

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Dannsa Nollaig

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 701. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 397 corresponds to Litir 701.

Tha an Nollaig gu bhith oirnn a-rithist agus shaoil mi gum biodh e laghach stòiridh Gàidhlig Nollaig a thoirt dhuibh anns an Litir an t-seachdain seo. Tha an stòiridh seo a’ tighinn à Siorrachd Pheairt – à Gàidhealtachd Siorrachd Pheairt. Tha e am measg na chaidh a chruinneachadh leis a’ Bhean-uasal Evelyn Stiùbhart Mhoireach timcheall Bhlàr Athall. Tha e ann an leabhar a chuireadh ri chèile le Sylvia Robertson agus Tònaidh Dilworth, agus a chaidh fhoillseachadh o chionn trì bhliadhna. ’S e an t-ainm air an stòiridh ‘Dannsa Nollaig’.

Dh’fhalbh dà ghille òg air oidhche na Nollaig a dh’iarraidh botal uisge-bheatha – airson a bhith a’ cumail na Nollaig. Bha aca ri dhol tarsainn **fàire a’ mhonaidh** airson am botal fhaighinn. Nuair a bha iad air an rathad dhachaidh, thàinig cur is cathadh orra. Bha iad fhathast gu h-àrd anns a’ mhonadh.

Ghabh iad fasnadh bhon stoirm fo bhruaich. Bha toll rin taobh. Chuala iad ceòl binn a’ tighinn às an toll. ‘An cluinn thu siud, a charaid?’ thuirt fear dhiubh. ‘Teichidh sinn. ’S e na sìthichean a th’ ann.’

‘Fuirich gus am faic sinn a’ danns iad,’ thuirt am fear aig an robh am botal uisge-bheatha. Ach ghlac an t-eagal a chompanach. Cha rachadh esan na b’ fhaide a-steach don toll. Am fear leis a’ bhotal, ge-tà, bha e a’ sìor dhol a-steach chum ’s gum faiceadh e sealladh de na sìthichean a’ danns. Agus fhuair e deagh shealladh. Choimhead e na sìthichean airson greis. An uair sin, bhuaill e na inntinn gum biodh ruidhil aige fhèin. Leum e a-staigh am measg nan dannsairean.

Bha a chompanach aig beul an tuill a’ **gabhail fadachd**. Smaoinich e gun rachadh e a-steach a choimhead gu dè bha a’ cumail a charaid. Chunnaic e a charaid. Bha e a’ danns, leis a’ bhotal uisge-bheatha air a dhruim. ‘Thig a-mach!’ thuirt e.

‘Dèan air do shocair,’ fhreagair am fear eile. ‘Bidh an ruidhil ullamh an ceartuair.’

Ruith foighidinn an duine a bha am beul an tuill agus dh’fhalbh e dhachaigh. Dh’innis e do chàirdean a chompanaich mar a thachair. Cha robh iad deònach a chreidsinn. Bha iad a’ smaoinichadh gun do chuir esan às do a chompanach – gun robh e na mhurtair!

Thuirt e riutha dèanamh tàmh gu ceann bliadhna. Mura robh a charaid air nochdadh, rachadh e fhèin a-steach don toll às a dhèidh. Agus dh’aontaich iad ri sin.

An ceann bliadhna, aig an ath Nollaig, thug an gille sin càirdean an fhir aig an robh am botal don toll. Chuala e an ceòl ceudna. Chaidh e a-steach don toll leis fhèin.

Bha a charaid fhathast ann. Bha e fhathast a' danns gu sunndach, dìreach mar a bha e bliadhna roimhe. Cha robh e a' coimhead sgìth. 'Thig a-mach,' dh'èigh an gille.

'Do shocair,' thuirt am fear eile. 'Bidh an ruidhil thairis an ceartuair. Chan eil mi sgìth fhathast.'

Ach, ann am meadhan an ruidhil, ghabh an gille grèim air a chompanach mu a ghualainn. Shlaod e a-mach e gu beul an tuill. Nuair a fhuair e a' ghaoth mun chuairt air, thuit fear a' bhotail leis an anfhannachd. Thug an gille do a chàirdean e, agus thug iadsan dhachaigh e. Às dèidh bliadhna de dhannsadh, cha robh e càil na bu mhiosa na bha e nuair a thòisich e.

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Faclan na Litreach: Gàidhealtachd Siorrachd Pheairt: *Highland Perthshire*; sìthichean: *fairies*; murtair: *murderer*; anfhannachd: *weakness*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Tha an Nollaig gu bhith oirnn a-rithist: *Christmas is about to hit us again*; na chaidh a chruinneachadh leis a' Bhean-usal Evelyn Stiùbhart Mhoireach: *material collected by Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray*; air oidhche na Nollaig a dh'iarraidh botal uisge-bheatha: *on Christmas Eve to fetch a bottle of whisky*; thàinig cur is cathadh orra: *a blizzard descended on them*; fasnadh bhon stoirm fo bhruaich: *shelter from the storm under a bank*; teichidh sinn: *we'll flee*; fuirich gus am faic sinn a' danns iad: *wait until we see them dancing*; cha rachadh esan na b' fhaide: *he wouldn't go any further*; chum 's gum faiceadh e sealladh: *so that he could get [see] a view*; bhuail e na inntinn gum biodh ruidhil aige fhèin: *it occurred to him that he could dance a reel*; dèan air do shocair: *take it easy*; bidh an ruidhil ullamh an ceartuair: *the reel will soon be finished*; ruith foighidinn an duine: *the man's patience ran out*; deònach a chreidsinn: *willing to believe him*; gun do chuir esan às do X: *that he killed X*; tàmh gu ceann bliadhna: *wait for a year*; rachadh e fhèin a-steach don toll: *that he himself would go into the hole*; an ceòl ceudna: *the same music [as before]*; ghabh an gille grèim air a chompanach mu a ghualainn: *the lad grabbed his pal around his shoulders*; cha robh e càil na bu mhiosa: *he was no worse*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *I've kept some of the Perthshire dialect words and expressions in the text, and this is an interesting one. Bha aca ri dhol tarsainn fàire a' mhonaidh – they had to cross the ridge of the mountains. The editors interpreted the word as faire 'watch hill', applying to the ridge which would have been the highest point for watching. Without being able to hear the original speaker (Alasdair Stewart from Atholl) and his rendition of the word, I've taken the liberty of interpreting it as fàire (with accented 'a') meaning 'horizon, skyline, height, hill, ridge'. The word appears in the names of at least three significant ridges in the part of Perthshire where the stories were collected – Fàire Mhòr, Fàire Ghlinne Mhòir and Fàire Clachghlais. Fàire does occur in other places in the Gaelic landscape, but seems to be at its greatest density here.*

Gnàthas -cainnt na Litreach: Bha a chompanach aig beul an tuill a' gabhail fadachd: his companion at the mouth of the hole was **growing weary of waiting**.

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