

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Naomh Meircheard (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 1,102. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 798 corresponds to Litir 1,102.

An cuala sibh mu Naomh Meircheard? Is esan an naomh sònraichte ann an Gleann Moireasdan. Ann am Beurla, tha daoine eòlach air mar St. Merchard no St. Irchard. Bha cleachdadh aig ar sinnsearan ‘mo’ a chur air beulaibh ainm naomh. Dh’atharraich Mo Eircheard gu Meircheard. Bhiodh muinntir Ghleann Moireasdan ga fhuaimneachadh mar ‘Meirhead’.

Rugadh is thogadh e faisg air Obar Dheathain ann an sgìre Chinn Chàrdainn – sgìre ris an canar ann am Beurla *Kincardine O’Neil*. Bha e na Chrìosdaidh on a bha e òg. Latha a bha seo, a rèir beul-aithris, bha Meircheard ann an Srath Ghlais le dithis eile. Bha an triùir aca a’ sgaoileadh an t-soisgeil.

Chaidh aire a thoirt gu bò bhàn. Latha an dèidh latha, bhiodh a’ bhò na seasamh faisg air craobh, a’ coimhead oirre. Cha bhiodh i a’ cur a beòil sìos airson ithe. Cha robh i ach a’ toirt sùil air a’ chraoibh fad an latha. A dh’aindeoin sin, bhiodh a’ bhò a’ dol dhachaigh gach feasgar, agus coltas oirre **gun robh i air a leòr de dh’fheur ithe**.

Dè rinn Meircheard, ach gun do chladhaich e anns an ùir aig bonn na craoibhe. Lorg e trì clagan. Bha iad uile gleansach, ùr-nodha a’ coimhead, mar gun robh iad air an dèanamh an latha sin fhèin.

Chùm Meircheard fear de na clagan dha fhèin. Thug e na dhà eile do a chompanaich. Dh’iarr e orra falbh, gach duine air an rathad aige fhèin. ‘Nuair a sheirmeas an clag leis fhèin an treas turas, a chàirdean,’ thuirt e, ‘togaibh eaglais an sin.’

Dh’fhalbh a’ chiad duine chun na h-àirde an ear. Sheirm an clag trì tursan. An turas mu dheireadh, bha e ann an Gleann a’ Chonfhadhaich, deas air a’ Mhanachainn. Tha seann eaglais is cladh an sin fhathast.

Dh’fhalbh an dàrna fear chun na h-àirde an iar. Nuair a sheirm an clag aigesan treas turas, bha e ann an Àth Leathann san Eilean Sgitheanach.

Agus Meircheard fhèin, dh’fhalbh esan chun na h-àirde a deas, suas Srath Ghlais an toiseach. An uair sin, chaidh e tarsainn a’ mhonaidh a dh’ionnsaigh Ghleann Moireasdan. Bha e air mullach an sin nuair a sheirm an clag aige a’ chiad turas. Chuir muinntir an àite an t-ainm air a’ bheinn ud Suidhe Meircheard. Anns an latha an-diugh, ’s e dìreach An Suidhe a th’ air na mapaichean, no mar a chanas na Gàidheil timcheall Loch Nis, An Suidh.

Lean Meircheard air gu deas, agus ràinig e Gleann Moireasdan. Stad e aig fuaran faisg air **Baile an Tom Buidhe** agus sheirm an clag a-rithist. ’S e Fuaran

Meirheard a th' air an fhuaran sin. Gu mì-fhortanach, chan eil e air na mapaichean. Cha deach am pears-eaglais fada nuair a sheirm an clag a-rithist. Sin far an do stad ar laoch. Thog e eaglais ann, agus canaidh daoine Clachan Meirheard ris an àite, ged nach eil dad ann a-nise ach seann chladh.

Dh'fhuirich Meirheard ann an Gleann Moireasdan fad ùine mhòr. 'S e searmonaiche math a bh' ann, agus bha gràdh aig muinntir an àite air. Agus mar a chù sinn an-ath-sheachdain, bha an clag aige ainmeil. Thairis air na linntean, bho àm gu àm, bhiodh e a' seirm leis fhèin.

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Faclan na Litreach: Naomh Meirheard: *St. Merchard*; Srath Ghlais: *Strathglass*; togaibh: *build*; Gleann a' Chonfhadhaich: *Glen Convinth*; fuaran: *spring [well]*; pears-eaglais: *churchman, cleric*; cladh: *cemetery*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bha cleachdadh aig ar sinnsearan 'mo' a chur air beulaibh ainm naoimh: *our ancestors had the practice of putting 'mo' before a saint's name*; faisg air Obar Dheathain ann an sgìre Chinn Chàrdainn: *near Aberdeen in the area of Kincardine [O'Neil]*; bha e na Chrìosdaidh on a bha e òg: *he was a Christian from a young age*; bha an triùir aca a' sgaoileadh an t-soisgeil: *the three of them were spreading the gospel*; bhiodh a' bhò na seasamh faisg air craobh, a' coimhead oirre: *the cow would stand near a tree, looking at it*; cha bhiodh i a' cur a beòil sìos airson ithe: *she wouldn't put her head down to eat*; dè rinn X, ach gun do chladhaich e anns an ùir aig bonn na craoibhe: *what did X do, except dig in the soil at the base of the tree*; gleansach, ùr-nodha a' coimhead: *shiny and brand-new in appearance*; chùm X fear de na clagan dha fhèin: *X kept one of the bells for himself*; gach duine air an rathad aige fhèin: *each man on his own route*; sheirm an clag trì tursan: *the bell rang three times*; deas air a' Mhanachainn: *south of Beaulay*; nuair a sheirm an clag aigesan treas turas, bha e anns an Àth Leathann: *when his bell rang the third time, he was in Broadford*; chun na h-àirde a deas: *to the south*; tarsainn a' mhonaidh a dh'ionnsaigh: *across the hills towards*; 's e searmonaiche math a bh' ann: *he was a good preacher*; bha gràdh aig muinntir an àite air: *the local people loved him*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Baile an Tom Buidhe: Balintombuie.** *This is the name of a small settlement in Glenmoriston. You might expect it to be Baile an Tuim Bhuidhe which would be 'correct' grammatically, with an Tuim Bhuidhe being the genitive form of noun and adjective (it is adjacent to a hill called an Tom Buidhe), but the toponym is Baile an Tom Buidhe in the records and in the speech of the last fluent native speakers of Glenmoriston Gaelic. The adjective sometimes has the effect of annulling the genitive singular inflection of masculine nouns, and this is likely to be an example.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: *gun robh i air a leòr de dh'fheur ithe: that she had eaten her fill of grass.*

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