

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Tòmas Garnett agus Iasgach a' Gheadais

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 667. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 363 corresponds to Litir 667.

'S ann tric a chuala mi, agus a leugh mi, gu bheil Loch Innis mo Cholmaig eadar-dhealaichte bhon a h-uile pìos uisge eile dhen aon seòrsa ann an Alba. Dè tha mi a' ciallachadh? Uill, 's e ainm an locha ann am Beurla *The Lake of Monteith*. "The only lake in Scotland" mar a chanas iad gu minig.

Bidh mi, mar as trice, a' cur ann an cuimhne dhaoine, a chanas a leithid, gu bheil sin fìor ann am Beurla a-mhàin, agus gur e "loch" a th' ann fhathast ann an Gàidhlig! Agus tha e coltach nach e rud sean a th' ann sa Bheurla nas motha. 'S e ainmeachadh an locha mar "lake" rud a dh'èirich uaireigin anns an naoidheamh linn deug. Tha cuid dhen bheachd gun tàinig e bhon fhacal *laich* ann an Albais, a' ciallachadh "blàr".

Agus seo cunntas inntinneach bhon leabhar aig Tòmas Garnett *Observations on a Tour Through the Highlands and Part of the Western Isles of Scotland* a nochd an toiseach anns a' bhliadhna ochd ceud deug (1800): "About six miles from Callander, we came to the Loch of Monteith, a beautiful little lake about five miles in circumference, adorned with two small sylvan islands." *Loch of Monteith*, seach *Lake of Monteith*. Cha chan mi an còrr.

Co-dhiù, sgrìobh Garnett cunntas air leth inntinneach mu dheidhinn an locha sin. Chan ann mun loch fhèin ach mu dhòigh iasgaich air an cuala e aithris. Bha cuid de dhaoine fhathast beò, a bh' air a bhith ag iasgach anns an dòigh sin. **Tha e doirbh a chreidsinn** – agus chan eil mi buileach cinnteach nach robh na daoine dìreach a' tarraing às an neach-siubhail Shasannach seo! Ach mas breug thugam e, 's breug bhuan e.

Tha Loch Innis mo Cholmaig làn dà sheòrsa èisg nach eil cho cumanta air a' Ghàidhealtachd – tha iad nas lionmhoire ann an uisgeachan na Galltachd agus ann an Sasainn. 'S e sin a' chreagag-uisge agus an geadas. Bidh sibh eòlach air a' gheadas, tha mi cinnteach – iasg mòr ris an canar *pìke* ann am Beurla. Agus a' chreagag-uisge? Uill, bidh cuid a' gabhail *muc-locha* air an iasg sin; ann am Beurla, 's e *freshwater perch* a th' air. Fàgaidh sinn a' chreagag-uisge an dàrna taobh. Tha cunntas Gharnett mun t-seann dòigh a bh' aig daoine airson geadais a ghlacadh ann an Loch Innis mo Cholmaig.

Bhiodh na tuathanaich a bha a' fuireach timcheall an locha a' **toirt grunn ghèadh a-mach do na h-eileanan**. Bhiodh iad a' ceangal lin-bheaga ri casan nan gèadh. Chuireadh iad dubhan air gach lìon, agus baoid air an dubhan. An uair sin, bhiodh na tuathanaich ag iomain nan gèadh a-steach don loch.

Cha b' fhada gus am biodh geadais a' greimeachadh air a' bhaoit agus air na dubhain. An uair sin, bhiodh spàirn mhòr eadar na geòidh agus na geadais. Bhiodh na geòidh an-còmhnaidh a' dèanamh a' ghnothaich, ged a bhiodh iad gu tric air an claidheadh buileach nuair a ruigeadh iad tìr. Tha amharas agam gun robh na daoine a' tomhas a' ghnothaich mar spòrs is cur-seachad èibhinn a cheart cho math ri dòigh airson geadais a ghlacadh. Tha fhios nach bitheadh a leithid ceadachte an-diugh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Loch Innis mo Cholmaig: *Lake of Menteith*; annasach: *unusual*; creagag-uisge/muc-locha: *freshwater perch*; geadas: *pike [fish]*; dubhan: *hook*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mar a chanas iad gu minig: *as they often say*; a' cur ann an cuimhne dhaoine: *reminding people*; nach e rud sean a th' ann sa Bheurla nas motha: *that neither is it an old thing in English*; a dh'èirich uaireigin anns an naoidheamh linn deug: *that arose sometime in the nineteenth century*; cha chan mi an còrr: *I'll not say anything else*; mu dhòigh iasgaich: *about a method of fishing*; nach robh na daoine dìreach a' tarraing às an neach-siubhail Shasannach seo: *that the people weren't just teasing/kidding this English traveller*; mas breug thugam e, 's breug bhuam e: *I'm only passing on what I've learned [if it came as a lie, it left as a lie]*; dà sheòrsa èisg nach eil cho cumanta: *two types of fish that aren't so common*; nas lionmhoire ann an uisgeachan na Galltachd: *more plentiful in Lowland waters*; fàgaidh sinn X an dàrna taobh: *we'll ignore X [leave X on one side]*; bhiodh iad a' ceangal lìn-bheaga ri casan nan gèadh: *they would tie short lines to the geese's legs*; a' greimeachadh air a' bhaoit: *gripping [biting] the bait*; bhiodh spàirn mhòr eadar na geòidh agus na geadais: *there would be a great struggle between the geese and the pike*; an-còmhnaidh a' dèanamh a' ghnothaich: *always prevailing*; air an claidheadh buileach: *completely exhausted*; tha amharas agam gun robh na daoine a' tomhas a' ghnothaich: *I suspect that the people were considering the matter [to be]*; spòrs is cur-seachad èibhinn: *fun and an amusing pastime*; a cheart cho math ri dòigh airson geadais a ghlacadh: *as much as a method of catching pike*; nach bitheadh a leithid ceadachte: *that the likes would not be permitted*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Bhiodh na tuathanaich ... a' toirt grunn ghèadh a-mach do na h-eileanan:** *the farmers ... would take a few geese out to the islands. The masculine noun gèadh inflects in the nominative plural by slenderisation to geòidh. Nouns of this nature revert to their nominative singular form in the genitive plural, at least in traditional usage. Thus we have in Litir ag iomain nan gèadh "driving the geese" where the noun is in the genitive plural following the verbal noun ag iomain. The indefinite genitive plural is lenited ie ghèadh means "of geese" ie grunn ghèadh "some geese", mòran ghèadh "many geese". But note that in some dialects, this traditional usage is being lost, or has already been lost, so that you are likely to hear mòran gheòidh, tuilleadh gheòidh.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **Tha e doirbh a chreidsinn:** *it's difficult to believe.*

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