

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A' Ruigsinn Taigh nam Bodach

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 626. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 322 corresponds to Litir 626.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Leum MhicGriogair ann an Gleann Lìomhann. Tha an t-ainm a' dol air ais don t-siathamh linn deug nuair a bha ceann-cinnidh Griogaraich Ghleann Sreith a' teicheadh bho bhuidheann de Chaimbeulaich. A rèir beul-aithris, tha dìreach aon duine bhon uair sin air an aon rud fheuchainn. B' esan teud-chleasaiche, no *acrobat*, a bha anns an sgìre.

Bha am fear seo a' creidsinn gum b' urrainn dha leum mar a leum MacGriogair, ach cha robh gràisg de dhaoine is coin air a thòir. Gu mì-fhortanach, dh'fhàilnich air, agus chaill e a bheatha. Bha càrn air a thogail dha air an robh *Càrn an Duine Ghointe* agus bha daoine a' smaoineachadh gun robh e air a thiodhlacadh fodha. Dh'fhàs an càrn mòr oir bhiodh muinntir an àite a' cur clach air gach turas a bha iad a' dol seachad.

Chan eil an càrn ann an-diugh oir chaidh a sgrios nuair a bhathar a' leasachadh an rathaid airson charbadan. Cha do lorgadh cnàmhan sam bith fodha agus, mar sin, tha daoine a-nise a' smaoineachadh gun deach an teud-chleasaiche a thiodhlacadh anns a' chladh ann am Fairtirchill.

Às dèidh dhomh a bhith aig Leum MhicGriogair, lean mi an rathad fada, brèagha suas Gleann Lìomhann. Aig a' cheann shuas, tha na beanntan a' fàs nas àirde is nas maoile. Tha na craobhan a' falbh. Chan e bàrr a th' aig na tuathanaich, ach caoraich. Ràinig mi ceann rathad nan carbadan aig geata ri taobh Loch Lìomhann, agus choisich mi air rathad a tha a' dol ri taobh an locha. Bha mi airson a dhol ann airson àite sònraichte fhaicinn – Taigh nam Bodach.

'S e sin an t-ainm a th' air an àite air a' mhapa, ach **bidh cuid ga ainmeachadh mar Taigh na Cailliche** agus, ceart gu leòr, tha e suidhichte ri taobh Allt Cailliche ann an Gleann Cailliche. Agus tha "bodach" is "cailleach" a' fuireach ann!

'S e a th' ann **nàdar de** thogalach beag ìosal air a dhèanamh de chlach, fiodh agus sgrathan. Tha e mu dhà mheatair a dh'fhaid, meatair gu leth ann an leud agus timcheall air leth-mheatair ann an àirde. Na bhroinn tha clachan iongantach – ochd dhiubh. Tha trì dhiubh ainmichte mar Am Bodach, A' Chailleach is An Nighean; chan eil fhios agam a bheil ainmean clàraichte airson a' chòrr.

Thuirt mi gu bheil na clachan am broinn an taighe, ach chan eil sin fìor fad na bliadhna. Tha iad na bhroinn anns a' gheamhradh. Ach tha iad air an toirt a-mach aig àm na Bealltainn gach bliadhna is air an cur ann an cearcall air beulaibh an taighe. Tha an taigh fosgailte don àird an ear. Aig àm na Samhna tha iad air an cur a-steach a-rithist airson a' gheamhraidh. Bha na seann daoine a' creidsinn gun cumadh am

Bodach 's a' Chailleach dìon air an sprèidh a bha beò anns a' ghleann, a tha gu sear air Taigh nam Bodach. Nam biodh an sprèidh sàbhailte, bhiodh na daoine sàbhailte.

Bidh sibh a' smaoinichadh – feumaidh gu bheil pàganachd fhathast beò ann an Gleann Lìomhann. Chan eil fhios a'm mu dheidhinn sin, ach tha e a' coimhead coltach gu bheil an cleachdadh a' dol air ais gu linn na pàganachd ann an Alba. Ma tha sin fìor, dh'fhaodadh Taigh nam Bodach a bhith am measg nan làraichean pàganach as sine anns an Roinn Eòrpa.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Leum MhicGriogair: *MacGregor's Leap*; Gleann Lìomhann: *Glenlyon*; Griogaraich Ghleann Sreith: *The MacGregors of Glenstrae*; teud-chleasaiche: *acrobat*; Fairtìrchill: *Fortingall*; pàganachd: *paganism*.

Abairtean na Litreach: tha dìreach aon duine air an aon rud fheuchainn: *only one man has tried the same thing*; a' creidsinn gum b' urrainn dha leum: *believing that he could leap*; cha robh gràisg de dhaoine is coin air a thòir: *there wasn't a gang of men and dogs in pursuit of him*; dh'fhàilnich air, agus chaill e a bheatha: *he failed, and he lost his life*; Càrn an Duine Ghointe: *the cairn of the wounded man*; air a thiodhlacadh fodha: *buried under it*; chaidh a sgrios: *it was destroyed*; nuair a bhathar a' leasachadh an rathaid airson charbadan: *when the road was being developed for vehicles*; cha do lorgadh cnàmhan: *no bones were found*; nas maoile: *more bare*; chan e bàrr a th' aig na tuathanaich, ach caoraich: *the farmers don't have crops, but sheep*; ceann rathad nan carbadan aig geata: *the end of the vehicular road at a gate*; air a dhèanamh de chlach, fiodh agus sgrathan: *made of stone, wood and turf*; mu dhà mheatair a dh'fhaid: *about two metres long*; a bheil ainmean clàraichte airson a' chòrr: *if names are recorded for the others*; am broinn an taighe: *inside the house*; air an toirt a-mach aig àm na Bealltainn: *brought out at the time of Beltane*; àm na Samhna: *Halloween time*; gun cumadh X dìon air an sprèidh: *that X would protect the livestock*; am measg nan làraichean pàganach as sine: *among the oldest pagan sites*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bidh cuid ga ainmeachadh mar Taigh na Cailliche: *some people name it The House of the Cailleach. It's difficult to translate cailleach here and it's best to leave it in Gaelic [the word is often used in Highland English in reference to old women anyway]. It's widely considered that the frequent and widespread reference to cailleachan in the Highland landscape (including in the immediate vicinity of this site) is a relic of an ancient Celtic religious cult in which the cailleach was a type of deity – and not just a grumpy old woman protecting her patch of land! In fact there is no tradition of grumpiness in the Glenlyon example – she appears to have been a benign spirit. In some countries such a feature as Taigh nam Bodach/Taigh na Cailliche would be celebrated nationally, and it would be protected. Do we in Scotland sometimes fail to recognise the wealth of our own heritage?*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: nàdar de thogalach beag ìosal: *a type of small, low house*.

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