

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Iseabail Gowdie (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 1,123. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 819 corresponds to Litir 1,123.

Bha mi faisg air Allt Èireann còmhla ri caraid o chionn ghoirid. Tha Allt Èireann faisg air Inbhir Narann, sear air Inbhir Nis. Bha cath ainmeil an sin – Blàr Allt Èireann – ann an sia ceud deug, ceathrad 's a còig (1645). Chaidh mi fhìn 's mo charaid seachad air blàr a' chatha, ge-tà, agus lean sinn oirnn.

Bha sinn ann an càraichean eadar-dhealaichte air sàillibh a' choròna-bhìorais. Gu h-obann, chuir mo charaid an taisbeanair clì aige air, agus stad e ri taobh achadh. Stad mi fhìn air a chùlaibh.

Nuair a bha sinn a-mach às na carbadan, chomharraich mo charaid tom beag ceud meatair air falbh. Bha beagan chraobhan a' fàs air. 'Sin agad tom,' thuirt e, 'far an do dhanns Iseabail Gowdie leis na sìthichean.'

'Iseabail cò?' arsa mise.

'Iseabail Gowdie,' fhreagair e. 'Agus coimhead air a' chnoc ud thall'. Mu mhìle air falbh bhuainn, bha cnoc eile le craobhan air. 'Siud agad an t-àite,' thuirt e, 'far an deach a cur gu bàs.'

'Ma-thà,' arsa mise, 'inns dhomh a h-eachdraidh!'

Bha Iseabail Gowdie beò anns an t-seachdamh linn deug. Thathar a' smaoineachadh gum buineadh i a dh'Allt Èireann no baile eile faisg air. Phòs i fear John Gilbert agus bha iad a' fuireach còmhla aig Loch Laoigh faisg air Inbhir Narann. Nise, 's e tòiridh nam bana-bhuidsichean a chaidh a chur gu bàs tè na caibideilean as miosa ann an eachdraidh na h-Alba. Gu tric, cha robh anns na 'bana-bhuidsichean' ach boireannaich a bha ri slànachadh. **Bha na thachair dhaibh maslach.**

Anns an t-siathamh linn deug, chaidh cùisean bhuaithe a thaobh buidseachd ann an Alba. Thachair an aon rud ri linn Rìgh Eanraig VIII ann an Sasainn. Ann an còig ceud deug, seasgad 's a trì (1563), chaidh achd tro Phàrlamaid na h-Alba – Achd Buidseachd na h-Alba. As dèidh sin, nam biodh cuideigin ciontach de bhith an sàs ann am buidseachd, **dh'fhaodadh e – no gu tric i – a bhith air a chur – no air a cur – gu bàs.**

Anns na naochadan dhen linn sin, dh'fhàs gnothaichean na bu mhiosa. Bha cùisean cùirte mòra ann am Bearaig a Tuath ann an Lodainn. Bha iad ainmeil oir bha an Rìgh – Seumas VI – an sàs annta. Bha Seumas air Bana-phrionnsa Anna na Danmhairg a phòsadh thall anns an Danmhairg, ged nach robh e fhèin an làthair. Bha fear eile ga riochdachadh aig a' bhanais.

Dh'fheuch Anna grunn tursan ri seòladh a-null a dh'Alba. Gach turas dh'èirich stoirm no thachair rudeigin eile. Mu dheireadh, dh'fhuirich i ann an Oslo airson a'

gheamhraidh. Ach cha robh Seumas riarachichte le sin. Chaidh e fhèin a-null a dh'Oslo aig toiseach a' gheamhraidh agus chuir e seachad an geamhradh an sin. Sheòl an Rìgh 's a' Bhanrigh ùr a dh'Alba as t-earrach.

Bha na Dànaich agus na h-Albannaich mì-thoilichte mun dàil. Chuala iad aithrisean air buidseachd, an dà chuid ann an Copenhagen agus Bearaig a Tuath. Aig an àm sin, bha mòran a' creidsinn gun robh cumhachd aig bana-bhuidsichean stoirmean a chruthachadh agus soithichean a chur fodha. Agus chì sinn na thachair ann am Bearaig a Tuath anns an ath Litir.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Allt Èireann: *Auldearn*; Inbhir Narann: *Nairn*; cath: *battle*; air a chùlaibh: *behind him*; Loch Laoigh: *Loch Loy [at one time 'Loch Lee']*; Achd Buidseachd na h-Alba: *The Scottish Witchcraft Act*.

Abairtean na Litreach: beagan chraobhan: *a few trees*; ann an càraichean eadar-dhealaichte air sàillibh a' choròna-bhìorais: *in separate cars because of the coronavirus*; chuir mo charaid an taisbeanair clì aige air: *my friend put on his left-hand indicator*; tom far an do dhanns Iseabail Gowdie leis na sìthichean: *a hillock where Isobel Gowdie danced with the fairies*; far an deach a cur gu bàs: *where she was put to death*; inns dhomh a h-eachdraidh: *tell me her story*; tè na caibideilean as miosa: *one of the worst chapters*; boireannaich a bha ri slànachadh nàdarach: *women who were involved in natural healing*; chaidh cùisean bhuaithe: *matters deteriorated*; ri linn Rìgh Eanraig VIII: *at the time of King Henry VIII*; bha cùisean cùirte mòra ann am Bearaig a Tuath ann an Lodainn: *there were major court cases in North Berwick in Lothian*; an sàs annta: *involved in them*; bha Seumas air Bana-phrionnsa Anna na Danmhairg a phòsadh: *James had married Princess Ann of Denmark*; ged nach robh e fhèin an làthair: *although he himself was not present*; ga riochdachadh aig a' bhanais: *representing him at the wedding*; dh'fheuch Anna grunn tursan ri seòladh a-null: *Anna tried several times to sail over*; chuir e seachad an geamhradh: *he spent the winter*; aithrisean air buidseachd, an dà chuid ann an X agus Y: *reports on witchcraft, both in X and Y*; gun robh cumhachd aig bana-bhuidsichean stoirmean a chruthachadh agus soithichean a chur fodha: *that witches had the power to create storms and sink ships*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *dh'fhaodadh e – no gu tric i – a bhith air a chur – no air a cur – gu bàs: he – or often she – could be put to death (both gender forms).*

Gender remains an important consideration in Gaelic (all nouns are either masculine or feminine), and given that women in particular suffered under the witchcraft laws, the distinction is here justified. But note that, as in English, non gender-specific usages referring to humans are become increasingly common. We have no neuter singular pronoun so we tend to use iad 'they' instead (as in English). Instead of the above, I could have said dh'fhaodadh iad a bhith air an cur gu bàs.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: *Bha na thachair dhaibh maslach: what happened to them was disgraceful.*

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