

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Sandaidh Camshron, Magh Comair

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 720. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 416 corresponds to Litir 720.

Tha sinn a’ fuireach ann an Dabhach an Fhasaidh, taobh Loch Lòchaidh, an t-seachdain seo. **Aig fìor cheann a deas an locha**, tha Magh Comair. Ann am Beurla – *Mucomir*. ’S e a th’ ann magh no blàr anns a bheil dà abhainn a’ tighinn còmhla – ann an ‘comar’. ’S iad sin Abhainn Spiothain agus Abhainn Lòchaidh.

’S iongantach mura h-eil baile-fearainn air a bhith ann am Magh Comair airson ùine mhòir. Am measg nan daoine a dh’obraich am fearann mar thuathanaich, bha fear Sandaidh Camshron. Bha e beò aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug, suas gu meadhan an fhicheadamh linn. Bha e am measg nan daoine a bu làidire ann an Alba.

Bha cliù aig Camshronaich Mhagh Comair mar dhaoine car fiadhaich. Tha stòiridh ann gun robh taistalach a’ sireadh biadh is fasnachadh. Thàinig e gu Magh Comair. Bha e greis a’ gnogadh air doras an taighe gun freagairt fhaighinn. Ghnog e rithist, le builean làidir.

Dh’fhosgladh uinneag. Chuir cuideigin a cheann a-mach, agus dh’fheòraich e gu dè bha ag adhbharachadh na h-ùpraid. ‘Ma tha Crìosdaidh a-staigh,’ thuir an taistalach, ‘nach leig e leam fois a ghabhail am broinn an taighe?’ Fhregair am fear eile, ‘Chan eil Crìosdaidh an seo ann – ’s e Camshronaich a th’ annainn uile!’

’S dòcha nach eil an stòiridh sin fìor, ach tuigidh sibh gun robh cliù de sheòrsa air choreigin aig muinntir an àite! Bhathar ag ràdh mu Shandaidh Camshron – no Alexander Anthony Cameron mar a bh’ air ann am Beurla – gun robh e na bu làidire na duine sam bith eile a bha beò ri linn ann an Alba. Bha a phiuthar, Ceit, a bha cuideachd iongantach làidir, dhen bheachd gun d’ fhuair iad an neart bho athair am màthar, a bhuineadh do Chloinn ’ic a’ Mhaoilein. Bha cliù acasan mar dhaoine neartmhor. Bhathar ag innse mu fhear dhiubh a tharraing each a-mach à poll mònach. Mar bu trice, nam biodh each a’ tuiteam ann am poll mònach, gheibheadh e bàs an sin.

Tha e coltach gun robh Sandaidh dìreach làidir gu nàdarrach. Cha robh e a’ dèanamh trèanadh sam bith, thuir e, ach beagan spealaidh. Chan eil mi cinnteach an gabh sin a chreidsinn, ach bha e na bu thoilichte a bhith an sàs ann an obair-fearainn seach a bhith na lùth-chleasaiche ainmeil.

Ach chaidh e timcheall nan geamannan Gàidhealach. Bha seachd clachan deug de chuideam ann. A dh’aindeoin sin, bhiodh e a’ buannachadh fharpaisean mar an àrd-leum. Agus bhiodh e gu tric a’ buannachadh fharpaisean neart – leithid carachd, tilgeil an ùird agus togail chlach.

Bha Sandaidh a’ carachd turas an aghaidh George Hackenschmidt, an ‘Leòmhann Ruiseanach’. Bha Hackenschmidt dhen bheachd gun robh Sandaidh air

leth math agus thabhainn e cothrom don Albannach a dhol air turas eadar-nàiseanta leis. Dhiùlt an Camshronach, ge-tà, agus thill e dhachaigh a Loch Abar.

Ach chaidh e air tursan eadar-nàiseanta tràth san fhicheadamh linn. Bha e ann an Astràilia 's Sealan Nuadh, agus cuideachd anns an Ruis. Tha e coltach, ge-tà, gun robh e a cheart cho toilichte a bhith aig Geamannan Gàidhealach Ghleann Fhionnainn! Chaochail Sandaidh ann an naoi ceud deug, caogad 's a h-aon (1951), aig aois seachdad 's a sia. 'S iomadh clach a chuireadh air a chàrn, ach bhiodh iad uile beag an coimeas ris an fheadhainn a thog e fhèin!

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Faclan na Litreach: Dabhach an Fhasaidh: *Dochanassie*; Loch Lòchaidh: *Loch Lochy*; Magh Comair: *Mucomir*; Abhainn Spiothain: *River Spean*; Sandaidh Camshron: *Sandy Cameron*; spealadh: *scything*; lùth-chleasaiche: *athlete*.

Abairtean na Litreach: 's iongantach mura h-eil baile-fearainn air a bhith ann airson ùine mhòir: *it's likely there's been a fermtoun there for a long time*; gun robh taistealach a' sireadh biadh is fasgadh: *that a travelling man was seeking food and shelter*; bha e greis a' gnogadh air doras an taighe gun freagairt fhaighinn: *he was a while knocking on the house door without getting a response*; dh'fhosgladh uinneag: *a window was opened*; dh'fheòraich e gu dè bha ag adhbharachadh na h-ùpraid: *he asked what was causing the uproar*; nach leig e leam fois a ghabhail am broinn an taighe?: *won't he allow me to take my ease inside?*; chan eil Crìosdaidh an seo ann – 's e Camshronaich a th' annainn uile: *there's no Christian here – we're all Camerons*; gun robh cliù de sheòrsa air choreigin aig muinntir an àite: *that the locals had a reputation of sorts*; a bhuineadh do Chloinn 'ic a' Mhaoilein: *belonged to the MacMillans*; bhathar ag innse mu fhear dhiubh a tharraing each a-mach à poll mònach: *it was told of one of them [that he] dragged a horse out of a peat bog*; bha seachd clachan deug de chuideam ann: *he weighed 17 stones*; leithid carachd, tilgeil an ùird agus togail chlach: *such as wrestling, throwing the hammer and lifting stones*; thabhainn e cothrom dha: *he made him an offer*; Geamannan Gàidhealach Ghleann Fhionnainn: *Glenfinnan Highland Games*; 's iomadh clach a chuireadh air a chàrn: *many a stone was put on his cairn [ie he was praised by many people when he died]*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *Although the name of the locality (preserved in Mucomir Farm) is Magh Comair 'plain of the confluence', the route of the River Lochy out of Loch Lochy was altered in 1813, cutting the 'magh' in two (and raising the loch by twelve feet). The Telford-designed Caledonian Canal took the original route of the Lochy, while the river was diverted eastwards to join the Spean a kilometre above the original 'comar'. The new 'Mucomir Cut' also cleaved across two other culturally significant features – Dail Mhagh Comair – where the clans would gather and Rathad Mòr nan Corp, an old coffin road from Letterfinlay that led to the burial ground of Cladh Mhagh Comair, now near the exit of the canal from the loch.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **Aig fìor cheann a deas an locha:** *at the extreme southern end of the loch.*

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