

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Coire Bhreacain (3)

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 924. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 620 corresponds to Litir 924.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mar a bha tubaist aig an sgrìobhadair ainmeil, George Orwell, ann an Coire Bhreacain ann an naoi ceud deug, ceathrad 's a seachd (1947). Ach bha cuairt-shruth Choire Bhreacain ainmeil **fad nan ceudan** roimhe sin. A bheil fios agaibh mar a fhuair an t-àite ainm? Uill, seo an stòiridh.

O chionn fhad an t-saoghail, 's e Coire na Caillich a bh' air. Bha ban-dia a' gheamhraidh – a' Chailleach – air coire a chruthachadh sa mhuir far am biodh i a' nighe a h-aodaich.

Thathar ag ràdh gun d' fhuair e ainm ùr – Coire Bhreacain – bho phrionnsa Lochlannach air an robh Breacan mar ainm. Ghabh Breacan gaol air nighean aig Tighearna nan Eilean agus dh'iarr e air a h-athair cead a thoirt dha a pòsadh. Gu mì-fhortanach dha, bha planaichean eile aig a h-athair air a son. Ge-tà, cha robh e airson dragh a chur air Rìgh Lochlainn, oir bha an Rìgh gu math cumhachdach. Mar sin, mhìnich e don phrionnsa gu feumadh e dearbhadh gun robh e airidh air a pòsadh. Anns na h-eileanan, thuirt e, dh'fheumadh duine, a bha ag iarraidh nighean a phòsadh, a dhearbhadh gun robh e na sheòladair comasach.

'Tha sin taghta,' thuirt am Prionnsa, 'Dè dh'fheumas mi a dhèanamh?

'Uill,' fhreagair Tighearna nan Eilean, 'feumaidh tu do bhirlinn a chumail air acair ann an Coire na Caillich airson trì latha is trì oidhcheannan. Dh'aontaich Breacan ris an deuchainn agus chaidh e dhachaigh a Lochlann airson a bhirlinn a chur air dòigh.

Fhad 's a bha e aig an taigh, dh'iarr e comhairle bho sheann chomhairlich aig athair. Thug iad comhairle dha mar a leanas. Dh'fheumadh e trì ròpan a thoirt leis. Bhiodh a' chiad ròp air a dhèanamh de chlàimh à caoraich nach robh barrachd is bliadhna a dh'aois. Bhiodh an dàrna ròp de chainb a bha a' fàs ann an cladh. Bhiodh an treas ròp de dh'fhalt à cinn òighean – agus dh'fheumadh an cuid òigheachd gu lèir a bhith gun cheist no teagamh.

Sheòl Breacan chun a' chuairt-shruth. Chuir e a bhirlinn air acair ann, ceangailte ris na trì ròpan. An dèidh latha is oidhche, bhris a' chiad ròp – am fear a chaidh a dhèanamh de chlàimh chaorach. Air an dàrna latha, bhris an dàrna ròp – am fear a bh' air a dhèanamh de chainb. Bha Breacan an dòchas gun seasadh an treas ròp ris an t-sruth. Ach, air an treas latha, bhris e. Bha sin a chionn 's gun robh tè de na h-òighean air a bhith breugach mu a h-òigheachd.

Chaidh an soitheach, agus Breacan leis, a shlugadh leis a' chuairt-shruth. Cha tàinig a-mach às an tubaist ach an cù aig Breacan – an cù glas. Shnàmh esan

timcheall gus an do lorg e corp a mhaighstir. Shlaod e an corp gu tìr agus dh'fhàg e e ann an uamh air a bheil Uamh Bhreacain.

Thill an cù chun na mara. Bha e a' coimhead airson cuirp aig daoine eile a bh' air bòrd an t-soithich. Chaidh a sguabadh leis an t-sruth agus chaidh a bhàthadh ann an cuairt-shruth eile eadar Sgarba agus Lunga. Chun an latha an-diugh, canar Bealach a' Choin Ghlais ris a' chaolas sin. Agus sin mar a fhuair Coire Bhreacain ainm – co-dhiù, a rèir beul-aithris. Beannachd leibh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Coire Bhreacain: *Corryvreckan*; prionnsa Lochlannach: *Scandinavian prince*; taghta: *fine, okay*; breugach: *lying, untruthful*; shnàmh: *swam*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bha ban-dia a' gheamhraidh – a' Chailleach – air coire a chruthachadh sa mhuir far am biodh i a' nighe a h-aodaich: *the goddess of winter – the Cailleach – had created a cauldron in the sea where she would clean her clothes*; ghabh Breacan gaol air nighean aig Tighearna nan Eilean: *Breacan fell in love with a daughter of the Lord of the Isles*; dh'ìarr e air a h-athair cead a thoirt dha a pòsadh: *he asked her father for his permission to marry her*; gu feumadh e dearbhadh gun robh e airidh air: *that he would have to demonstrate that he was worthy of*; gun robh e na sheòladair comasach: *that he was a capable sailor*; feumaidh tu do bhirlinn a chumail air acair: *you must keep your birlinn at anchor*; bhiodh a' chiad ròp air a dhèanamh de chlàimh à caoraich nach robh barrachd is bliadhna a dh'aois: *the first rope would be made of wool from sheep that were no older than one year*; cainb a bha a' fàs ann an cladh: *hemp that was growing in a cemetery*; de dh'fhalt à cinn òighean: *of hair from the heads of virgins*; dh'fheumadh an cuid òigheachd gu lèir a bhith gun cheist no teagamh: *their virginity would have to be beyond reproach*; bha X an dòchas gun seasadh an treas ròp ris an t-sruth: *X hoped that the third rope would withstand the current*; chaidh an soitheach a shlugadh leis a' chuairt-shruth: *the vessel was sucked down by the whirlpool*; shlaod e an corp gu tìr: *he pulled the body to land*; chaidh a sguabadh: *it was swept*; canar Bealach a' Choin Ghlais ris a' chaolas sin: *that strait is called 'the gap of the grey dog'*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha cuairt-shruth Choire Bhreacain ainmeil **fad nan ceudan** roimhe sin: *the Corryvreckan whirlpool was famous over the centuries before that. You might be used to using linn for 'century' but linn's primary meaning is 'age' or 'historical period' eg ri linn nan gaisgeach 'in the age of the heroes'; ri linn nan dìneasairean 'during the time of the dinosaurs'. If you want an alternative to linn for 'century', ceud will do the job. B' e an t-ochdamh ceud deug linn nan Seumasach 'the 18th century was the age of the Jacobites'.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: O chionn fhad an t-saoghail: *a long, long time ago*.

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