

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Sguaban nam Bana-bhuidseach (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 954. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 650 corresponds to Litir 954.

A bheil sibh eòlach **air a’ chraoibh-bheithe** – craobh cho pailt ’s a th’ againn air Gàidhealtachd na h-Alba? An do mhothaich sibh do na badain de mhion-mheanglan a tha gu tric rim faicinn gu h-àrd anns an duilleach? Tha iad coltach ri sguaban, nach eil? ’S e sin a th’ annta – sguaban bhana-bhuidseach. Agus ciamar a fhuair iad ann? Uill, ’s e Magaidh Reamhar a bu choireach. Agus seo mar a thachair e.

Bha uaireigin dithis bhràithrean a bha nan croitearan ann an Earra-Ghàidheal. ’S e Ailig agus Eairdsidh na h-ainmean a bh’ orra. **B’ e Ailig a bu shine dhiubh.** Bha e na bhantrach agus cha robh Eairdsidh riamh air pòsadh. Mar sin, dh’fhuirich iad còmhla air a’ chroit. Airson beagan airgid a dhèanamh, bhiodh iad a’ togail ghàrraidhean airson croitearan eile agus tuathanaich.

A chionn ’s gum b’ esan am fear a bu shine, ’s ann le Ailig a bha a’ chroit agus ’s ann aigesan a bha ceannas. Bhiodh e a’ pàigheadh tuarastal do dh’Eairdsidh de bhonn-a-sia san t-seachdain nuair a bha e a’ smaoineachadh gun robh e iomchaidh. Chan e mòran a bh’ ann ach bha Eairdsidh riarachtaichte gu leòr, oir bha àite-fuirich aige, agus biadh gu leòr.

Latha a bha seo, bha Ailig is Eairdsidh anns a’ mhònadh, a’ togail gàrradh. Bha iad ri taobh rathad. Bha iad trang ag obair nuair a nochd fear-siubhail air an rathad. Stad e a bhruidhinn riutha. ‘An ann leibh fhèin a tha am fearann seo?’ dh’fhaighnich e.

‘Chan ann,’ fhreagair Ailig. ‘Carson a tha thu a’ faighneachd?’

‘Bu mhath leam cead fhaighinn beagan dhen fhraoch a tha sin fhaighinn,’ thuirt am fear-siubhail. Bha e a’ coimhead air fraoch fada a bha a’ fàs air taobh thall a’ ghàrraidh.

‘Tha fhios gum faodadh tu fraoch a tharraing gun chead iarraidh,’ thuirt Ailig. ‘Dè tha thu a’ dol a dhèanamh leis?’

‘Bidh mi a’ dèanamh sguaban airson reic,’ thuirt am fear eile. ‘Sguaban airson taighean a sguabadh ’s a leithid sin.’

‘Dè tha thu a’ faighinn air gach sguab?’ dh’fhaighnich Eairdsidh.

‘Gheibh mi bonn-a-sia mar as trice. ’S e gnothachas math a th’ ann.’

‘Agus dè cho fad ’s a bheir e dhut sguab a dhèanamh?’ thuirt Eairdsidh.

‘Dà uair a thìde,’ ars am fear-siubhail.

‘Dà uair a thìde?!’ thuirt Eairdsidh. ‘Nì thu bonn-a-sia ann an dà uair a thìde!’

Cosgaidh e seachdain dhomh a leithid sin de dh’airgead a dhèanamh!’ Cha tuirt Ailig smid ri Eairdsidh ach thuirt e ris an fhear-siubhail gum faodadh e eallach de fhraoch a thoirt leis. Leum am fear-siubhail thar a’ ghàrraidh agus tharraing e fraoch gus an robh gad mòr aige. ‘Taing mhòr dhuibh,’ thuirt e, agus thòisich e air an rathad a-rithist.

Lean Eairdsidh air agus chuir e stad air. ‘A bheil e furasta sguab a dhèanamh?’ dh’fhaighnich e. ‘Furasta gu leòr,’ fhreagair am fear-siubhail, agus mhìnich e dha ciamar a dhèanadh e tè dha fhèin. Thug Eairdsidh taing dha, agus thill e don ghàrradh.

‘Siuthad a-nis, Eairdsidh,’ thuir a bhràthair ris, ‘tha obair againn ri dhèanamh an seo.’

‘Chan eil, Ailig,’ fhreagair Eairdsidh. ‘Cha dèan mi obair dhut tuilleadh. Nì mi fad a bharrachd airgid le bhith a’ dèanamh sguaban.’ Agus ’s ann mar sin a thòisich Eairdsidh ceàird ùr mar fhear-dèanaimh sguaban. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh **mu na craobhan-beithe** an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: pailt: *plentiful*; sguaban bhana-bhuidseach: *witches’ brooms*; tuarastal: *wages*; bonn-a-sia: *sixpence*; iomchaidh: *appropriate*; fear-siubhail: *travelling man*; ceàird: *trade*.

Abairtean na Litreach: an do mhothaich sibh do: *did you notice?*; na badain de mhion-mheanglan a tha gu tric rim faicinn gu h-àrd anns an duilleach?: *the clumps of tiny branches that are often seen high in the foliage*; ’s e Magaidh Reamhar a bu choireach: *it’s Fat Maggie that was responsible*; bha uaireigin dithis bhràithrean a bha nan croitearan ann an Earra-Ghàidheal: *there were once two brothers who were crofters in Argyll*; ’S e Ailig agus Eairdsidh na h-ainmean a bh’ orra: *they were called Alex and Archie*; bha e na bhantrach agus cha robh Eairdsidh riamh air pòsadh: *he was a widower and Archie had never married*; bhiodh iad a’ togail ghàrraidhean: *they would build dykes*; ’s ann aigesan a bha ceannas: *he was the leader*; bha Eairdsidh riaraichte gu leòr, oir bha àite-fuirich aige, agus biadh gu leòr: *Archie was satisfied enough as he had a dwelling place and enough food*; an ann leibh fhèin a tha am fearann seo?: *do you own this land?*; fraoch fada a bha a’ fàs air taobh thall a’ ghàrraidh: *long heather that was growing on the far side of the dyke*; gum faodadh tu fraoch a tharraing gun chead iarraidh: *that you can pull heather without asking permission*; sguaban airson taighean a sguabadh ’s a leithid sin: *brooms [besoms] for sweeping houses and the like*; dè tha thu a’ faighinn air gach sguab?: *what do you get [paid] for each broom?*; dè cho fad ’s a bheir e dhut?: *how long does it take you?*; gum faodadh e eallach de fhraoch a thoirt leis: *that he could take a load of heather with him*; mhìnich e dha ciamar: *he explained how*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: A bheil sibh eòlach air a’ chraoibh-bheithe?: *do you know the birch tree?*; innsidh mi dhuibh mu na craobhan-beithe: I’ll tell you about the birch trees. Can you explain the lenition of beithe in the first example but its lack of lenition in the second? Beithe is the genitive form of beith ‘birch’ but it acts in the compound craobh-bheithe like an adjective and is lenited accordingly. Where an adjective (eg mòr) would be lenited, so beithe is lenited. We’d say craobh mhòr, air a’ chraoibh mhoir (craobh is feminine) but craobhan mòra and air na craobhan mòra, so we lenite beithe by the same rules.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: B’ e Ailig a bu shine dhiubh: *Alex was the older of them.*

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