

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Clann Lir (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. This is Litir 857. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 553 corresponds to Litir 857.

Gu-bhi-gì, gu-bhi-gò, Gu-bhi-gì, gu-bhi-gò... Dè an t-eun a tha a’ dèanamh fuaim mar sin? Tha i ainmeil ann an dualchas nan Gàidheal. A bheil e agaibh?

’S e sin fuaim na h-eala. Agus seo agaibh a h-òran air fad. ’S e *Òran na h-Eala* a chanas sinn ris.

*Gu-bhi-gì, gu-bhi-gò,
Gu-bhi-gì, gu-bhi-gò,
Gu-bhi-gì, gu-bhi-gò,
Gu-bhi-gì, gu-bhi-gò,*

*Mo chasan dubh,
Mo chasan dubh,
Mo chasan dubh,
’S mi fhìn glè gheal.*

*Chreachadh mo nead,
Chreachadh mo nead,
Chreachadh mo nead,
’S mi fhìn an Èirinn*

Tillidh sinn gu Èirinn an ceartuair. Tha na Gàidheil a’ tomhas gu bheil guileag na h-eala cho binn ’s a ghabhas. Tha abairt ann – *Is binne iad na guileag na h-eala ‘they are more melodious than the lamenting note of the swan’*. Is binne iad na guileag na h-eala.

A bheil sibh eòlach air an fhacal *lear*? L-E-A-R. Lear. ’S e facal àrsaidh a th’ ann, a’ ciallachadh ‘muir’. Cha chluinn sibh ann an còmhradh e. Ach tha e ann am bàrdachd is seann sgeulachdan traidiseanta.

Agus tha e ann an ainm lus beag dùthchasach – an *lear-uinnean*, gu litreachail ‘*sea onion*’. Tha an luibh seo car coltach ri uinnean beag bìodach. ’S e *spring squill* a th’ air ann am Beurla. A’ chiad turas a chunnaic mi *lear-uinnean*, bha mi ann an Arcaibh, faisg air a’ chladach, ach gu h-àrd air talamh rèidh air cùl bearraidh. Bha mi a’ coimhead airson na sòbhraig Albannaich. Agus lorg mi i. Agus lorg mi an *lear-uinnean mar thuiteamas* cuideachd.

Ma tha *lear* a’ ciallachadh ‘sea’, tha a dhreach anns an tuiseal ghinideach –

lir – a’ ciallachadh ‘of sea’. Agus ’s dòcha gu bheil cuid agaibh air an seann stòiridh a chluinntinn – *Clann Lir* – gu litreachail ‘*the sea children*’. Ach b’ e an *Lear* anns an sgeulachd dia pàganach – dia na mara, mar gum bitheadh. Gu tric bithear a’ dèanamh eadar-theangachadh air mar *The Children of Lir*, ged as e *The Children of Lear* a bu chòir a bhith ann. Tha an eala an sàs anns an sgeulachd seo.

Tha *Clann Lir* nas aithnichte ann an Èirinn na tha ann an Alba ach tha Gàidheil na h-Alba car eòlach air. Agus, ged a tha a’ chuid as motha dhen sgeulachd a’ tachairt ann an Èirinn, tha pàirt dhith a’ gabhail àite ann an Sruth na Maoile. ’S e sin an caolas mara faisg air Maol Chinn Tìre – eadar Alba agus Èirinn. Sruth na Maoile.

Co-dhiù, seo agaibh geàrr-chunntas de Chlann Lir. Anns an t-seann aimsir, bha na Gàidheil a’ creidsinn ann an diofar dhiathan. B’ e Lear tighearna na mara. Bha e pòsta agus bha ceathrar cloinne aige. B’ iad an dithis a bu shine dhiubh Fionnuala agus Aodh. Latha a bha seo chaidh iad a shnàmh ann an loch.

Bha iad math air snàmh. Bha giùrain orra a leigeadh leotha anail a ghabhail fon uisge mar a ghabhas iasg. Agus bha **spògan-snàmha** orra a leigeadh leotha snàmh cho math ri ... uill, cho math ri eala. Cha bu chòir sin a bhith na iongnadh oir bha iad nan cloinn aig ‘rìgh na tìr fo thuinn’. Agus leanaidh mi leis an sgeulachd an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: eala: *swan*; guileag: *chattering or warbling of birds, the note of the swan*; lear: *sea (archaic)*; lear-uinnean: *spring squill*; Arcaibh: *Orkney*; sòbhrag: *primrose*; caolas mara: *sea strait*; geàrr-chunntas: *condensed account*; tighearna: *lord*.

Abairtean na Litreach: chreachadh mo nead: *my nest was destroyed*; tillidh sinn gu Èirinn an ceartuair: *we’ll return to Ireland shortly*; sin a gairm a tha car brònach don chlaisneachd againn: *that’s her call that is somewhat sad to our ears (hearing)*; cho binn ’s a ghabhas: *as sweet as can be*; gu h-àrd air talamh rèidh air cùl bearraidh: *high up on flat land behind cliffs*; a dhreach anns an tuiseal ghinideach: *its form in the genitive case*; dia pàganach – dia na mara, mar gum bitheadh: *a pagan god – the sea god, as it were*; bithear a’ dèanamh eadar-theangachadh air mar: *it’s translated as*; nas aithnichte: *better known*; tha pàirt dhith a’ gabhail àite ann an Sruth na Maoile: *part of it takes place in the Straits of Moyle (between Scotland and Ireland)*; bha ceathrar cloinne aige: *he had four children*; an dithis a bu shine dhiubh: *the two eldest of them*; bha giùrain orra a leigeadh leotha anail a ghabhail fon uisge mar a ghabhas iasg: *they had gills that would allow them to breathe under the water as a fish does*; cha bu chòir sin a bhith na iongnadh: *that shouldn’t be a surprise*; bha iad nan cloinn aig ‘rìgh na tìr fo thuinn’: *they were the children of ‘the king of the land under [the] waves’*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha **spògan snàmha** orra: *they had webbed feet. There are two ways of saying ‘web-foot’ in Gaelic – spòg-shnàmha ‘swimming foot’ agus spòg-lacha ‘duck-foot’*. Lach-spògach can be used as the adjectival form ‘web-footed’. *Do you know of any other alternatives?*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: lorg mi an lear-uinnean **mar thuiteamas** cuideachd: *I found the sea squill by chance as well*.

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