

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## An Dèirceach Abrach (1)

*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 758. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 454 corresponds to Litir 758.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu na comasan iongantach a bh’ aig Calum Cille ann a bhith a’ fosgladh dhorsan a bha glaiste na aghaidh. Bha e ann an Èirinn turas agus thugadh cuireadh dha a dhol a chèilidh air na manaich ann am manachainn aig **Tìr Dà Ghlas** (‘fearann an dà allt’) ann am meadhan na dùthcha. Nuair a chaidh e ann, bha an iuchair a dh’fhosgladh an caibeal air chall. Bha na manaich gu math mì-thoilichte mu dheidhinn call na h-iuchrach.

Chaidh Calum Cille gu doras a’ chaibeil. Thuir e, ‘Is urrainn don Tighearna, às aonais iuchair, doras a thaigh fhèin fhosgladh do a shearbhantan.’ Cho luath ’s a bha na faclan sin a-mach às a bheul, dh’fhuasgladh glasan an dorais le neart, agus dh’fhosgail an doras leis fhèin.

Tha an stòiridh sin a’ nochdadh ann an *Vita Columbae*, eachdraidh Chalum Chille a chaidh a sgrìobhadh le Adomnan. Agus a’ chaibideil a leanas air sin anns a’ *Vita*, tha i co-cheangailte ri dèirceach bochd à Loch Abar agus an t-slat bhiorach a rinn Calum Cille dha. Seo agaibh an stòiridh.

Latha a bha seo thàinig an dèirceach Abrach a Chalum Cille, ag ràdh nach robh gu leòr aige a chumadh a theaghlach a dol. Thug Calum Cille dha na b’ urrainn dha de dhèirc. An uair sin thuir e, ‘A dhuine bhoichd, faigh slat bhon choille a tha faisg oirnn agus thoir i dhomh gu sgiobalta.’ Chaidh an duine boichd don choille, fhuair e slat agus thug e do Chalum Cille i.

Nuair a fhuair e an t-slat, rinn Calum Cille aon cheann dhith biorach agus bheannaich e i. ‘Glèidh an t-slat seo le cùram,’ thuir e. ‘Ma nì thu sin, tha mi a’ creidsinn nach dèan i cron air daoine no crodh, ach gun dèan i cron a-mhàin air fiadh-bheatha agus èisg. Cho fad ’s a ghleidheas tu an t-slat seo, **cha bhi gainnead de shitheann** anns an taigh agad.’

Mar a bhiodh dùil, bha an dèirceach toilichte. Cha bhiodh gainnead feòla anns an taigh aige tuilleadh. Dh’fhalbh e dhachaigh, ann an deagh shunnd, a Loch Abar. Chuir e an t-slat bhiorach mar stob anns a’ choille ann an àite iomallach. Bha aon cheann dhith anns an talamh agus an ceann eile – an ceann biorach – a’ stobadh an-àirde. Dh’fhàg an duine boichd i mar sin fad na h-oidhche. An ath mhadainn, thill e don àite. Agus, mar a bha Calum Cille air innse, ’s ann a bha damh mòr air tuiteam air an stob. Bha e marbh. Saoilidh mi gun robh an t-slat air a dhol tro chridhe an daimh. Co-dhiù, bha feòil gu leòr aig a theaghlach an latha sin.

A rèir beul-aithris, ’s ann mar sin a lean gnothaichean fad ùine mhòr. Cha d’ rachadh latha seachad air nach biodh beathach air choreigin – damh no eilid no earba

– marbh air ceann biorach an stuib. Nuair a bha a theaghlach sàsaichte leis na bh’ aca de dh’fheòil, bhiodh am fear bochd a’ reic na bh’ air fhàgail do a choimhearsnaich. Feumaidh nach robh e uile-gu-lèir bochd tuilleadh.

’S e Calum Cille a bu choireach ris a’ phiseach a thàinig air a bheatha. Ach, gu mì-fhortanach, cha robh cùisean gu bhith a’ leantainn mar sin gu sìorraidh. Innsidh mi dhuibh dè thachair don dèirceach Abrach an-ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Abrach: *belonging to Lochaber*; slat: *rod, long stick*; glèidh: *keep, preserve*; damh: *stag*; sàsaichte: *satisfied*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** na comasan iongantach a bh’ aig Calum Cille: *St Columba’s amazing abilities*; thugadh cuireadh dha a dhol a chèilidh air na manaich: *he was given an invitation to go and visit the monks*; bha an iuchair a dh’fhosgladh an caibeal air chall: *the key that would open the chapel was missing*; dh’fhuasgladh glasan an dorais le neart: *the locking bolts on the door flew open*; dèirceach bochd à Loch Abar: *a poor beggar from Lochaber*; thug X dha na b’ urrainn dha de dhèirc: *X gave him all the alms he could spare*; rinn X aon cheann dhith biorach: *X sharpened one end of it*; gun dèan i cron a-mhàin air fiadh-bheatha agus èisg: *that it will only damage wild animals and fish*; mar stob anns a’ choille: *as a stake in the wood*; a’ stobadh an-àirde: *sticking up*; cha d’ rachadh latha seachad: *not a day would go past*; beathach air choreigin marbh air ceann biorach an stuib: *an animal of some sort dead on the sharp end of the stake*; a’ reic na bh’ air fhàgail do a choimhearsnaich: *selling what was left to his neighbours*; a bu choireach ris a’ phiseach: *who was responsible for the improvement*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Tìr Dà Ghlas (*Tirdaglas, now Terryglas, Co. Tipperary*) has an ancient church history. What is also interesting is the name, which translates as ‘land of two streams’. Glas ‘stream’ is to be found in both Irish and Welsh dictionaries but appears to have become obsolete at a reasonably early stage in Scottish Gaelic and is not in our dictionaries. Nevertheless it is present in place names. Loch Glass and Glen Glass in Easter Ross likely derive their names from the original name of the stream that drains the loch. Strathglass, named from the River Glass, takes its name from an old Gaelic form, and Inveruglas Water (Loch Lomond) is originally Dubh Ghlas ‘dark stream’, the settlement at its mouth being Inbhir Dhubh Ghlais, anglicised Inveruglas. The personal name Dùghlas/Dùbhghlas (Douglas) appears to have the same origin, and there are other place names like Finglas/Finlas ‘fair stream’, Fo-ghlas/Fowlis ‘sub-stream’ in a number of localities. While the anglicised forms are based on the Gaelic names, river names are very conservative and one cannot rule out the possibility that the Gaelic forms were themselves built on earlier P-Celtic forms.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** cha bhi gainnead de shitheann anns an taigh agad: *there will be no shortage of venison in your house*.

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