

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Srath Àrdail (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. This is Litir 843. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 539 corresponds to Litir 843.

Bha sinn ann an Srath Àrdail ann an Siorrachd Pheairt an t-seachdain sa chaidh, agus sin far am bi sinn a’ fuireach an-diugh. Tha e coltach gun robh am madadh-allaidh pailt anns an sgìre sin uaireigin. Tha madaidhean-allaidh air an ainmeachadh ann an cuid de dh’ainmean-àite, leithid Creag a’ Mhadaidh faisg air Cill Mhìcheil. Bha saobhaidh aca faisg air sin.

Tha Gleann Feàrnaid ceangailte ri Srath Àrdail. Aig ceann shuas a’ ghlinne, air a’ chrìch eadar fearann Àrdail agus fearann Athall, tha Beinn Bhùirich. Bha cuideigin a’ faighneachd dhìom o chionn ghoirid mun ainm. Dè bhiodh a’ bùirich ann? Thuir mi gur iad na daimh a bu choltaiche.

Ach, a rèir choltais, bha mi ceàrr. Anns an t-seann dàn Athallach, Òran nam Beann, tha Beinn Bhùirich air a h-ainmeachadh mar seo:

Chì mi Beinn Ghlo nan eag, Beinn Bheag ’s Airgead-bheann, Beinn Bhùirich nam Madadh Mòr ’s Allt Nid nan Eun ri a taobh...

’S iad na madaidhean-allaidh a bha ainmeil airson a bhith **ri bùirich** ann, seach na daimh!

Aig bonn Ghleann Feàrnaid, tha clach mhòr ann. Cha bhuin a’ chlach sin don sgìre. Tha seòrsa eile de chloich innte bhon fheadhainn a bhuineas don t-srath fhèin. Bhiodh cuid ag ràdh gun robh i air a gluasad ann le deigh o chionn nam mìltean bhliadhnaichean. Canaidh sinn ‘clach iomrallach’ no *glacial erratic* ri a leithid.

Ach bha stòiridh eile aig na seann daoine. Tha e a’ dol air ais don linn nuair a b’ iad na Cuimeanaich uachdarain Bhàideanach. Bha ceann-cinnidh nan Cuimeanach airson caisteal mòr a thogail. Bhiodh e cho daingeann ’s nach biodh comas aig armailt sam bith a thoirt bhuaithe.

Mar sin, an àite a bhith a’ dol gu luchd-togail no clachairean, chaidh an Cuimeanach a bhruidhinn ri bana-bhuidseach ainmeil ann am Bàideanach. Dh’aontaich ise, airson duais mhòr, caisteal mòr daingeann a thogail dha. Bhiodh i a’ giùlan nan clach na h-aparan.

Thòisich i le bhith a’ coimhead airson dà chloich mhòir a bha co-ionann ann an àirde is meudachd. Bhiodh iad nan seasamh air gach taobh de gheata a’ chaisteil. Ach, beannaich mi, ged a rùraich i thall ’s a-bhos, **a latha ’s a dh’oidhche**, air feadh Alba, cha do lorg i dà chloich a bha freagarrach.

Oidhche a bha seo, bha i a-muigh nuair a thachair i ri bana-bhuidseach eile.

Bhuineadh an tè seo do dh’Eilean Mhanainn – àite far an robh buidseachd ainmeil! Agus dh’inns i don tè à Bàideanach gun robh dà chloich fhreagarrach ann an Eilean Mhanainn.

Lorg an tè Albannach na clachan agus thog i tè dhiubh na h-aparan. Bha i anns na speuran a' dèanamh air an taigh air oidhche shoilleir nuair a chunnaic sealgair i os cionn Srath Àrdail. Thuirt an sealgair, 'Dhia, glèidh mise!' Leis na faclan sin, bhriseadh cumhachd na bana-bhuidsich, bhris sreanga a h-aparain, agus thuit a' chlach gu talamh. Tha i fhathast na laighe far an do thuit i.

Cha d' fhuair a' bhana-bhuidseach sreanga aparain eile a bha làidir gu leòr, agus cha deach caisteal nan Cuimeanach a thogail. Agus, tha iad ag ràdh, air gach ceann-bliadhna bhon latha a thuit a' chlach gu talamh, bidh taibhse na bana-bhuidsich air ais, a' feuchainn ri a togail 's a gluasad. Tha e a cheart cho math do mhac an duine an t-àite a sheachnadh air an oidhche sin!

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Faclan na Litreach: Srath Àrdail: *Strathardle*; Siorrachd Pheairt: *Perthshire*; madadh-allaidh: *wolf*; Cill Mhìcheil: *Kirkmichael*; saobhaidh: *den*; Gleann Feàrnaid: *Glen Fernate*; clach iomrallach: *glacial erratic*; clachairean: *stonemasons*; bana-bhuidseach: *witch*; sealgair: *hunter*.

Abairtean na Litreach: ceann shuas a' ghlinne: *the upper end of the glen*; air a' chrìch eadar fearann Àrdail agus fearann Athall: *at the border between the lands of Ardlie and the lands of Atholl*; gur iad na daimh a bu choltaiche: *that it was most likely to be [the] stags*; cha bhuin a' chlach don sgìre: *the stone doesn't belong to the area*; tha seòrsa eile de chloich innte bhon fheadhainn a bhuineas don t-srath fhèin: *it consists of a rock type different from those that belong to the strath itself*; air a gluasad ann le deigh o chionn nam mìltean bhliadhnaichean: *moved there by ice thousands of years ago*; nuair a b' iad na Cuimeanaich uachdarain Bhàideanach: *when the Cummings were the lords of Badenoch*; cho daingeann 's nach biodh comas aig armailt sam bith a thoirt bhuaithe: *so secure that no force could take it from him*; a' giùlan nan clach na h-àparan: *carrying the stones in her apron*; dà chloich mhòir a bha co-ionann ann an àirde is meudachd: *two large stones that were equivalent in height and size*; air gach taobh de gheata a' chaisteil: *on each side of the castle gate*; bhuineadh an tè seo do dh'Eilean Mhanainn: *this one belonged to the Isle of Man*; anns na speuran a' dèanamh air an taigh: *in the heavens making for home*; Dhia, glèidh mise!: *God, protect me!*; bhriseadh cumhachd na bana-bhuidsich: *the witch's power was broken*; tha e a cheart cho math an t-àite a sheachnadh: *it's just as well to avoid the place*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: 'S iad na madaidhean-allaidh a bha ainmeil airson a bhith ri **bùirich** ann: *it's wolves that were famous for howling there*. Bùirich today generally means roaring or bellowing (like a bull or stag), whereas the howling of wolves is usually described as nuallaich, donnalaich, sgàirneach or ulfhartaich. However, old natives of Strathardle reckoned Beinn Bhùirich to be named for the howling of wolves and indeed Armstrong's 1825 dictionary (he was a native of Perthshire) gives the primary meaning of bùirich as 'howl, roar, make a loud lament'. There may be more 'wolf' names in our landscape than we think.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a latha 's a dh'oidhche: *at day and night*.

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