

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Freiceadain a' Choire Dhuibh

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 674. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 370 corresponds to Litir 674.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Iain Geal Donn à Loch Abar a bhiodh a' togail creach ann an Siorrachd Rois anns an t-seachdamh linn deug. Chuir Alasdair Breac Gheàrrloch roimhe stad a chur air. Dh'fhastaich e Alasdair Buidhe MacAoidh à Srath Òiceall. Chuir Alasdair Buidhe peilear ann an Iain Geal Donn nuair a bha Iain ann am bothan-àirigh aig Sgàrd Ruaidh ann an Srath Chonainn. Ruith na daoine a-mach às a' bhothan, ach bha Alasdair agus a sgalag a' feitheamh riutha. Mharbh iad a h-uile duine aca, ach a-mhàin aon fhear **a rinn a dhol-às**.

Chuir iad corp Iain am broinn seiche an tairbh, agus chuir iad air a' bhior-ròstaidh e. Dh'fhàg iad na cuirp eile far an robh iad. Chaidh Alasdair Buidhe gu ruige Geàrrloch airson an naidheachd innse do dh'Alasdair Breac. Bha Alasdair Breac toilichte cluinntinn nach togadh Iain Geal Donn creach tuilleadh air an fhearann aige. Chuir e teachdaire sa mhionaid gu ruige Caisteal Bhrathainn, ann an Ros an Ear, airson an naidheachd a thoirt don Mhorair MacCoinnich.

Nuair a ràinig an teachdaire Caisteal Bhrathainn, cò bha a' gabhail dinnear cuide ris a' Mhorair MacCoinnich ach Loch Iall, ceann-cinnidh nan Camshronach à Loch Abar. Chaidh an dithis uachdaran a-mach air a chèile mun chùis, agus dh'fhalbh an Camshronach gun a dhinnear ithe. Chuir e gillean aige gu ruige Sgàrd Ruaidh agus thug iad air falbh corp Iain. Chaidh dust Iain a thiodhlacadh anns a' chladh anns a' Chorpaich agus thogadh càrn dha mar chuimhneachan air.

Ach cha b' e sin deireadh a' ghnòthaich. Chuir Loch Iall roimhe gum biodh feadhainn à Loch Abar a' togail creach ann an Geàrrloch fhèin. Bhiodh sin mar dhioghaltas air bàs nan Abrach ann an Sgàrd Ruaidh.

Chuala Alasdair Breac mun phlana seo, ge-tà. Chuir e feachd de dh'ochdad duine ri chèile airson seasamh ris na h-Abraich. Bha iad an dùil gun tigeadh na h-Abraich tro Thoirbheartan agus chaidh iad ann airson coinneachadh riutha. Seo mar a chaidh an gnothach aithris anns a' Cheltic Magazine ann an ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a seachd (1877): *Nuair a thàinig a' mhadainn, dh'fhalbh na fir, agus ma dh'fhalbh, gu dearbh bha am prasgan glè neo-sgeadachail, ach bha iad calma, neo-sgàthach. Cha b' fhada gus an d' ràinig iad Coire Dubh Liathaich ... agus mar a bha a' chùis gun chinnte, bha bothannan-àirigh air ùrlar a' choire, agus cha robh fios aig na Geàrrlaich nach robh na h-Abraich nan laighe anns na bothannan, ri foill falaich.*

Bha fear de na Geàrrlaich treun gu leòr gus a dhol a dh'ionnsaigh nam bothan leis fhèin. B' esan Alasdair Ros. Ann an guth mòr, thug e dùbhlán do na h-Abraich thighinn a-mach. Ach cha d' fhuair e freagairt. Bha na h-Abraich air cluinntinn gun robh feachd de dh'ochdad duine a' dèanamh orra, agus bha iad air teicheadh dhachaigh.

Chaidh na Geàrrlaich dhachaigh tro Cheann Loch Iù, far an do thachair iad ri Ruairidh Breac mac Dhonnchaidh Bhàin, bàrd aig a' Chromfhasadh. Sgrìobh Ruairidh òran mun tachartas. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air an òran *Freiceadan a' Choire Dhuibh*. Tha e coltach gun robh muinntir Gheàrrloch gu math measail air an òran sin fad ùine mhòr.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Srath Òiceall: *Strath Oykeall*; bothan-àirigh: *shieling bothy*; sgalag: *lackey*; bior-ròstaidh: *roasting spit*; cuirp: *bodies*; Toirbheartan: *Torridon*; calma: *resolute*; neo-sgàthach: *fearless*; Ceann Loch Iù: *Kinlochewe*; An Cromfhasadh: *Cromasag*; freiceadan: *guard*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a bhiodh a' togail creach: *who would plunder cattle*; Sgàrd Ruaidh ann an Srath Chonainn: *Scardroy in Strathconon*; mharbh iad a h-uile duine aca: *they killed every man of them*; ach a-mhàin aon fhear: *except for one man*; am broinn seiche an tairbh: *inside the bull's hide*; tuilleadh air an fhearann aige: *any more on his land*; chuir e teachdaire sa mhionaid gu ruige Caisteal Bhrathainn: *he immediately sent a messenger to Brahan Castle*; cuide ris a' Mhorair MacCoinnich: *along with Lord MacKenzie*; Loch Iall, ceann-cinnidh nan Camshronach: *Locheil, the chief of the Camerons*; chaidh an dithis uachdaran a-mach air a chèile: *the two leaders/landlords fell out with each other*; gun a dhinnear ithe: *without eating his dinner*; chaidh dust Iain a thiodhlacadh: *Iain's remains were buried*; dioghaltas air bàs nan Abrach: *revenge for the death of the Lochaber men*; bha am prasgan glè neo-sgeadachail: *they were a very untidy bunch*; cha robh fios aig na Geàrrlaich: *the Gairloch men didn't know*; nach robh na h-Abraich nan laighe anns na bothannan, ri foill falaich: *that the Lochaber men weren't lying in the bothies, in ambush*; treun gu leòr gus a dhol a dh'ionnsaigh nam bothan leis fhèin: *brave enough to go towards the bothies on his own*; thug e dùbhlán do: *he challenged*; gun robh feachd de dh'ochdad duine a' dèanamh orra: *that a force of eighty men were bearing down on them*; bha iad air teicheadh dhachaigh: *they'd gone home*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Cha b' fhada gus an d' ràinig iad Coire Dubh **Liathaich**: *it wasn't long until they reached the black corrie of Liathach*. I've given the standard spelling of the famous mountain Liathach, on whose slopes the Gairloch men were ready to do battle with their Lochaber foes. But, in the original text, the spelling is Liaghaich (genitive of Liaghach) which is more indicative of the pronunciation, at least in Ross-shire. The word is based on liath and means "the light-grey one", hence the spelling. The pronunciation of a median "th" separating two broad vowels as a lenited "g" rather than a lenited "t" is simply based on ease of pronunciation. Another example from Ross-shire is an Applecross coastal name – Poll na Làthaich "inlet of the fine mud"; it's pronounced "Poll 'a Làghaich".

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a rinn a dhol-às: *who made his escape*.

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