

# 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.maclea@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 621. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 317 corresponds to Litir 621.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an stòiridh *Sliochd an Eich Bhric Nach Robh Riamh Glic* à sgìre Loch Laomainn. Tha an stòiridh ag innse mar a thàinig an t-ainm Mac an Oighre, no MacNair, gu bith. Tha Mac an Oighre a’ ciallachadh “the son of the heir”.

Bha Clann Phàrlain an Arair air mòran dhen fhearann aca a chall. Bha a’ chiad mhac – an t-oighre – aig MacPhàrlain am beachd a dhol a Dhùn Èideann, feuch an còrr dhen fhearann aige fhaighinn air ais bhon Rìgh. Ach bha each robach aige. Cha bhiodh sin freagarrach airson a dhol a Dhùn Èideann. Bha e, mar sin, ag iarraidh each bòidheach breac fhaighinn bho a leth-bhràthair air iasad.

“Chan fhaigh thu an t-each air iasad oir tha an t-eagal oirnn nach fhaigh sinn air ais e a-chaidh tuilleadh,” thuirt màthair a leth-bhràthar, an dàrna bean aig athair. ‘S e ban-Shasannach a bh’ innte.

Ach thuirt an gille gun toireadh e an t-each air ais slàn fallain. Thuirt e sin rithe uair is uair. “Ma tha thu cho cinnteach sin,” thuirt a mhuime, “an toir thu dhomh còir don fhearann agad mar bharantas? Mura toir thu an t-each dhachaigh slàn fallain, gheibh do bhràthair am fearann **mar èirig**.”

Bha an gille rudeigin faoin agus ghabh e ris a’ bhargan. Chaidh fianaisean fhaotainn. Rinneadh cùmhnantan. Mura toireadh an t-oighre an t-each breac dhachaigh slàn fallain, gheibheadh a leth-bhràthair còir air an fhearann aige.

Ach bha a mhuime ri foill. Bhruidhinn i ris an t-searbhant a bha a’ dol cuide ris an oighre a Dhùn Èideann. Thug i puinnsean dha airson a thoirt don each bhreac. Agus thug i duais dha airson an t-each a phuinnseanachadh.

Dh’fhalbh an t-oighre gu ruige Dùn Èideann a’ **marcachd** an eich bhric. Bha an searbhant a’ **marcachd air** each eile. Dh’fhalbh an dithis rathad Taigh an Droma, agus iad ag amas air a dhol tro Shruighlea. Stad iad airson na h-oidhche aig taigh-òsta. Chuir an searbhant na h-eich don stàball. Chuir e am puinnsean ann am biadh an eich bhric. An ath latha, lorg iad an t-each breac marbh anns an stàball.

**Cha robh air** ach an diollaid a b’ fheàrr a chur air each an t-searbhaint. Thill oighre Chloinn Phàrlain dhachaigh air muin an eich; ghiùlain an searbhant na màileidean, agus e air chois. Nuair a thill an t-oighre, agus an t-each breac marbh, dh’agair a mhuime am fearann aige do a mac fhèin **mar èirig**. Chaill an t-oighre am fearann aige mar sin do a leth-bhràthair.

Às dèidh na thachair, cha robh mòran spèis aig muinntir na fine don t-seann oighre. Leis gun robh e cho faoin 's gun tug e seachad a chòir air an fhearann dìreach airson each breac, 's e "An t-Each Breac" a chanadh daoine ris.

Phòs e agus bha clann aige. 'S ann bho a mhac-san a shìolaich an dream Mac an Oighre – no MacNair mar a th' orra ann am Beurla. Ged a fhuair mac na ban-Shasannaich fearann an Arair, cha do dh'aidich Clann Phàrlain riamh mar cheann-cinnidh e. Theireadh iad ri a shliochd "Clann Phàrlain an Fhearainn". Agus sliochd a' chiad oighre? Uill, riuthasan, theireadh iad "Sliochd an Eich Bhric Nach Robh Riamh Glic".

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Loch Laomainn: *Loch Lomond*; Mac an Oighre: *MacNair/Macnair*; Clann Phàrlain an Arair: *The MacFarlanes of Arrochar*; oighre: *heir*; robach: *ragged*; freagarrach: *suitable*; ban-Shasannach: *Englishwoman*; faoin: *naïve*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Sliochd an Eich Bhric Nach Robh Riamh Glic: *The Descendants of the Speckled Horse who was Never Wise [for a full account of the story see Michael Newton's excellent book "Bho Chluaidh gu Calasraid"]*; feuch an còrr dhen fhearann aige fhaighinn air ais: *to try to get the rest of his land back*; each bòidheach breac fhaighinn bho a leth-bhràthair air iasad: *to get the loan of a beautiful speckled horse from his half-brother*; nach fhaigh sinn air ais e a-chaidh tuilleadh: *that we'll never get him back again*; gun toireadh e an t-each air ais slàn fallain: *that he would bring back the horse in a fit and healthy state*; uair is uair: *again and again*; còir don fhearann agad mar bharantas: *the right[s] to your land as a surety*; chaidh fianaisean fhaotainn: *witnesses were obtained*; rinneadh cùmhnantan: *contracts were made*; bha a mhuime ri foill: *his stepmother was involved in deceit*; thug i duais dha airson an t-each a phuinnseanachadh: *she gave him a reward for poisoning the horse*; dh'fhalbh iad rathad Taigh an Droma, agus iad ag amas air a dhol tro Shruighlea: *they left on the Tyndrum road, with the aim of going through Stirling*; cha robh mòran spèis aig muinntir na fine don t-seann oighre: *the clanspeople did not have much respect for the old heir*; 's ann bho a mhac-san a shìolaich an dream Mac an Oighre: *it's from his son that those of the name MacNair were descended*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** a' marcachd an eich bhrìc. Bha an searbhant a' marcachd air each eile: *riding the speckled horse. The servant was riding the other horse. Notice that with the verb marcachd, we can have a direct object which will be in the genitive case following the verbal noun form (a' marcachd an eich bhrìc), at least where the article is present. But it can also be used with the preposition air, placing the noun commanded by it in the dative case eg a' marcachd air each eile. For the first part, I might have said a' marcachd air an each bhreac.*

**Gnàthasan-cainnt na Litreach:** gheibh do bhràthair am fearann mar èirig: *your brother will get the land as reparation. Dh'agair a mhuime am fearann aige do a mac fhèin mar èirig: the stepmother claimed his land for her own son as reparation. Cha robh air ach an diollaid a b' fheàrr a chur air each an t-searbhaint: there was nothing for it but to put the best saddle on the servant's horse.*

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