

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Mar a Thàinig na Sìthichean gu Bith

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 791. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 487 corresponds to Litir 791.

Bidh sibh eòlach air na sìthichean. Chan eil mi a’ ciallachadh gu bheil sibh eòlach orra gu pearsanta. Air an làimh eile, ’s dòcha gu bheil. Tha cuimhne agam air còmhradh a bh’ agam le fear à Uibhist. ‘Eil thu a’ creidsinn anns na sìthichean?’ dh’fhaighnich e dhìom. Thàinig a’ cheist **mar chlach às an adhar**.

‘Uill, tha mi a’ creidsinn gun robh na seann daoine a’ creidsinn annta,’ fhreagair mi. Bha mo thòn air an fheansa, gun teagamh.

‘O, tha mi fhìn a’ creidsinn annta,’ thuirt am fear eile le sgoinn. ‘Gu deimhinne, tha!’ Choimhead e orm le truas na shùilean.

Biodh sin mar a bhitheadh e. Fàgaidh mi agaibh fhèin e co-dhiù tha sibh a’ creidsinn annta gus nach eil. Ach is cinnteach gu bheil sibh air gu leòr a chluinntinn mun deidhinn. Cò an Gàidheal nach eil?

Far a bheil mi fhìn a’ fuireach ann an Inbhir Nis, tha sgeulachdan rin aithris fhathast mu na sìthichean, gu h-àraidh an fheadhainn a bha a’ fuireach ann an Tom na h-Iùbhraich air taobh an iar a’ bhaile. Eadhon an-diugh, cò rachadh an sin leis fhèin air oidhche dhorch!

A bheil fios agaibh, ge-tà, mar a thàinig na sìthichean gu bith anns a’ chiad dol a-mach? Chan eil cunntas orra sa Bhìoball, fhad ’s as aithne dhomh, agus cha chreid mi gun tug Teàrlach Darwin beachd orra nas motha. Ach bha beachd aig na seann daoine orra, agus seo agaibh cunntas a thàinig à Eilean Mhiùghlaigh anns an naoidheamh linn deug.

Nise, bha na daoine anns na h-eileanan sin eòlach air eun-mara air a bheil *famhlag-mhara* no *amhlag-mhara*; tha an t-ainm a’ ciallachadh *sea swallow*. ’S e ainm an eòin ann am Beurla *storm petrel*. Bidh iad a’ neadachadh ann an tuill ann an creagan no san talamh.

Bha an t-Aingeal Pròiseil a’ fuireach ann an Nèamh. Ach thòisich e ar-a-mach am measg nan ainglean. Thuirt e gum falbhadh e agus gun cruthaich e rìoghachd dha fhèin. Nuair a bha e a’ falbh a-mach air dòras Nèamh, thug e dealanaich dheilgneach agus beithir bheumnach leis aig a shàilean. Lean mòran ainglean air.

Bha uiread a’ fàgail Nèamh ’s gun do dh’èigh am Mac, ‘Athair! Athair! Thathar a’ falmhachadh a’ bhaile!’ Aig a sin, dh’òrdaich an t-Athair gum biodh gèatachan Nèamh agus Ifrinn air an dùnadh sa bhad. Agus ’s e sin a thachair. Bha Nèamh agus Ifrinn dùinte, glaiste.

An fheadhainn a bh' air an taobh a-staigh, bha iad a-staigh. Ach an fheadhainn a bh' air Nèamh fhàgail agus nach do ràinig Ifrinn, dh'itealaich iad a-steach gu tuill anns an talamh dìreach mar na famhlagan-mara.

Is iad sin na sìthichean. Bhon uair sin tha iad air a bhith a' fuireach fon talamh, agus chan fhaod iad falbh a-mach ach a-mhàin nuair a gheibh iad cead bhon Rìgh. Chan eil cead aca falbh a-mach **air Diardaoin** oir 's e sin Latha Chaluim Chille Chaoimh. Chan eil cead aca falbh a-mach air Dihaoine nas motha, oir 's e sin Latha a' Mhic, no air Disathairne oir 's e sin Latha Moire, no air Didòmhnaich oir 's e sin Latha an Tighearna. Agus sin agaibh an stòiridh air mar a thàinig na sìthichean gu bith o chionn fhad an t-saoghail.

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Faclan na Litreach: Tom na h-Iùbhraich: *Tomnahurich*; Eilean Mhiùghlaigh: *Mingulay*; (f)amhlag-mhara: *storm petrel*; Latha Moire: *the Virgin Mary's day*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Chan eil mi a' ciallachadh gu bheil sibh eòlach orra gu pearsanta: *I don't mean that you know them personally*; air an làimh eile: *on the other hand*; eil thu a' creidsinn anns na sìthichean?: *do you believe in the fairies?*; bha mo thòn air an fheansa: *my backside was on the fence*; gu deimhinne, tha!: *certainly I do!*; le truas na shùilean: *with pity in his eyes*; biodh sin mar a bhitheadh e: *that's as it may be [lit. let that be as it would be]*; tha sgeulachdan rin aithris fhathast: *stories are still told*; cò rachadh an sin leis fhèin air oidhche dhorch?: *who would go there on his own on a dark night?*; mar a thàinig na sìthichean gu bith: *how the fairies came into being*; chan eil cunntas orra sa Bhìoball, fhad 's as aithne dhomh: *there's no account of them in the Bible, as far as I'm aware*; cha chreid mi gun tug X beachd orra nas motha: *I don't think X gave an opinion on them either*; bidh iad a' neadachadh ann an tuill: *they nest in holes*; bha an t-Aingeal Pròiseil a' fuireach ann an Nèamh: *the Proud Angel was living in Heaven*; gun cruthaich e rìoghachd dha fhèin: *he would found his own kingdom*; thug e dealanaich dheilgneach agus beithir bheumnach leis aig a shàilean: *he brought with him prickly lightning and wounding thunderbolts at his heels*; gum biodh gèatachan Nèamh agus Ifrinn air an dùnadh sa bhad: *that the gates of Heaven and Hell would be closed instantly*; an fheadhainn a bh' air Nèamh fhàgail agus nach do ràinig Ifrinn: *the ones that had left Heaven and had not reached Hell*; dh'itealaich iad a-steach gu tuill anns an talamh: *they flew into holes in the ground*; Latha Chaluim Chille Chaoimh: *gentle St Columba's day*; o chionn fhad an t-saoghail: *a very long time ago*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Chan eil cead aca falbh a-mach **air Diardaoin**: *They're not allowed to leave on Thursdays. You don't need to pluralise as is done in English – the use of the preposition 'air' means you are referring to Thursdays in general. Note the difference in the following: Bidh mi ga dhèanamh Diardaoin 'I'll be doing it on Thursday'. Bidh mi ga dhèanamh air Diardaoin 'I'll be doing it on Thursdays'.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Thàinig a' cheist **mar chlach às an adhar**: *the question came like a bolt from the blue [lit. like a stone from the sky]*.

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