

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A' Chuimrigh

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. This is Litir 648. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 344 corresponds to Litir 648.

Bha mi anns a' Chuimrigh o chionn ghoirid. Bha mi anns a' cheann a tuath, ann an Snowdonia no *Eryri*, mar a chanar ris ann an Cuimris. Tha an sgìre sin brèagha, le beanntan car coltach ris an fheadhainn againn fhèin, agus eachdraidh mhòr. Bha mi a' fuireach ann an ionad a bhuineas don phàirc nàiseanta an sin agus bha Cuimris aig a h-uile duine a bha ag obair ann.

Chunnaic mi rudan a bha furasta a thuigsinn do Ghàidheal. Bha sanas ann airson *pont isel* – drochaid ìosal. Bha mi air *traeth* – tràigh. Agus air *glustraeth* – no *glas-mhagh* mar a bhiodh againn fhèin air – talamh còmhnard gorm aig beul-aibhne, air cùl na tràghad. Agus, ann an ainmean-àite, chunnaic mi faclan mar *mynydd*, *moel*, *allt*, *ynys* agus *afon* – coltach ri monadh, maol, allt, innis agus abhainn.

Agus chòrd e rium dha-rìribh nuair a chuir mi ceist air fear a bhuineas don sgìre. Dh'fhaighnich mi dheth dè tha a' Chuimris airson na beinne ris an canar *Snowdon* ann am Beurla – *Yr Wyddfa* – a' ciallachadh. "Barpa," fhreagair e. "Tom far am bite a' tiodhlacadh dhaoine." Agus, mus do chuir mi an ath cheist air – ciamar a fhuair i a h-ainm – thòisich e air a mhìneachadh. Coltach rinn fhèin, tha tòrr stòiridhean aca co-cheangailte ris an tìr.

Bha uaireigin famhair ann a bha a' fuireach ann an ceann a tuath na Cuimrigh. 'S e an t-ainm a bh' air Rhita Gawr. Bha dithis rìghrean anns an dùthaich a bha a' strì le chèile airson ceannas. Chuir Rhita Gawr armailt ri chèile agus thug e an aghaidh air na rìghrean. Rinn e a' chùis orra agus bheàrr e na feusagan far nan rìghrean. Rinn e ad leis na feusagan.

Chuala sia rìghrean fichead eile ann am Breatainn mu dhol a-mach an Fhamhair agus cha robh iad toilichte. Chuir iad armailt ri chèile. Chaidh iad gu ruige Eryri airson Rhita Gawr a cheannsachadh. Ach rinn am Famhair a' chùis orra, agus bheàrr e feusagan nan rìghrean dhiubh. Leis na feusagan ùra seo, rinn e còta dha fhèin.

Ach cha robh Rhita Gawr riarachtaichte. Chuir e teachdaireachd gu Artair, rìgh nan rìghrean, ag iarraidh fheusaig airson brèid a chur air a' chòta aige. Dhiùlt Artair agus bha e cho feargach 's gun deach e fhèin gu ruige Eryri le feachd. Bha sabaid ann eadar an dithis agus bha buaidh aig Artair. Thog e a chlaidheamh agus thug e sìos e le uiread neirt 's gun do bhris e tro chlogaid an Fhamhair agus gun do sgàin e a cheann ann an dà phìos.

Far an do làigh am Famhair marbh, cha robh beinn ann aig an àm. Thug Artair òrdugh seachad gun togte càrn thairis air a chorp le bhith a' tilgeil chlachan air. Agus 's ann mar sin a thàinig a' bheinn air a bheil Yr Wyddfa an-diugh gu bith. 'S e an t-

ainm a bh' oirre aig an àm sin Gwyddfa Rhita Gawr, a' ciallachadh Barpa no Tuam Rhita Gawr. Thairis air na ceudan bhon uair sin, chaidh an t-ainm ceart **air dìochuimhne** agus dh'atharraich Gwyddfa Rhita gu Yr Wyddfa. Uill, mas breug bhuan e 's breug thugam e!

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Faclan na Litreach: A' Chuimrigh: *Wales*; glas-mhagh: *green sea-field*; barpa: *burial mound*; famhair: *giant*; ad: *hat*; claidheamh: *sword*; tuam: *tomb*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mar a chanar ris ann an Cuimris: *as it is called in Welsh*; ionad a bhuineas don phàirc nàiseanta: *a centre that belongs to the national park*; talamh còmhnard gorm aig beul-aibhne, air cùl na tràghad: *flat green ground at a river-mouth, behind the beach*; tom far am bite a' tiodhacadh dhaoine: *a mound where people would be buried*; a' strì le chèile airson ceannas: *struggling with each other for primacy*; thug e an aghaidh air na rìghrean: *he attacked the kings*; rinn e a' chùis orra: *he defeated them*; bheàrr e na feusagan far nan rìghrean: *he cut the beards off the kings*; rinn e còta: *he made a coat*; ag iarraidh fheusaig airson brèid a chur air a' chòta aige: *wanting his beard in order to patch his coat*; thug e sìos e le uiread neirt: *he brought it down with such strength*; 's gun do bhris e tro chlogaid X: *that it broke through X's helmet*; gun do sgàin e a cheann ann an dà phìos: *that it split his head in two pieces*; thug Artair òrdugh seachad: *Arthur ordered*; gun togte càrn thairis air a chorp: *that a cairn would be built over his body*; a' tilgeil chlachan: *throwing stones*; thairis air na ceudan bhon uair sin: *over the centuries since then*; mas breug bhuan e 's breug thugam e: *if I'm telling you a lie, I heard it as a lie*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *In Wales, bilingual signs and place name elements highlight, for the Gaelic-speaking visitor, the common Celtic origins of the Gaelic and Welsh languages, and make the experience different from that of a monoglot English-speaking tourist. For example, Moel Ddu is Maol Dubh, Llan Fair is Lann Mhoire and Afon Gafr is Abhainn (Allt) Goibhre. And I noticed a lot of other words which are similar between our two languages (in addition to those mentioned in the text). Carreg is our carragh, craig is our creag, mawr is mòr, carn is càrn and cam is cam. Slate is llech (our leac), bwlch is bealach and cleddyf is claidheamh. But there are also a few 'false friends', which are only similar because they commonly originate in another language, notably Latin. Examples are eglwys and eaglais (from ecclesia), capel and caibeal (from capella) and castell and caisteal which both originate in the Latin castellum (as does English castle).*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach chaidh an t-ainm ceart **air dìochuimhne**: *the correct name became forgotten*.

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