

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Calum Cille agus an Lèabag

*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 870. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 566 corresponds to Litir 870.*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, bha mi a’ bruidhinn mun fhacal-fillte *geal-chasach* – *white-legged* no *white-footed*. *Geal-chasach*. Tha e inntinneach cho tric ’s a bhios faclan eile a’ dol **an co-bhuinn ri** ‘casach’. Ann an Litir ceud is ochdad (180), mar eisimpleir, dh’innis mi dhuibh mun eun – a’ chathag dhearg-chasach. Gu litreachail, ‘*the red-legged jackdaw*’. ’S e sin an *chough* no *chough* – a’ chathag dhearg-chasach. Tha Dwelly cuideachd ag innse dhuinn gum bi cuid anns an Eilean Sgitheanach ag ràdh ‘*ròcas dhearg-chasach*’ rithe. ‘*The red-legged rook*’.

Dè mu dheidhinn ‘*black-legged*’? Dubh-chasach. Tha sin furasta gu leòr, nach eil? Dubh-chasach. Tha *fionn-chasach* a’ ciallachadh an ìre mhath an aon rud ri *geal-chasach*. Agus tha fhios gum b’ urrainn a leithid seo a ràdh – *gorm-chasach*, *ruadh-chasach*, *liath-chasach*, *donn-chasach* agus *breac-chasach*.

A bharrachd air dathan, ge-tà, faodar facal eile a chur ri casach. Faodar àireamhan a chur ris. Mar eisimpleir – aon-chasach ‘*one-footed*’, dà-chasach ‘*bipedal*’, ceithir-chasach ‘*quadrupedal*’. Faodaidh sinn *ceithir-chasach* a chleachdadh mar ainmear cuideachd – a’ ciallachadh *quadruped*. Tha cù na cheithir-chasach. ’S e ceithir-chasach a th’ ann an caora cuideachd. Ach ’s e ochd-chasach creutair gu math eadar-dhealaichte a tha beò air grunn na mara. Ochd-chasach – *an octopus*.

Tha am facal *trì-chasach* ann cuideachd. Tha stòl trì-chasach agam aig an taigh. Tha cuimhne agam gun robh mi a’ cleachdadh trì-chasach gu tric ann an clasaichean saidheans nuair a bha mi aig an àrd-sgoil. Trì-chasach – *a tripod*.

Faodaidh sinn tuairisgeul a dhèanamh air cumadh chasan cuideachd le faclan dhen t-seòrsa seo. Tha *caol-chasach* a’ ciallachadh ‘*slender-legged*’. Tha *clàr-chasach* a’ ciallachadh ‘*splay-footed*’. Tha *cuimir-chasach* air an làimh eile – no air a’ chois eile – a’ ciallachadh ‘*having shapely legs*’. Cuimir-chasach. Tha *balg-chasach*, *brabhd-chasach*, *brat-chasach*, *cam-chasach* agus *croma-chasach* uile a’ ciallachadh ‘*bow-legged*’.

Agus tha sin gam thoirt gu sgeulachd thraidiseanta a tha a’ toirt a-steach an fhacail *croma-chasach*. Bidh sibh eòlach air an iasg air a bheil lèabag no leòbag – *the flounder*. Canaidh sinn mun lèabaig gu bheil i ceàrr-ghobach – *wry-mouthed*. Ceàrr-ghobach no ceàrr-ghobach. Ach ciamar a fhuair i beul – no gob – mar sin? Uill – ’s e Calum Cille a bu choireach. Seo an stòiridh, ma-thà – ‘Calum Cille agus an Lèabag’.

