

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## **Murchadh Sròineach**

*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 822. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 518 corresponds to Litir 822.*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Phinguin – long-cogaidh Ghearmailteach ri linn an Dàrna Cogaidh. Bha i a’ toirt a’ chreidsinn gur e soitheach-carago a bh’ innte. Tharraing mi an sgeulachd sin à leabhar grinn dà-chànanach a thàinig a-mach o chionn beagan mhìosan – ‘Casán Searraich’ le Calum MacFhearghuis. Buinidh Calum don Rubha ann an Eilean Leòdhais.

’S e leabhar fìor mhath a th’ ann. Tha e làn spòrs agus làn Gàidhlig bhrèagha. Anns an leabhar, tha Calum a’ sgrìobhadh mu Murchadh Sròineach. Cò – no dè – a bh’ ann am Murchadh Sròineach? Seann Rubhach, a bha na charaid aig athair Chalum, ’s dòcha? Uill, chan e buileach.

Bha Calum na ghille òg. Bha e air an leabaidh anns a’ chùlaist le brochan na bhroilleach. Tha e a’ sgrìobhadh gun robh e gu math tinn. Bha a mhàthair air a thoirt às a’ chlòsaid far am biodh e a’ cadal còmhla ris a dhithis bhràithrean.

Fhad ’s a bha e na laighe air an leabaidh, dh’fhairich e seachas shìos aig an teine. Bha feadhainn air thighinn a-steach don taigh agus bha iad a’ còmhradh ri chèile. Thàinig màthair Chalum a-steach don chùlaist agus chuir i a’ cheist air, ‘Am faod Sgeadaidh agus Murchadh Sròineach a thighinn a-nuas a shealltainn ort?’

Thuirt Calum gum faodadh. Bha e eòlach air Sgeadaidh – fear de mhuinntir an àite. Ach cha robh e eòlach air Murchadh Sròineach.

Thàinig Sgeadaidh a-steach don chùlaist air sàil màthair Chalum. Cha robh sgeul air duine eile, ge-tà.

‘Càite a bheil Murchadh Sròineach?’ dh’fhaighnich Calum.

Thug Sgeadaidh eun a-mach fo a gheansaidh. Bha an t-eun beò. Bha e mu mheud eireig – cearc òg. Bha e brèagha, iomadh-dhathte le gob mòr air. Chan fhaca Calum a leithid riamh roimhe sin.

Bhruidhinn Sgeadaidh. ‘Seo agad Murchadh Sròineach. ’S ann ainneamh a chì sinn e a’ tadhal nan cladaichean againne ach tha a sheòrsa cumanta gu leòr anns na h-eileanan iomallach. Nise, dè do bheachd? Nach eil e eireachdail?’

‘Tha e bòidheach,’ dh’aontaich Calum. Thuirt e gun robh e an dòchas nach robh Sgeadaidh a’ dol ga mharbhadh.

‘Chan eil idir!’ thuirt a mhàthair agus Sgeadaidh **à beòil a chèile**.

‘Bha e feidhir air grèim a ghabhail air baoit fhad ’s a bha sinn a’ tarraing an lìn-bhig,’ mhinich Sgeadaidh. ‘Tha amharas agam gun robh e air cluinntinn nach robh thu gu math agus dh’iarr e a thighinn a shealltainn ort.’ Tha fhios gun robh Calum òg toilichte mu dheidhinn sin!

An do dh'obraich sibh a-mach fhathast gu dè an t-eun a bh' ann? Feumaidh nach robh ainm aca do a leithid anns an Rubha, chan eil fhios a'm. Ach dh'inns màthair Chaluum dha gun robh ainm Gàidhlig aig fear Tirisdeach, Dougaidh MacCaluim, dha – *buthaid*. 'S e sin an t-eun beag bòidheach ris an canar *puffin* ann am Beurla.

Bha iad dhen bheachd gur e fear òg a bh' ann. Cha bhiodh fear aig ìre inbhich cho aineolach 's gun gabhadh e grèim le a bheul air dubhan le baoit air. Agus dè thachair do Mhurchadh Sròineach? Uill, thug Sgeadaidh sìos don chladach e. Leig e às e gus am faigheadh e dhachaigh 'gu a mhàthair'. Ged a tha amharas agam nach robh for aig màthair Mhurchaidh don 'ghille' aice!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** grinn: *fine, nice*; Calum MacFhearghuis: *Calum Fergusson*; Murchadh Sròineach: *big-nosed Murdo*; Rubhach: *a person from Point*; geansaidh: *gansey, jumper*; iomadh-dhathte: *multi-coloured*; eireachdail: *handsome*; buthaid: *puffin*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** long-cogaidh Ghearmailteach ri linn an Dàrna Cogaidh: *a German warship at the time of the Second War*; a' toirt a' chreidsinn gur e soitheach-carago a bh' innte: *pretending that she was a cargo ship*; buinidh X don Rubha: *X belongs to Point*; anns a' chùlaist le brochan na bhroilleach: *in the big bedroom with a chest infection*; dh'fhairich e seachas shìos aig an teine: *he heard, became aware of conversation in the living room [at the fire]*; am faod X a thighinn a-nuas a shealltainn ort?: *can X come [down] and see you?*; air sàil màthair X: *directly behind [on the heel of] X's mother*; chun na leapa: *to the bed*; mu mheud eireig: *about the size of a pullet*; chan fhaca X a leithid riamh roimhe sin: *X never saw the like before that*; 's ann ainneamh a chì sinn e a' tadhal nan cladaichean againne: *it's rarely we see him visiting our shores*; tha a sheòrsa cumanta gu leòr: *his kind are plentiful enough*; nach robh Sgeadaidh a' dol ga mharbhadh: *that Skeddy was not going to kill him*; bha e feidhir air grèim a ghabhail air baoit: *he had just bitten on bait*; fhad 's a bha sinn a' tarraing an lin-bhig: *as we were pulling in the small [fishing] line*; cha bhiodh fear aig ìre inbhich cho aineolach 's gun gabhadh e grèim le a bheul air dubhan le baoit air: *an adult one wouldn't be so ignorant as to bite a baited hook*; leig e às e: *he let him go*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *What is the correct spelling of the loan word carago (from English 'cargo')? Calum Fergusson uses caragò, although I'm not convinced about the accented terminal letter and I went for carago. GOC and some of the dictionaries have cargu which assumes a svarabhakti vowel between 'r' and 'g'. But it doesn't really reflect the pronunciation of the word by many speakers. Defenders of cargu would say it's like Glaschu for Glasgow, although many pronounce the name as 'Glasacho'. Perhaps we should compromise by adopting the original English spelling of 'cargo' and accept it as a loan word which was given a Gaelic pronunciation. No doubt you'll have your own opinion!*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** thuirte X agus Y à beòil a chèile: *said X and Y together (lit. 'from each other's mouth')*.

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