

# 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 598. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 294 corresponds to Litir 598.*

Bidh daoine a’ faighneachd dhìom, “An e facal Gàidhlig a th’ ann an *Hogmanay*?” Uill, chan e. Thàinig *Hogmanay* don Bheurla is Albais bhon Fhraingis *hoguinané*. Thàinig sin bhon t-seann Fhraingis *aguillaneuf*, a’ ciallachadh tiodhlaic a bhite a’ toirt seachad air an oidhche mu dheireadh dhen bhliadhna.

’S e a’ Ghàidhlig air Hogmanay A’ *Challainn* no *Oidhche Challainn*. Tha Callainn a’ tighinn bhon Laidinn *calendae*, a’ ciallachadh a’ chiad latha dhen mhìos. ’S ann às a sin a tha sinn a’ faighinn na Beurla *calends*. Agus tha an aon fhreumh aig *calendar*.

Gu traidiseanta air Oidhche Challainn, bhiodh na balaich a’ ruith timcheall, a’ cluich iomain agus **a’ dèanamh mhucan sneachda**. Bhiodh fear dhiubh a’ cur seiche mairt timcheall a chinn. Bhiodh na balaich a’ bualadh na seiche, a’ dèanamh fuaim coltach ri drumma. Bhiodh an còmhlain a’ dol timcheall gach taigh anns a’ bhaile trì tursan deiseil. Gach turas a thigeadh iad gu doras, dh’èigheadh iad:

*A Challainn a’ bhuilg bhuidhe bhoicinn,  
Buail an craiceann air an tobhta  
Cailleach sa chill, cailleach sa chùil,  
Cailleach eile ’n cùil an teine,  
Bior na dà shùil, bior na goile  
A’ Challainn seo, leig a-staigh mi!*

Mus fhaigheadh na balaich a-steach bha aca ri rann aithris. Tha mi a’ dol a dh’aithris pàirt de rann Callainn traidiseanta dhuibh. Ach feumaidh mi abairt chudromach a mhìneachadh an toiseach. ’S e sin **caisean Callainn**. Nise, chan e seo **càise Callainn** – ged a bha càise cudromach aig àm na Bliadhn’ Ùire cuideachd. Tha **caisean** a’ ciallachadh rud sam bith a tha cas no dualach – *curled* ann am Beurla. Agus ’s e **caisean uchd** no **caisean Callainn** an stiall-fheòla a tha fon chnàimh bhroillich aig caora no a leithid.

Bhite a’ marbhadh caora airson na Nollaig. Agus bhite a’ cumail na stèill-fheòla sin airson an caisean Callainn a dhèanamh. Nuair a thigeadh na balaich a-steach don taigh, às dèidh dhaibh rann Callainn aithris, bhiodh fear an taighe a’ suaineadh a’ chaisein Challainn timcheall ceann a-mach camain. Bhiodh an fheadil air a dàthadh anns an teine. Bhiodh i air a cur trì tursan deiseil timcheall a’ chòmhlain, agus air a cur ri sròn gach duine. Bhathar a’ creidsinn gun obraicheadh sin mar gheas an aghaidh dhroch spioradan. Seo a-nise pàirt de rann Callainn:

*Thàinig mise seo air tùs  
A dh’ùrachadh na Callainn,  
Cha ruig mi leas a bhith ga innse,  
Bha i ann ri linn mo sheanar.  
Caisean Callainn na mo phòca  
’S math an ceò thig às an fhear ud,  
Gheibh fear an taighe e air thùs  
’S cuiridh e shròn san teallach.*

Seo a-nise pìos eile dhen rann:

Èirich a-nuas, a bhean chòir  
'S a' bhean òg a choisinn cliù,  
Èirich a-nìos, mar bu dual,  
'S thoir a-nuas ar Callainn dhuinn.  
A' chàbag air 'bheil an aghaidh rèidh  
's an t-ìm nach do bheum sùil,  
Agus mura bheil sin agad air chòir  
Fòghnaidh aran 's feòil dhuinn.  
Tha bogan na mo bhrògan  
'S tha mo mhedirean air an gearradh,  
Is ann a-staigh, taobh an teine  
Tha an rud a nì mo leigheas,  
'S ma tha àit' agad gu gluasad,  
Èirich 's thoir a-nuas a' ghlainne.

Sin e bho Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh airson na Bliadhna dà mhìle 's a deich (2010). Tha mi an dòchas gun toir a' Bhliadhna Ùr sonas is sìth dhuibh uile.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Oidhche Challainn: *Hogmanay*; iomain: *shinty*; a' suaineadh: *wrapping*; geas: *charm*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** tiodhlac a bhite a' toirt seachad: *present that would be given*; seiche mairt timcheall a chinn: *a cow hide around his head*; gach turas a thigeadh iad gu doras, dh'èigheadh iad: *every time they came [would come] to a door, they would shout*; a' bhuilg bhuidhe bhoicinn: *of the yellow bag of hide*; buail an craiceann air an tobhta: *hit the skin on the wall*; cailleach sa chill: *an old woman in the graveyard*; 'n cùil an teine: *in the fire nook*; bior na dà shùil, bior na goile: *a pointed stick in her two eyes, a pointed stick in her stomach*; bha aca ri: *they had to*; an stiall-fheòla a tha fon chnàimh bhroillich aig caora: *the strip of flesh that is below the breastbone of a sheep*; bhite a' marbhadh caora: *a sheep would be killed*; air a dàthadh: *singed*; cha ruig mi leas a bhith ga innse: *I don't need to be telling it*; ri linn mo sheanar: *in my grandfather's time*; cuiridh e shròn san teallach: *he'll put its nose in the fire*; èirich a-nuas, a bhean chòir: *rise and come down, good wife*; èirich a-nìos, mar bu dual: *rise and come up, as is your wont*; a' chàbag air 'bheil an aghaidh rèidh: *the cheese that has the smooth face*; ìm nach do bheum sùil: *butter that did not strike eye*; mura bheil sin agad air chòir: *if you do not have that near you*; fòghnaidh aran 's feòil dhuinn: *bread and meat will suffice*; bogan na mo bhrògan: *water in my shoes*; tha mo mhedirean air an gearradh: *my fingers are cut*; ma tha àit' agad gu gluasad: *if you have room to move*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *Don't confuse caisean Callainn with càise Callainn (note the accented "a"). The latter is Hogmanay cheese. A piece of càise Callainn was cut, preserved and a hole made through it. John Gregorson Campbell, the collector of Gaelic folklore, said that "a person losing his way during the ensuing year, in a mist or otherwise, has only to look through the hole and he will see his way clearly." The caisean uchd or caisean Callainn was the breast-stripe of a sheep. It was wrapped around the end of a shinty stick, singed in the fire and put three times deiseil (sunwise) around the group and held to the noses of all. No drink was taken until this ceremony had been performed.*

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** a' dèanamh mhucan sneachda: *making enormous snowballs. A muc-shneachda ("snow-pig") is a gigantic snowball of the type you get by rolling a snowball in more snow.*

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