Latha a bha seo, bha Calum Cille san tràigh shìolag. ’S e sin a’ phàirt dhen tràigh fo ìre na h-ìsle-mhara aig an reothart. An tràigh-shìolag – far a bheil sìolagan ‘*sandeels*’ a’ fuireach. Co-dhiù, bha Calum Cille a’ coiseachd, no a’ grunnachadh anns an tràigh-shìolag. Bha e casruisgt’. Shaltair e air earball aig lèabag bheag bhòidheach bhàn. Tha sin

a' ciallachadh gun do chuir e a chas air earball na lèabaig. Shaltair e air. Ghoirtich e an t-iasg. Dhochair e a h-earball. Agus dh'èigh an lèabag bheag bhrònach aig àird a cinn:

'A Chaluim mhòir mhosaich,  
Le do chasan croma crosnach,  
'S mòr a rinn thu orm de dhosgadh  
*Dar* a shaltair thu air m' earball.'

Uill, ghabh Calum Cille fearg. Bha an t-iasg beag ladarna seo a' tilgeil air gun robh e croma-chasach. Thuir e ris an leabaig, 'Ma tha mise croma-chasach, biodh tusa cearra-ghobach.' Agus dh'fhàg e mar sin i. Bho sin a-mach, tha an lèabag air a bhith cearra-ghobach. Co-dhiù bha Calum Cille croma-chasach gus nach robh, chan eil fhios a'm. Agus chan eil mi a' dol a thoirt beachd sam bith air a' chùis!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** facal-fillte: *compound word*; stòl trì-chasach: *three-legged stool*; clasaichean saidheans: *science classes*; lèabag, leòbag: *flounder*; a' grunnachadh: *wading*; casruisgte: *bare-footed*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** gum bi cuid anns an Eilean Sgitheanach ag ràdh 'X' rithe: *that some on Skye call it 'X'*; a' ciallachadh an ìre mhath an aon rud ri: *means pretty much the same as*; tha fhios gum b' urrainn a leithid seo a ràdh: *it's obvious that you could say this sort of thing*; gorm-chasach, ruadh-chasach, liath-chasach, donn-chasach agus breac-chasach: *blue-legged, russet-legged, grey-legged, brown-legged and speckly-legged*; faodar facal eile a chur ri casach: *another word can be added to 'casach'*; faodaidh sinn X a chleachdadh mar ainmear cuideachd: *we can use X as a noun as well*; creutair gu math eadar-dhealaichte a tha beò air grunn na mara: *a really different creature that lives on the seabed*; faodaidh sinn tuairisgeul a dhèanamh air cumadh chasan cuideachd le faclan dhen t-seòrsa seo: *we can also describe the shape of legs with words of this nature*; bidh sibh eòlach air an iasg air a bheil: *you'll know the fish called*; bha Calum Cille san tràigh shìolag: *St Columba was on the sandeel shore (the sub-littoral zone)*; a' phàirt dhen tràigh fo ìre na h-ìsle-mhara aig an reothart: *the part of the beach below low-tide mark at a spring tide*; shaltair e air earball aig lèabag bheag bhòidheach bhàn: *he trampled on the foot of a fair, beautiful flounder*; dhochair e a h-earball: *he damaged her tail*; A Chaluim mhòir mhosaich: *big, miserable Columba*; le do chasan croma crosnach: *with your crooked crosswise feet*; 's mòr a rinn thu orm de dhosgadh: *you caused me great calamity*; bha an t-iasg beag ladarna seo a' tilgeil air gun robh e croma-chasach: *this cheeky little fish was accusing him of being bandy-legged*; biodh tusa cearra-ghobach: *let you be wry-mouthed*; dh'fhàg e mar sin i: *he left her like that*; co-dhiù bha Calum Cille croma-chasach gus nach robh: *whether or not Columba was bandy-legged*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *Dar* a shaltair thu air m' earball: **when** you trod on my tail. *Dar* is a conjunction meaning 'when' and stands in the place of nuair in certain dialects, particularly on the northern mainland. MacBain derived it from do-uair whereas nuair is derived from an-uair.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** cho tric 's a bhios faclan eile a' dol an co-bhuinn ri 'casach': *how often other words work in partnership with 'casach'*.

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