

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## **Sgàthach, Cù Chulainn agus na Cnothan-calltainn**

*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](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 700. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 396 corresponds to Litir 700.*

Thairis air na trì seachdainean a dh’fhalbh, tha mi air a bhith a’ bruidhinn mun chraoibh-challtainn. Bu mhath leam crìoch a chur air an t-sreath le seann stòiridh às an Eilean Sgitheanach, anns a bheil cnothan-calltainn a’ nochdadh.

Bha na seann Ghàidheil a’ tomhas a’ chnotha-challtainn mar chnò an eòlais. Tha stòiridh ann mu na naoi cnothan-calltainn a chaidh ithe le bradan. Bho sin a-mach, ’s e bradan an eòlais a bh’ ann. ’S ann bho bhradan an eòlais a fhuair Fionn MacCumhail na comasan inntinn aige.

Tha an stòiridh Sgitheanach a’ dol air ais don linn nuair a bha boireannach air leth cumhachdach agus treun a’ fuireach anns an eilean. ’S e Sgàthach an t-ainm a bh’ oirre agus bha i a’ fuireach ann an Càisteal Dhùn Sgàthaich ann an Slèite. Bha sgoil sabaid aice. Bhiodh i ag oideachadh ghaisgeach òga ann an sgilean cogaidh.

Dh’fhàs an sgoil ainmeil thall thairis agus chuala an gaisgeach Ultach, Cù Chulainn, mu a deidhinn. Bha esan iomraiteach ann an Èirinn. Bha e treun is làidir gu leòr airson stad a chur air armailt.

An dèidh dha a bhith a’ sabaid, bhiodh uiread de chuthach air ’s gum biodh trì amaran air an dèanamh dha. Bha iad làn uisge fuar. Nuair a leumadh e don chiad fhear, bhiodh an t-uisge a’ goil agus a’ falbh mar deatach. Bhiodh an dàrna fear a’ goil agus a’ cur thairis. Bhiodh an treas fear an uair sin na amar teth.

Nuair a chuala Cù Chulainn mun sgoil aig Sgàthach, chaidh e, ann an trì cas-cheumannan, don Eilean Sgitheanach. Bha e an dùil, leis gun robh e na ghaisgeach ainmeil ann an Èirinn, gun cuireadh Sgàthach fàilte mhòr air. Ach cha do chuir. **Cha robh cliù Chù Chulainn aithnichte** ann an Alba aig an àm sin.

Bha Cù Chulainn feargach agus chuir e dùbhlán sabaid ron a h-uile oileanach eile san sgoil. Rinn e a’ chùis orra gu lèir. Mhòthaich Sgàthach an uair sin e. Thug i cead dha sabaid le a nighinn, **rud nach tachradh mar bu trice** le oileanaich ùra. An dèidh dà latha is oidhche, thug Cù Chulainn buaidh air a nighinn.

Thàinig Sgàthach fhèin. Rinn i fhèin is Cù Chulainn sabaid airson dà latha is oidhche. Ach cha robh duine seach duine aca buadhach.

Dh’iarr nighean Sgàthach air a maighdeanan bainne fèidh a thoirt dhi. Rinn i càise dheth. Ach chan itheadh a màthair no Cù Chulainn dad dhen chàise. Chuir i gaisgich a-mach airson fiadh a mharbhadh. Ròst i an fheadail, ach chan itheadh Sgàthach no Cù Chulainn dad dhith.

An uair sin chuir i na gaisgich a-mach gu ruige na craobhan-calltainn ri taobh nan allt air cliathaich beinn faisg air Sligeachan – Broc Bheinn. Thug iad cnothan-

calltainn air ais leotha. Ròst an nighean fiadh eile agus lìon i a bhrù le cnothan-calltainn ròsta. Dh'ith Sgàthach agus Cù Chulainn sin.

Bha Sgàthach agus Cù Chulainn le chèile an dòchas gum biodh cnothan an eòlais a' leigeil leotha buaidh a thoirt air an neach eile. Ach nuair a dh'ith iad na cnothan, fhuair iad eòlas na sìthe. Gheall iad nach dèanadh iad sabaid le chèile tuilleadh. 'S dòcha gum bu chòir dhuinn uile a bhith ag ithe barrachd chnothan-calltainn!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** craobh-challtainn: *hazel tree*; Fionn MacCumhail: *Fingal, Finn MacCoul*; sgoil sabaid: *a fighting school*; iomraiteach: *renowned*; buadhach: *victorious*; bainne fèidh: *deer milk*; Sligeachan: *Sligachan*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** bu mhath leam crìoch a chur air an t-sreath: *I would like to conclude the series*; às an Eilean Sgitheanach: *from Skye*; cnò an eòlais: *the nut of knowledge*; air leth cumhachdach agus treun: *extremely powerful and brave*; bhiodh i ag oideachadh ghaisgeach òga ann an sgilean cogaidh: *she would instruct young heroes in the skills of war*; gaisgeach Ultach: *Ulster hero*; làidir gu leòr airson stad a chur air armailt: *strong enough to stop an army*; bhiodh uiread de chuthach air 's gum biodh trì amaran air an dèanamh dha: *he was so fired up with apoplexy that three baths would be prepared for him*; bhiodh an t-uisge a' goil agus a' falbh mar deatach: *the water would boil and evaporate*; trì cas-cheumannan: *three steps*; gun cuireadh Sgàthach fàilte mhòr air: *that Sgàthach would give him a warm welcome*; rinn e a' chùis orra: *he defeated them*; sabaid le a nighinn: *to fight with her daughter*; thug X buaidh air Y: *X defeated Y*; chan itheadh a màthair no Cù Chulainn dad dhen chàise: *neither her mother nor Cuchullin would eat any of the cheese*; ròst i an fheadil: *she roasted the meat*; gu ruige na craobhan-calltainn ri taobh nan allt air cliathaich beinn: *to the hazel trees near the burns on the side of a mountain*; lìon i a bhrù le cnothan-calltainn ròsta: *she stuffed it with roast hazelnuts*; eòlas na sìthe: *the knowledge of peace*; nach dèanadh iad sabaid le chèile tuilleadh: *that they wouldn't fight each other anymore*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** rud nach tachradh mar bu trice le oileanaich ùra: *something that wouldn't usually happen with new students*. If you look up 'usually' in an English-Gaelic dictionary you will find *mar as trice* or *mar bu trice*. When is each used? The assertive verb 'is' is contained within the expression *mar as trice*. The past and conditional forms of the verb are both 'bu'. So where the past or conditional are employed, the form is *mar bu trice*. In the example in the Litir, the tense is conditional/past habitual (translated into English as 'would' or 'wouldn't') so the form is *mar bu trice*.

**Gnàthas -cainnt na Litreach:** Cha robh cliù Chù Chulainn aithnichte: Cuchullin's reputation wasn't recognised.

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