

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Gille Dubh Locha Druing

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 638. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 334 corresponds to Litir 638.

Tha loch an an sgìre Gheàrrloch ann an Ros an Iar a tha clàraichte air na mapaichean mar Loch an Draing. Tha e gu siar air baile beag air a bheil An Uamhghaidh ann an Gàidhlig. Tha am baile clàraichte air a’ mhapa mar *Cove*, an t-ainm a th’ air ann am Beurla. Tha Loch an Draing ann an suidheachadh brèagha le druim agus coille nàdarrach air a chùlaibh.

Chan eil ciall an ainm, Loch an Draing, soilleir idir. Agus, gu dearbh, chan ann mar sin a chanas muinntir an àite e co-dhiù. Canaidh iadsan “Locha Druing” no “Locha Dring”. Bha Uilleam MacBhàtair dhen bheachd gur e ainm Gàidhlig a bh’ ann, ’s dòcha ainm pearsanta. Gu cinnteach, ’s e ainmean Gàidhlig a th’ air na lochan eile faisg air làimh.

Ach, a thaobh *druing*, tha mi a’ mothachadh gun robh facal anns an t-Seann Lochlannais – *dreng* – a’ ciallachadh “gaisgeach”; tha e fhathast ann an cànan Innis Tìle, a’ ciallachadh “gille” no “balach”. Chan eil fhios agam a bheil ceangal aig an fhacal seo agus ainm an locha, ach tha e inntinneach gu bheil seann stòiridh às an sgìre mu shìthiche a bha a’ fuireach anns a’ choille ri taobh an locha. B’ e ainm **an t-sìthiche** “An Gille Dubh”.

Cha robh aodach ceart aig a’ Ghille Dhubh. Chuireadh e duilleagan chraobhan agus còinneach uime. A rèir aithris a chaidh a sgrìobhadh anns an naoidheamh linn deug, chunnacas e grunn tursan anns an leth mu dheireadh dhen ochdamh linn deug. Chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh cò às a thàinig e ach bha athair, a rèir aithris, à Asainte.

Cha chanadh e guth ri duine, ach a-mhàin ri caileag òg air an robh Seònaid NicRath; bha ise a’ fuireach faisg air Locha Druing. Feasgar samhraidh a bha seo, bha i air chall anns a’ choille – feumaidh gun robh a’ choille na bu mhotha an uair sin na tha i a-nise. Thàinig an Gille Dubh dha h-ionnsaigh agus rinn e cobhair oirre. An ath mhadainn, thug e dhachaigh i slàn sàbhailte.

Shaoileadh tu le sin gum biodh muinntir an àite toilichte gun robh an Gille Dubh a’ fuireach faisg orra. Cha do rinn e cron air duine. Ach bha an t-eagal air feadhainn roimhe. Ràinig Seònaid ìre agus phòs i fear Iain MacCoinnich a bha na thuathanach faisg air Locha Druing. Cha do ghabh ise dragh mun Ghille Dhubh. Ach cha b’ ionann e do chuid de na h-uaislean. Thàinig còignear de dh’uaislean na sgìre còmhla airson an sìthiche a mharbhadh.

Chaidh iad uile gu ruige taigh Iain MhicCoinnich, an tuathanach, airson na h-oidhche. Thug Iain biadh mòr dhaibh. Chan eilear ag innse co-dhiù an robh Seònaid ann. Chuir na h-uaislean seachad an oidhche air leabannan fraoich ann an sabhal Iain

MhicCoinnich. Ach nuair a dh'èirich iad airson a dhol tron choille, agus iad deiseil airson an Gille Dubh a mharbhadh, cha robh sgeul air an t-sìthiche.

Chan eil fhios a'm an robh e am falach no dìreach doirbh fhaicinn, agus e còmhdaichte le duilleagan is còinneach. Bu mhath leam smaoinichadh gun tug Seònaid rabhadh dha gun robh droch dhaoine **air a thòir!** Às dèidh sin, a rèir beul-aithris, dh'aontaich e falbh a dh'Asainte, dùthaich athar, agus cha do thill e gus an robh an t-uachdaran aig Locha Druing air a dhol fon fhòid.

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Faclan na Litreach: Geàrrloch: *Gairloch*; clàraichte: *recorded*; An Uamhghaidh: *Cove (Loch Ewe)*; Uilleam MacBhàtair: (*Prof*) *William J Watson*; gu cinnteach: *certainly*; Innis Tìle: *Iceland*; air chall: *lost*.

Abairtean na Litreach: air a chùlaibh: *behind it*; chan eil ciall an ainm soilleir: *the meaning of the name is not clear*; chan ann mar sin a chanas muinntir an àite e: *that's not how local people say it*; ainm pearsanta no frìth-ainm: *a personal name or nickname*; cha robh aodach ceart aig a' Ghille Dhubh: *the Gille Dubh didn't have proper clothing*; chuireadh e duilleagan chraobhan agus còinneach uime: *he would put leaves of trees and moss around him*; chunnacas e grunn tursan anns an leth mu dheireadh dhen ochdamh linn deug: *he was seen several times in the latter half of the eighteenth century*; chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh cò às a thàinig e: *I can't say where he came from*; bha athair, a rèir aithris, à Asainte: *his father was reputedly from Assynt*; cha chanadh e guth ri duine: *he wouldn't speak to anybody*; ach a-mhàin ri caileag òg air an robh Seònaid NicRath: *except for a young girl called Jessie MacRae*; rinn e cobhair oirre: *he assisted her*; thug e dhachaigh i slàn sàbhailte: *he took her home safe and sound*; shaoileadh tu le sin: *you'd think because of that*; cha b' ionann e do chuid de na h-uaislean: *it wasn't the same for some of the gentry*; chan eilear ag innse co-dhiù an robh Seònaid ann: *it's not said if Jessie was there*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: B' e ainm an t-sìthiche "An Gille Dubh": *the fairy was called "the black-haired lad"*. Notice the quality of the prefixed "t" in the definite genitive singular of sìthiche ie an t-sìthiche (*it's the same in the definite dative, later in the Litir*). In pronunciation, it acts as if the "s" were no longer there and as if the letter combination at the start of the word were "ti-" (with a slender "t" pronounced like the "ch" in English church). This is a general rule for the language. In the case of a broad first vowel eg air an t-Sàbaid, the "s" is also "ignored" in speech but the "t" is now broad, pronounced as it would be in "tà-" ie it's more like the "t" in English table. Try pronouncing the following to make sure you've got it: air an t-sitig (*slender*); anns an t-sabhal (*broad*).

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: gun robh droch dhaoine **air a thòir**: *that bad people were in pursuit of him*. An alternative to gun robh droch dhaoine an tòir air.

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