

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Tòmas Garnett agus Mìorbhailean Loch Laomainn

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 669. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 365 corresponds to Litir 669.

Chuir mi ceist oirbh an t-seachdain sa chaidh. Còrr is dà cheud bliadhna mus deach ìomhaigh de Dhòmhnall Mac an Deòir – a’ chiad Phrìomh Mhinistear ann an Alba – a thogail aig ceann shuas Sràid Bhochanain ann an Glaschu, cha mhòr nach deach carragh-cuimhne a chur suas do chuideigin eile anns an dearbh àite. Cò?

’S e am fuasgladh Seòras Bochanan, an sgoilear, bàrd is eachdraiche. Fhuair mi fios air sin bhon leabhar aig Tòmas Garnett *Observations on a Tour Through the Highlands and Part of the Western Isles of Scotland* a chaidh fhoillseachadh anns a’ bhliadhna ochd ceud deug (1800).

Chunnaic Garnett an carragh-cuimhne do Bhochanan ann an Cill Earrainn ann an Siorrachd Shruighlea. Thuirt e gun robhar ag iarraidh an toiseach a chur suas ann an Sràid Bhochanain. Ach feumaidh mi rudeigin a chur ri sin. Cha d’ fhuair Sràid Bhochanain a h-ainm bho Sheòras, ach bho Anndra Bochanan a rinn fortan thall thairis ann an gnìomhachas an **tombaca**.

Nuair a bha Tòmas Garnett ann an sgìre Loch Laomainn, fhuair e fios bho mhuinntir an àite gun robh trì mìorbhailean co-cheangailte ris an loch. B’ iad sin: èisg gun itean, tuinn gun ghaoth agus **eilean air flod**.

Mhìnich Garnett na trì mìorbhailean anns an dòigh seo. Choinnich e ris an Urramach Iain Stiùbhart à Lus a bha ag obair air eadar-theangachadh an t-Seann Tiomnaidh gu Gàidhlig. Thuirt Mgr Stiùbhart ris gun robh nathraichean pailt ann am mòran de dh’eileanan an locha. Bhiodh iad a’ snàmh bho eilean gu eilean. B’ iad sin na “h-èisg” gun itean.

Ciamar a bha e a’ mìneachadh tuinn anns an loch eadhon nuair nach robh a’ ghaoth ann? Uill, gu ìre, leis an dearbh rud a bha mi a’ bruidhinn mu dheidhinn o chionn grunn Litrichean – *seiches*. Sin mar a bhios crith-thalmhainn, eadhon fad’ air falbh, ag adhbharachadh gluasad uisge ann an loch, gu h-àraidh loch fada caol. A bharrachd air sin, gluaisidh uisge ann an leithid de loch airson ùine mhòr an dèidh stoirm, eadhon nuair a tha an aimsir ciùin a-rithist.

Nuair a bha Garnett aig Loch Laomainn, cha robh eilean air flod ann. Ach bha e an dùil gum biodh pìosan air am briseadh far eileanan san loch, leithid Innis Mòna. Bhiodh lusan is craobhan ceangailte ri mòine a’ dol air bhog.

Rinn e aithris air a leithid de dh’eilean ann an Loch Dochart ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. Nam biodh an t-eilean air a shèideadh don chladach, bhiodh crodh uaireannan a’ dol air airson ionaltradh. Nam biodh a’ ghaoth ag atharrachadh, bhiodh an crodh air an aiseag a-null gu taobh eile an locha!

Agus bhiodh seòrsa eile de “eilean air flod” ann cuideachd – fear a bh’ air a dhèanamh le mac-an-duine. Bhiodh daoine a bha a’ fuireach air bruaichean Loch Laomainn a’ dèanamh nàdar de ràth. Bhiodh iad a’ ceangal ri chèile stocan craoibhe giuthais agus a’ cur ùir air am muin. B’ urrainn dhaibh daoine, crodh, fodar is rudan mòra eile a ghluasad tarsainn an locha air.

Aig àm èiginn, b’ urrainn do dhaoine a dhol am falach air a leithid de ràth. Bhiodh iad a’ ceangal an ràtha ri eilean anns an loch. Aig astar, bhiodh e a’ coimhead coltach ri pàirt dhen eilean fhèin. Tha dùil gun deach iomadh duine a shàbhaladh anns an dòigh sin air Loch Laomainn aig àm strì is fòirneirt.

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Faclan na Litreach: Dòmhnall Mac an Deòir: *Donald Dewar*; Prìomh Mhinistear: *First Minister*; Sràid Bhochanain: *Buchanan Street*; Seòras Bochanan: *George Buchanan*; eachdraiche: *historian*; Cill Earrainn: *Killlearn*; Siorrachd Shruighlea: *Stirlingshire*; Loch Laomainn: *Loch Lomond*; snàmh: *swimming*; ciùin: *calm*; Innis Mòna: *Inchmoan*; astar: *distance*; fòirneirt: *violence*.

Abairtean na Litreach: cha mhòr nach deach carragh-cuimhne a chur suas: *a memorial was nearly erected*; gun robhar ag iarraidh: *that it was intended*; trì mìorbhailean co-cheangailte ri: *three marvels connected to*; èisg gun itean: *fish without fins*; tuinn gun ghaoth: *waves without wind*; choinnich e ris an Urramach Iain Stiùbhart à Lus: *he met the Rev John Stuart of Luss*; eadar-theangachadh an t-Seann Tiomnaidh: *the translation of the Old Testament*; gun robh nathraichean pailt: *that snakes were abundant*; eadhon nuair nach robh a’ ghaoth ann: *even when there was no wind*; mar a bhios crith-thalmhainn, eadhon fad’ air falbh, ag adhbharachadh gluasad uisge: *how an earthquake, even far away, causes a water movement*; gluaisidh uisge ann an leithid de loch: *water will move in such a loch*; ùine mhòr an dèidh stoirm: *a long time after a storm*; bhiodh lusan is craobhan ceangailte ri mòine a’ dol air bhog: *plants and trees connected to peat would float*; nam biodh an t-eilean air a shèideadh don chladach: *if the island were blown to the shore*; air an aiseag a-null: *ferried over*; nàdar de ràth: *a sort of raft*; bhiodh iad a’ ceangal ri chèile stocan craoibhe giuthais agus a’ cur ùir air am muin: *they would tie together pine tree trunks and put soil on top of them*; àm èiginn: *time of strife*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: a rinn fortan thall thairis ann an gnìomhachas an **tombaca**: *who made a fortune overseas in the tobacco industry. You will notice that tombaca does not fit the rule that we emphasise in speech the first syllable of a word; we say tom-BACHK-uh rather than TOM-bachk-uh. But it is a loanword, possibly ultimately of Caribbean origin, that entered Europe via Spanish, so it doesn’t necessarily fit the traditional orthographic system. The stress in buntàta “potato” is indicated by an accent, but the “a” in tombaca is not elongated to the extent of the “a” in buntàta. If it were a compound word, we might consider the inclusion of a hyphen to show post-hyphen stress (cf làmh-sgrìobhadh, taigh-òsta). But the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions specifically prohibit this by saying that “hyphens should not be used in borrowed or adapted words that have non-initial stress”; thus we write telebhisean rather than tele-bhisean.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: eilean air flod: *a floating island*.

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