

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Ainmean-àite an t-Sratha

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 862. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 558 corresponds to Litir 862.

Nuair a bha mi a’ fuireach anns an Eilean Sgitheanach aig toiseach nan naochadan, bha rud sònraichte math mun obair agam. Bha mi ag obair ann an gnìomhachas a’ mhaoraich agus **bhithinn a’ dràibheadh gu tric** eadar An t-Ath Leathann agus Ealaghol, air fear de na rathaidean as brèagha ann an Alba. Bhithinn a’ togail maoraich bho iasgairean aig cidhe Ealaghoil – àite le sealladh iongantach dhen Chuiltheann thar Loch Sgàbhaig.

Bha mi riamh a’ gabhail ùidh ann an dualchas an àite agus bha mi air leth toilichte nuair a thàinig leabhraan a-mach an-uiridh mu ainmean-àite sgìre an t-Sratha. Tha e dà-chànanach, air a sgrìobhadh leis an Oll. Jacob King agus Eilidh Sgaimeal a tha **le chèile** ag obair don bhuidhinn Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba. Chaidh fhoillseachadh le Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba.

Gu siar air Loch Slaopan, anns a’ mhonadh os cionn an rathaid, tha tobar. Air a’ mhapa ’s e Tobar Ceann a th’ air. Ach gu h-ionadail, ’s e Tobar a’ Chinn a chanas daoine ris. Tha stòiridh anns an leabhar a tha a’ mìneachadh mar a fhuair e ainm. Anns an t-seann aimsir, nuair a bhiodh fear a’ faighinn bàs, bhiodh aig an teaghlach no banntnach aige ri mart a thoirt seachad don uachdaran no ceann-feadhna. Aidh, tha sin ceart, bha iad dìreach air cuideigin a chall, a bha ’s dòcha a’ toirt airgead a-steach don teaghlach, agus bha aca ri beathach mairt prìseil a thoirt seachad cuideachd! Cha b’ e làithean geala a bh’ ann ach làithean dubha!

Co-dhiù, chaochail an duine aig tè a bha seo. Bha i air a fàgail na banntnach le aon ghille agus bha i gu math bochd. Cha robh aice ach aon mhart. Thàinig am bàillidh air a shon. Dh’iarr i air gun am beathach a thoirt air falbh, ach bha am bàillidh coma. Dh’fhalbh e leis a’ mhart.

Bha mac na banntnach, fear air an robh Dòmhnall mar ainm, air falbh bhon taigh nuair a thachair seo. Nuair a thill e agus a chunnaic e mar a dh’èirich do a mhàthair, ghabh e an cuthach. Chaidh e an tòir air a’ bhàillidh agus ghlac e e air Druim an Fhuarain os cionn Loch Slaopan – far a bheil Tobar a’ Chinn. Mharbh e am bàillidh agus gheàrr e a cheann dheth. Ghlan e an ceann anns an tobar, agus ’s e sin a thug ainm dha.

Chaidh Dòmhnall far an robh an ceann-feadhna agus dh’inns e dha mar a thachair. An toiseach, bha an ceann-feadhna a’ dol ga chur bu bàs. Ach mheòraich e air a’ chùis. Thuirt e ris a’ ghille, ‘Uill, mharbh thu am bàillidh, agus feumaidh tusa a bhith nad

bhàillidh na àite'. Agus fhuair Dòmhnall obair mar bhàillidh. Ach saoil an robh e deònach mart a thoirt air falbh bho bhantrach eile, às leth an uachdarain?!

'S iomadh ainm-àite inntinneach a th' anns an leabhran. Mar eisimpleir, faisg air baile beag ris an canar Na Torran, tha sloc air a' chladach air a bheil Leabaidh na Glais-Ghoilein. Thathar ga eadar-theangachadh mar '*the bed of the grey greedy-gut*'. 'S e a bh' anns a' Ghlas-Ghoilean ach beathach mòr a bhiodh a' gluasad bho àite gu àite, a' sireadh ionaltraidh. A rèir beul-aithris an eilein, bha e a' dol cho fada ri Bhatarnais! Ma chì sibh e, nach cuir sibh fios thugam!

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Faclan na Litreach: An t-Ath Leathann: *Broadford*; Ealaghol: *Elgol*; sgìre an t-Sratha: *Strath (South Skye)*; Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba: *Scottish Natural Heritage*; Loch Slaopan: *Loch Slapin*; mheòraich e air: *he considered*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a' fuireach anns an Eilean Sgitheanach aig toiseach nan naochadan: *living on Skye at the start of the 90s*; bhithinn a' togail maoraich bho iasgairean aig cidhe Ealaghoil: *I would pick up shellfish from fishermen at Elgol jetty*; sealladh iongantach dhen Chuiltheann thar Loch Sgàbhaig: *an amazing view of the Cuillin across Loch Scavaig*; a' gabhail ùidh ann an dualchas an àite: *taking an interest in the area's heritage*; anns a' mhonadh os cionn an rathaid, tha tobar: *on the hill above the road, there is a well*; nuair a bhiodh fear a' faighinn bàs: *when a man died*; bhiodh aig an teaghlach no bantrach aige ri mart a thoirt seachad don uachdaran no ceann-feadhna: *the family or widow would have to give the landlord or clan chief a cow*; cha b' e làithean geala a bh' ann ach làithean dubha: *they weren't golden [white] days, but dark days*; bha i air a fàgail na bantraich: *she was left a widow*; bha am bàillidh coma: *the bailiff was indifferent*; nuair a thill e agus a chunnaic e mar a dh'èirich do a mhàthair: *when he returned and saw what had happened to his mother*; ghabh e an cuthach: *he became furious*; an tòir air: *in pursuit of*; far an robh an ceann-feadhna: *where the clan chief was*; feumaidh tusa a bhith nad bhàillidh na àite: *you have to be a bailiff in his place*; thathar ga eadar-theangachadh mar: *it is translated as*; a' sireadh ionaltraidh: *in search of pasture*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bhithinn a' dràibheadh gu tric: *I would often drive*. The conditional forms of Gaelic verbs also stand for the past habitual, in other words they are often used to describe matters that happened in the past on a regular basis. I might have said bha mi a' dràibheadh gu tric '*I was often driving*', using the past tense from bha, but it doesn't have the same sense of habitual repeated behaviour about it as does the use of bhithinn (the conditional form). Compare the verbal forms in the following: bhithinn a' dol don bhall-choise gu tric, ach bha mi aig Hampden dìreach dà thuras '*I would go to the football often, but I was only at Hampden twice*'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a tha le chèile ag obair: *who both work*.

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