

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Iolair-uisge

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 1,078. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 774 corresponds to Litir 1,078.

Bha mi a’ bruidhinn an t-seachdain sa chaidh mu dhà iolair a lorgadh marbh air a’ Chomraich. ’S e iolairean-buidhe a bh’ annta le chèile. Ach dè mun dà iolair eile a tha beò ann an Alba? A bheil, no an robh, iadsan ann an Ros an Iar cuideachd? Tha mi a’ ciallachadh le sin – an iolair-mhara agus an iolair-uisge. Uill, uaireigin, bha iad beò anns an sgìre. Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mun deidhinn faisg air Poll Iù, tuath air a’ Chomraich. Tha na cunntasan a’ tighinn bhon leabhar *A Hundred Years in the Highlands* le Osgood MacCoinnich. Tha MacCoinnich ainmeil airson Leas Inbhir Iù a chur air chois.

’S e uachdaran a bh’ ann am MacCoinnich. Ann am meadhan an naoidheamh linn deug, fhuair e sealbh air pàirt de loch-uisge mòr ris an canar am Fionn Loch. Bha am Fionn Loch ainmeil airson cho pailt agus cho mòr ’s a bha na bric ann. Bha na h-èisg cho lionmhor ’s gum biodh muinntir an àite gan glacadh le sleaghan air an oidhche anns an Dàmhair agus san t-Samhain. Bha iad a’ cleachdadh leusan de ghiuthas-blàir airson solas a thoirt dhaibh.

Tuath air an Fhionn Loch, tha loch beag ris an canar Loch an Iasgair. Rinn an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais eadar-theangachadh air an ainm mar *‘fisher’s loch’*. Tha mi an dùil gun robh iad a’ beachdachadh air daoine a bhiodh a’ falbh don loch le slat. Ach tha an t-ainm a’ ciallachadh ‘loch na h-iolair-uisge’ – *the loch of the osprey*.

Tha Osgood MacCoinnich ga dhearbhadh anns an leabhar aige. Bhiodh na h-iolairean-uisge ag iasgach anns na lochan gu lèir anns an sgìre. Ach bhiodh iad a’ neadachadh air stac cas ri taobh Loch an Iasgair. **Carson, ma-thà, a thugadh an t-ainm air an loch** – Loch an Iasgair, seach Loch na h-Iolaire? Uill, gu h-ionadail, ’s e Ailean Iasgair a chanadh daoine ris an iolair-uisge.

Tha MacCoinnich ag innse dhuinn mu thachartas duilich anns an sgìre co-cheangailte ris an loch. Nochd dithis Shasannach ann an Taigh-seinnse Pholl Iù latha a bha seo. B’ iadsan am Morair Huntingfield agus companach aige. Nuair a chuala iad gu robh iolairean-uisge a’ neadachadh aig Loch an Iasgair, chaidh iad ann le dealas. Gu mì-fhortanach, ’s e mèirlich uighean a bh’ annta.

Lorg iad an nead air an stac. Shnàimh sgalag aca a-mach chun an àite, ghoid e an dà ugh às an nead agus shnàimh e air ais gu tìr. Bha na h-uighean aige ann am bonaid air an do chùm e greim le fhiacalan. An do rinn MacCoinnich càineadh air na mèirlich? Cha do rinn oir, mar a chì sinn an ath-sheachdain, bha MacCoinnich fhèin ris an aon seòrsa mèirle.

Aig an àm sin, bha an iolair-uisge air a dhol à bith ann an Sasainn **mu thràth**. Cha robh fada aice ri dhol ann an Alba. Thathar a’ tomhas gun deach i à bith an seo ann an naoi ceud deug is sia-deug (1916) no mar sin.

Gu fortanach, tha an iolair-uisge a-nise pailt gu leòr ann an Alba a-rithist. Tha i eadhon air ais a’ neadachadh ann an Sasainn. Ach co-dhiù tha i air tilleadh gu Loch an Iasgair, chan urrainn dhomh innse dhuibh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Ros an Iar: *Wester Ross*; iolair-mhara: *sea eagle*; iolair-uisge: *osprey*; Poll Iù: *Poolewe*; Leas Inbhir Iù: *Inverewe Gardens*; lionmhor: *plentiful*; an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais: *the Ordnance Survey*; dealas: *zeal*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mu dhà iolair a lorgadh marbh air a’ Chomraich: *about two eagles that were found dead in Applecross*; ’s e iolairean-buidhe a bh’ annta le chèile: *they were both golden eagles*; ’s e uachdaran a bh’ ann am MacCoinnich: *Mackenzie was a landlord*; fhuair e sealbh air: *he took ownership of*; airson cho pailt agus cho mòr ’s a bha na bric ann: *for how plentiful and big the trout were in it*; ’s gum biodh muinntir an àite gan glacadh le sleaghan air an oidhche: *that the local people would catch them with spears at night*; a bhiodh a’ falbh don loch le slat: *who would go to the loch with a [fishing] rod*; a’ neadachadh air stac cas: *nesting on a steep rock pillar*; gu h-ionadail, ’s e Ailean Iasgair a chanadh daoine ris an iolair-uisge: *locally, people called the osprey Allan the Fisher*; nochd dithis Shasannach ann an Taigh-seinnse Pholl Iù latha a bha seo: *two Englishmen arrived in the Poolewe Inn one particular day*; gu mì-fhortanach, ’s e mèirlich uighean a bh’ annta: *unfortunately, they were egg thieves*; shnàimh sgalag aca a-mach chun an àite: *a servant (valet) swam out to the place*; ghoid e an dà ugh às an nead: *he stole the two eggs from the nest*; air an do chùm e greim le fhiaclan: *which he gripped in his teeth*; an do rinn X càineadh air na mèirlich?: *did X criticise the thieves?*; bha X ris an aon seòrsa mèirle: *X was involved in the same sort of robbery*; cha robh fada aice ri dhol ann an Alba: *she didn’t have long to go in Scotland*; co-dhiù tha i air tilleadh gu X, chan urrainn dhomh innse dhuibh: *whether [or not] it has returned to X, I cannot tell you*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha an iolair-uisge air a dhol à bith ann an Sasainn **mu thràth**: *the osprey had already become extinct in England. There is another way of writing mu thràth (no hyphen) – which is mar-thà (with a hyphen). Both are permitted by GOC (Gaelic Orthographic Conventions). They come to the issue of ‘already’ from slightly different perspectives, but are pronounced virtually the same.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Carson a thugadh an t-ainm air an loch?: *why was the loch named?*

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