

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Ùrnisgean Braghaid Albann

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.macleaen@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 629. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 325 corresponds to Litir 629.

Seo na th’ aig Dwelly, anns an fhaclair aige, mun fhacal ùruisg: ‘*being supposed to haunt lonely and sequestered places, water-god ... the ùruisg had the qualities of man and spirit curiously commingled*’. Bha daoine a’ creidsinn annta ann am mòran àiteachan agus tha an dualchas làidir ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. Tha seann rann ag ainmeachadh an fheadhainn a b’ ainmeile ann am Braghaid Albann:

*Peallaidh an Spùit is Brùnaidh an Easain
Babaidh an Lochain is Brùnaidh an Eilein
Padarlan à Feàrnan, Peadragan, Patragan
Triubhas-dubh à Fairturchill, Fuath Coire Ghamhnain
Cas-luath Leitir, Amhlagan Dubh
Catan Ceann-liath, is Ùruisg Dubh Eas Amhlagan*

B’ e Peallaidh an Spùit am fear a bha a’ fuireach ann am Bun Eas faisg air baile Obar Pheallaidh. Thug e ainm do dh’Obar Pheallaidh. Bha Brùnaidh an Easain a’ fuireach anns an aon allt, dìreach os cionn Pheallaidh. Thathar ag ràdh gun tigeadh an dithis ùruisgean a-mach air an oidhche, a’ cur dragh air muinntir a’ bhaile. Cha chreid mi nach eil Brùnaidh a’ tighinn bhon Albais *Broonie* no *Brownie*. Air an làimh eile, tha *urisk* ann am Beurla a’ tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig. Bha am Brùnaidh eile anns an rann – Brùnaidh an Eilein – a’ fuireach air eilean ann an Loch Tatha.

Cha robh na h-ùruisgean olc ach bha iad draghail. Latha a bha seo aig Àird Eònaig air bruach a deas Loch Tatha, bha boireannach a’ dèanamh bonnach-choirce. Thàinig ùruisg òg a-steach, gun chuireadh, agus shuidh e aig an teine. Nuair a bha a’ chiad bhonnach deiseil, ghoid e e, agus dh’ith e e. Rinn e an dearbh rud leis an dàrna bonnach, agus an treas fear.

Bha am boireannach sgèth dhen dol a-mach aige agus chuir i bonnach teth far an stòbha air glùinean rùisgte an ùruisg. Leum e agus ruith e don eas, ag èigheachd. Thàinig an seann ùruisg don taigh airson gearain, ach bha am boireannach air an doras a dhùnadh is a ghlasadh agus chan fhaigheadh e a-steach. Bha iomadh stòiridh aig a’ bhoireannach sin mu na h-ùruisgean.

Agus tha stòiridh on Bhlàr Mhòr air taobh eile an locha, far a bheil allt ann, agus linne air a bheil Linne na Slige. O chionn fhada bha ùruisg, dom b’ ainm Sligeachan, a’ fuireach ann. Bha mac aig Sligeachan agus bhiodh esan gu tric a’ cur dragh air an t-seann bhean air a’ Bhlàr Mhòr. Bhiodh e a’ faighneachd dhith, gu dè an t-ainm a bh’ oirre. Ach bha i seòlta. Cha chanadh i ach, “Is mise mi fhìn; chan eil ann ach mi fhìn.”

Latha a bha seo bha e uabhasach draghail. “Dè an t-ainm a th’ ort?” dh’fhaighnich e a-rithist. “Mi fhìn, mi fhìn,” fhreagair am boireannach. Mu dheireadh thall, dh’fhàs i sgìth dhen ùruisg òg agus thilg i pana uisge teth air a chasan rùisgte.

Nuair a chuala Sligeachan am fear òg a’ sgrìachail, thàinig e na dheann. “Dè thachair?” dh’fhaighnich e. “**Chaidh mo chasan a sgaldadh** le uisge teth,” thuirt an t-ùruisg òg. “Agus cò rinn e?” dh’fhaighnich Sligeachan. “Mi fhìn, mi fhìn!” thuirt am fear òg. “Is math sin,” arsa Sligeachan, “nam biodh duine eile air a dhèanamh, bhithinn ga pheanasachadh.”

Tha e coltach nach do chuir an t-ùruisg òg dragh air a’ bhoireannach tuilleadh, agus nach d’fhuair Sligeachan a-mach riamh cò thilg uisge teth air a mhac.

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Faclan na Litreach: Siorrachd Pheairt: *Perthshire*; Àird Eònaig: *Ardeonaig*; bonnach-coirce: *oatcake, oat bannock*; seòlta: *cunning*.

Abairtean na Litreach: tha seann rann ag ainmeachadh an fheadhainn a b’ ainmeile ann am Braghad Albann: *an old verse names the best-known ones in Breadalbane*; ann am Bun Eas faisg air baile Obar Pheallaidh: *in Moness near the town of Aberfeldy*; Brùnaidh an Easain: *the brownie of the small waterfall*; gun tigeadh an dithis ùruisgean a-mach air an oidhche: *that the two urisks would come out at night time*; gun chuireadh, agus shuidh e aig an teine: *without an invitation, and he sat at the fire*; ghoid e e, agus dh’ith e e: *he stole it and ate it*; rinn e an dearbh rud leis an dàrna bonnach: *he did the same thing with the second bannock*; chuir i bonnach teth far an stòbha air glùinean rùisgte an ùruisg: *she put a hot bannock from the stove on the urisk’s bare knees*; bha am boireannach air an doras a dhùnadh is a ghlasadh: *the woman had closed and locked the door*; on Bhlàr Mhòr: *from Blairmore*; dom b’ ainm Sligeachan: *called Sligeachan*; bhiodh e a’ faighneachd dhith, gu dè an t-ainm a bh’ oirre: *he would ask her what her name was*; is mise mi fhìn: *I am myself*; thilg i pana uisge teth air a chasan rùisgte: *he threw a pan of hot water on his bare legs*; am fear òg a’ sgrìachail: *the young one screaming*; thàinig e na dheann: *he came in haste*; cò rinn e?: *who did it?*; nam biodh duine eile air a dhèanamh, bhithinn ga pheanasachadh: *if another person had done it, I would punish him*; nach do chuir an t-ùruisg òg dragh air a’ bhoireannach tuilleadh: *the young urisk didn’t annoy the woman again*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *The Gaelic ùruisg and the Scots brownie seem to be very similar, and a large collection could be made of stories of these supernatural creatures from around Scotland. They’re not particularly evil; rather they are like mischievous children, so they would be ideal to employ as a way of interesting children in our landscape and cultural heritage. I’ve found the word ùruisg on OS maps in two places – Coire nan Ùruisgean at the eastern end of Loch Katrine and Coire an Ùruisge near Salen on Mull, but they are recalled in oral tradition from many other localities. Have you any good stories of ùruisgean that you tell to children (or adults!)? I’d love to hear from you.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **Chaidh mo chasan a sgaldadh** le uisge teth: *my legs were scalded with hot water. The Gaelic sgald is a borrowing from English.*

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