

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Fear nan Cluasan Eich (2)

*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.maclea@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 765. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 461 corresponds to Litir 765.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu *Chastell March* – ‘Caisteal Eich’ – ann an ceann a tuath na Cuimrigh. Chaidh ainmeachadh airson *March* – ‘Each’ – fear de ridirean Rìgh Artair. Bha cluasan mòra aige coltach ri cluasan eich. Chùm e am falach iad le falt fada. Nuair a dh’fheumadh e cliop fhaighinn, ’s e an gille a b’ òige anns a’ chaisteal a dhèanadh sin. Às dèidh làimhe, cha bhiodh sgeul air a’ ghille.

Bha an t-àrd-chòcaire, Derfel, ag innse don ghille a b’ òige, Islwyn, gum bu chòir dha teicheadh nuair a choisich March a-steach don chidsin. ‘Is tu an gille as òige,’ thuirt e ri Islwyn. ‘Bidh thu a’ gearradh m’ fhuilt madainn Disathairne.’ Bha cuirm mhòr gu bhith ann oidhche Shathairne.

Feasgar Dihaoine, thòisich an luchd-ciùil air nochdadh bho air feadh ceann a tuath na Cuimrigh. Nam measg bha pìobaire air an robh Merfyn mar ainm. Chan e a’ phìob-mhòr a bhiodh e a’ cluich ach tè a bhathar a’ dèanamh de chuilc. Chaidh Merfyn a-steach don chidsin far an robh Derfel agus Islwyn.

‘Sheas mi air mo phìob agus bhris mi i,’ thuirt Merfyn. ‘Càit am faigh mi cuilc airson tè ùr a dhèanamh?’

‘Thalla sìos an rathad,’ thuirt Derfel. ‘Chì thu coilleagan. Air an taobh thall dhiubh tha boglach. Tha cuilcean gu leòr a’ fàs an sin.’

Dh’fhalbh Merfyn a dh’iarraidh chuilcean. Cha robh e air falbh fada nuair a thill e ann an cabhaig, agus **anail na uchd**. ‘Lorg mi a’ bhoglach,’ thuirt e. ‘Gheàrr mi cuilc mhòr chruaidh a bha dìreach ceart airson pìob a dhèanamh. Agus rinn mi pìob. Ach, nuair a sheinn mi i, cha tigeadh port sam bith aiste. An àite sin, bha guth. Agus a bheil fios agaibh dè bha e ag ràdh?’

‘Chan eil,’ thuirt Derfel, ‘dè bha e ag ràdh?’

‘*Tha cluasan eich aig March, tha cluasan eich aig March!*’ fhreagair am pìobaire. ‘Èistibh!’

Thug e a’ phìob ùr às a phòcaid agus sheinn e i. ‘Tha cluasan eich aig March, tha cluasan eich aig March,’ sheinn a’ phìob.

‘Tha fios agam a-nise carson a tha falt fada aig March,’ thuirt Derfel. ‘Tha nàire air mu a chluasan.’

‘Tha thu ceart,’ thuirt guth air an cùlaibh. Thionndaidh iad. ’S e March fhèin a bh’ ann. ‘Bha an t-eagal orm gum biodh daoine a’ magadh orm oir bha cluasan eich orm,’ thuirt e.

‘Ach ciamar a bha fios aig a’ phìob-chiùil?’ dh’fhaighnich Islwyn.

‘A, uill, a’ chiad chliop a bh’ agam,’ thuir March, ‘dh’iarr mi air mo shaighdearan an gille a ghearr m’ fhalt a thoirt air falbh. Ach chuir iad gu bàs e agus chuir iad a chorp anns a’ bhoglaich. Bhon uair sin, thug mi òrdugh seachad nach bitheadh gille a’ faighinn bàs. Tha iad uile a’ faighinn poca làn òir airson an sgìre seo fhàgail agus an dìomhaireachd a chumail.’

‘Agus ’s e taibhs a’ ghille a tha a’ bruidhinn anns a’ phìob,’ thuir Islwyn.

‘S e,’ fhreagair March.

‘Agus dè thachras dhòmhsa a-màireach?’ dh’fhaighnich Islwyn.

‘Faodaidh tusa fuireach an seo,’ fhreagair an ridire. ‘Tha mi a’ dol a shealltainn mo chluasan don a h-uile duine a-màireach. Carson a bhiodh nàire orm mu rudeigin a bh’ agam nuair a rugadh mi?’ Chùm March ri a ghealladh. Agus nuair a leig Derfel dheth a dhreuchd, ghabh Islwyn thairis bhuaithe mar àrd-chòcaire Chastell March.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Faclan na Litreach:** àrd-chòcaire: *chief cook*; cuirm: *feast*; pìobaire: *piiper*; coilleagan: *sand dunes*; taibhs: *ghost*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** ceann a tuath na Cuimrigh: *North Wales*; ridirean Rìgh Artair: *the knights of King Arthur*; bha cluasan mòra aige coltach ri cluasan eich: *he had large ears like horse ears*; chùm e am falach iad: *he kept them hidden*; nuair a dh’fheumadh e cliop fhaighinn: *when he needed to get a haircut*; às dèidh làimhe, cha bhiodh sgeul air a’ ghille: *afterwards, there would be no sign of the lad*; a’ gearradh m’ fhuilt: *cutting my hair*; tè a bhathar a’ dèanamh de chuilc: *one that was made of a rush*; sheas mi air mo phìob agus bhris mi i: *I stood on my pipe and broke it*; air an taobh thall dhiubh tha boglach: *on the far side of them is a bog*; nuair a sheinn mi i: *when I played it*; cha tigeadh port aiste: *no tune would come from it*; tha nàire air mu a chluasan: *he’s ashamed of his ears*; gum biodh daoine a’ magadh orm: *that people would mock me*; chuir iad gu bàs e: *they killed him*; chuir iad a chorp anns a’ bhoglaich: *they put his body in the bog*; poca làn òir airson an sgìre seo fhàgail agus an dìomhaireachd a chumail: *a bag of gold to leave this area and keep the secret*; dè thachras dhòmhsa a-màireach?: *what will happen to me tomorrow?*; faodaidh tusa fuireach an seo: *you can stay here*; chùm March ri a ghealladh: *March kept to his promise*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *Did you think you might have heard the story of March and his horse’s ears before? You might have, although perhaps from a different culture. The Irish tale of Lowry Lynch is very similar, except that the plant that heard about the King’s horse ears was a willow, from which a clàrsach was made – and the clàrsach of course told the populace about the ears. And, unlike the kindlier March, Lowry had put many barbers to death so that his secret could be kept. Another version is from Greece and concerns King Midas (he of the golden touch) who had ass’s ears; here the tell-tale plants in question are very similar to the Welsh example – they are bulrushes. Cornwall and Brittany also have versions – do any of you know a Scottish one in Gaelic, Scots or English?*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Cha robh e air falbh fada nuair a thill e ann an cabhaig, agus **anail na uchd:** *he wasn’t gone long when he returned in a hurry, out of breath.*

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