachd riutha. An uair sin, faodaidh sibh dhol don làraich-lìn airson an cluinntinn aig sàr-Abrach. Seo a' chiad tè:

Bha triùir dhaoine a' coiseachd còmhla. Agus bha seòrsa de ghnothaich aig an dithist eile **gun robh taibhsearachd aig fear dhiubh**. Agus thuirt am fear a bha seo, “Tha sinn a' dol a bhith ann an cogadh, an triùir againn, agus chan fhada gus an tòisich an cogadh. Agus thèid fear againn a chumail sa chogadh, cha till e dhachaigh, ge b' e dè fear againn a bhios ann,” thuirt e.

'S ann mar seo a bha e. Thòisich an cogadh anns an naoi ceud deug 's a ceithir-deug agus chaidh an triùir don chogadh. Agus fhuair esan fòrladh dhachaigh, an dèidh dha a bhith dreis ann. Agus chaidh an dithist eile a-nunn don Tuirc. Agus dh'inns e nuair a thàinig e dhachaigh, “Tha mi duilich airson an fheadhainn a chaidh don Tuirc. 'S e àite cunnartach a th' ann,” thuirt e, “agus tha mis' air an taobh shàbhailte fhathast.”

Agus dh'fhalbh e a-nunn an uair sin an dèidh don fòrladh a bhith thairis agus chuir iad don Fhraing e 's cha robh e fada san Fhraing gus an deach a mharbhadh. Agus 's e e fhèin am fear den triùir nach do thill agus dh'inns e gun tachradh sin, ach cha d'aithnich e gur e e fhèin a dreigheadh a chumail.

Seo a-nise naidheachd eile aige mu Raibeart Brus, Rìgh na h-Alba:

Bha am Brusach air a ruaigeadh agus air an allaban mar bu tric a bha e. 'S e sin Rìgh Raibeart. Agus cha robh e ach na dhuine òg nuair a chaochail e. Agus 's e gnothach duilich a bh' ann gun do chaochail e cho luath.

Rugadh Brus anns a' bhliadhna dhà-dheug agus ceithir-deug thar nan trì fichead (1274). Agus chaochail e anns an trì cheud deug agus naoi thar an fichead (1329). Bha e mar sin leth-cheud bliadhn' agus a còig. Agus bha e air an allaban glè chruaidh agus bha iad a' cur teann air. Agus thàinig e gu taigh tuathanaich. Agus dh'iarr e an t-each air an tuathanach. “Gheibh thu sin,” thuirt e,

“’s tu a gheibh. Agus thèid mi don cheàrdaich leis cho luath ’s a rinn mi riamh,”
thuirt e, “agus cuiridh mi na cruidhean an rathad eile.” ’S e sin a rinn e.

Agus nuair a thàinig an t-sluagh agus iad a’ faicinn nan luirg air an rathad agus air an talamh bha iad a’ leanadh nan luirg agus an dèidh sin ’s e an rathad eile a bha am Brus a’ dol nist gu robh na cruidhean air an tionndainn an cùl ris a’ bheul agus fhuair e teicheadh mar sin. Agus nuair a fhuair e astar fada gu leòr air falbh bhuapa, chuir e na cruidhean mar bu chòir dhaibh air an ainmhidh a thug air falbh gu grad agus gu luath e à làmhan nan nàmhaidean.

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Faclan na Litreach: Loch Abar: *Lochaber*; sàr-Abrach: [*hard to translate – it means a top-notch Lochaber man*]; fòrladh dhachaigh: *home leave*; taigh tuathanaich: *a farmer’s house*.

Abairtean na Litreach: cruth sgrìobhte: *written format*; chan fhada gus an tòisich an cogadh: *it isn’t long until the war starts*; ge b’ e dè fear againn a bhios ann: *whichever of us it is*; an dèidh dha a bhith dreis ann: *after he had been there a while*; an fheadhainn a chaidh don Tuirc: *the ones who went to Turkey*; gus an deach a mharbhadh: *until he was killed*; am fear den trìuir nach do thill: *the one of the three who didn’t return*; cha d’ aithnich e: *he didn’t know*; bha am Brusach air a ruaiheadh agus air an allaban mar bu tric a bha e: *Bruce was being pursued and was without fixed abode as he often was*; cha robh e ach na dhuine òg: *he was only a young man*; bha iad a’ cur teann air: *they were closing on him*; dh’iarr e an t-each air an tuathanach: *he asked the farmer for the horse*; thèid mi don cheàrdaich leis cho luath ’s a rinn mi riamh: *I’ll go to the smiddy as fast as I ever did*; cuiridh mi na cruidhean an rathad eile: *I’ll put on the horseshoes the wrong way round*; a’ leanadh nan luirg: *following the hoofprints*; air an tionndainn an cùl ris a’ bheul: *turned back to front*; a thug air falbh gu grad agus gu luath e à làmhan nan nàmhaidean: *who instantly and quickly took him away from the enemies’ grasp [hands]*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *I’m hoping that this week’s Litir will encourage you to listen to some of the wonderful material on the new Tobar an Dualchais website. At www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/johnthebard you will be able to hear the same two anecdotes I recorded in the Litir as told by John MacDonald, the Lochaber Bard (1876-1964). I have tried to be as faithful as possible to his dialect. Among things you will notice as different from “standard” usage are: the use of the definite article with years (anns an naoi ceud deug....), dreis for greis, dithist for dithis, a-nunn for a-null, nist for a-nis and tionndainn for tionndadh. Sluagh is feminine rather than masculine and he says gur e e fhèin a dreigheadh a chumail where others might say gur e e fhèin a rachadh/dheigheadh a chumail (“that it was himself who would be retained”, a euphemism meaning he wouldn’t return from the battlefield). Our dialects, like our stories and culture, contain great riches. Enjoy listening to a great Lochaber storyteller!*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: gun robh taibhsearachd aig fear dhiubh: *that one of them had the second sight.*

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