

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Cù Glas Mheòbail

*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 890. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 586 corresponds to Litir 890.*

Ann am Mòrar, anns na Garbh Chrìochan, tha lochan air a bheil ainm car annasach – *Lochan Tàin Mhic Dhùghaill*. Tha e gu h-àrd anns a’ mhonadh tuath air Loch Beòraid, agus deas air Loch Mhòrair. Tha eilean anns an lochan. ’S e Meòbal am baile as fhaisge air – agus tha Meòbal gu math beag. Saoil ciamar a fhuair an lochan ainm mar sin?

Ma tha sibh eòlach air eachdraidh is dualchas nan seann Ghàidheal, bidh sibh air cluinntinn mun sgeulachd *Tàin Bò Cuailgne – The Cattle Raid of Cooley* ann am Beurla. Tha e stèidhichte ann an Èirinn. Tha *tàin* a’ ciallachadh ‘plunder’, ‘driving off’ is a leithid sin. Lochan Tàin Mhic Dhùghaill – ‘*the lochan of the plundering of MacDugald*’?

Tha e coltach gu bheil an t-ainm ceangailte ri seann sgeulachd. Bha Calum I MacGill-Eain am measg na feadhainn a chruinnich i agus bha muinntir nan Garbh Chrìochan gu math eòlach oirre. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ oirre *Cù Glas Mheòbail* agus bu mhath leam a h-aithris dhuibh. Chan eil i ach goirid.

O chionn bhliadhnaichean mòra, bha fear a’ fuireach ann am Meòbal. Bhuineadh e do Dhòmhnallaich Mhòrair. ’S e Clann Dhùghaill a chanar riutha ann an Gàidhlig. Bha **mial-choin** aig an fhear a bha seo. Bha iad glas. Cha bhi sin na iongnadh dhuibh, oir ’s e ‘greyhound’ a chanar ri mial-chù ann am Beurla.

Dh’fhalbh am fear seo a-null thairis. Mus do dh’fhalbh e, dh’fheuch e ri lorg fhaighinn air a h-uile gin de na mial-choin aige – airson cur às dhaibh. Ach dh’fhàilnich air grèim fhaighinn air aon ghala. Bha ise beò fhathast nuair a dh’fhalbh e.

An dèidh dha falbh, chaidh a’ ghala suas don lochan anns a’ mhonadh. Shnàmh i a-mach don eilean. Agus, air an eilean, rugadh grunn chuileanan dhi. Bha na mial-choin seo beò air toradh a’ mhonaidh agus cha do chuir iad dragh air duine.

Thachair gun do thill ar caraid – MacDhùghaill – a-null don sgìre. Nuair a ràinig e a sheann dachaigh ann am Meòbal, dh’innseadh dha gun robh a’ ghala agus a cuileanan beò, agus gun robh iad a’ fuireach air an eilean anns an lochan.

Chaidh an duine suas chun an lochain airson na coin fhaicinn dha fhèin. Rinn e fead mar a bhitheadh nuair a bha a’ ghala òg. Dh’fhairich a’ ghala e, agus shnàmh i gu tìr. **Rinn i sogan** an duine fhaicinn, agus bha e fhèin air a dhòigh cuideachd. An ceann tacain, ge-tà, shnàmh trì de na cuileanan aice a-null. Bha iad air tighinn gu ìre agus bha iad mòr is làidir. Chan eil fhios carson, ach stiall iad an duine às a chèile sa spot. Cha robh na coin òga ga aithneachadh mar charaid.

Agus chun an latha an-diugh, nuair a tha fear no tè de Chloinn 'ic Dhùghaill Mhòrair an impis bàs fhaighinn, chì iad, no cuideigin a tha faisg orra, cù glas mar mhanadh a' bhàis. No 's e sin a chanas iad co-dhiù.

Tha ainmean eile air Lochan Tàin Mhic Dhùghaill. Bidh cuid ag ràdh Lochan Mhic Dhùghaill no Lochan a' Choin Ghlais. Ach tha seann ainm eadar-dhealaichte air a' chiad eagan de mhapaichean an OS – *Lochan Fèith a' Mhath-ghamhna* 'the lochan of the bog of the bear'. Tha amharas agam gu bheil stòiridh eile ceangailte ri sin!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Mòrar: *Morar*; Na Garbh Chrìochan: *The Rough Bounds*; glas: *grey*; shnàmh i: *she swam*; fead: *whistle*; eagan: *edition*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** bidh sibh air cluinntinn mun sgeulachd Tàin Bò Cuailgne: *you'll have heard of the story of the Cattle Raid of Cooley*; stèidhichte ann an Èirinn: *set in Ireland*; am measg na feadhainn a chruinnich i: *among those who collected it*; bu mhath leam a h-aithris dhuibh: *I would like to tell it to you*; chan eil i ach goirid: *it's only short*; bhuineadh e do Dhòmhnallaich Mhòrair: *he belonged to the MacDonalds of Morar*; 's e Clann Dhùghaill a chanar riutha: *they are called Clan Dugald [ie MacDugald]*; dh'fhalbh am fear seo a-null thairis: *this man left to go overseas*; dh'fheuch e ri lorg fhaighinn air a h-uile gin: *he tried to find every one*; airson cur às dhaibh: *to kill them*; dh'fhàilnich air grèim fhaighinn air aon ghala: *he failed to locate one bitch*; rugadh grunn chuileanan dhi: *several puppies were born to her*; bha X beò air toradh a' mhonaidh: *X lived off the produce of the hill[s]*; thachair gun do thill ar caraaid: *our friend happened to return*; dh'innseadh dha gun robh a' ghala agus a cuileanan beò: *he was told that the bitch and her puppies were alive*; dh'fhairich a' ghala e: *the bitch heard him [unexpectedly]*; bha iad air tighinn gu ìre: *they had reached maturity*; stiall iad an duine às a chèile sa spot: *they ripped the man to pieces on the spot*; ga aithneachadh mar charaid: *recognising him as a friend*; an impis bàs fhaighinn: *about to die*; cù glas mar mhanadh a' bhàis: *a grey dog as an omen of death*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** mial-choin: *greyhounds*. *You might be tempted to think that mial-chù derives from mial + cù, meaning 'louse dog'. However, that is not the case. Mial derives from an old Celtic root meaning 'animal' or 'wild beast' and is still used in Scottish Gaelic for 'monster' or 'mythical beast' eg mial-mhòr a' chuain 'sea monster'. Mial-chù means 'animal dog' because of its ancient use in hunting animals such as deer. This interpretation is validated by the very similar words for greyhound in the P-Celtic languages eg Welsh milgi and Cornish mylgy, also meaning 'animal dog'.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Rinn i sogan an duine fhaicinn: *she was delighted to see the man*.

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