

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Clach Cailleach nam Muc

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 1,145. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 841 corresponds to Litir 1,145.

Na bu tràithe dhen bhliadhna seo, chuir mi crìoch air leabhar mu dheidhinn ainmean-àite ann an Inbhir Nis agus anns an sgìre mun chuairt. 'S e obair mhòr a bh' ann, ach chòrd e rium oir thug e cothrom dhomh sùil a thoirt air iomadh àite inntinneach timcheall a' bhaile sa bheil mi a' fuireach – aig àm **nuair a bha e toirmisgte a dh'ol fada bhon dachaigh** air sàillibh Chovid-19.

'S iomadh ainm-àite sònraichte a sheasas nam chuimhne bhon rannsachadh a rinn mi, ach tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu fhear dhiubh. 'S e sin clach mhòr ris an canar **Clach Cailleach nam Muc**. Tha i ann an Srath Narann, beagan mhìltean a-mach à Inbhir Nis. 'S e srath brèagha a th' ann an Srath Narann, le dualchas Gàidhlig air leth.

Chuala mi an sgeul an toiseach bho dhithis anns an t-srath, ged nach robh iad buileach soilleir cà' robh a' chlach. An uair sin, lorg mi cunntas le eachdraiche ionadail, Anndra Cuimeanach nach maireann. Sgrìobh Anndra gur ann à Eilean Leòdhais a bha a' chailleach. Bhiodh i a' falbh eadar na glinn is srathan air gach taobh de Loch Nis le treud de mhucan. Bhiodh i a' faighinn fasnadh fon chloich agus sin far an d' fhuair i bàs. Bha i air a h-ithe le a mucan fhèin. Abair sgeul!

Lorg mi cunntasan eile mun chaillich. Sgrìobh aon duine gun robh cuimhne aig fear à Gleann Moireasdan oirre. Chaochail am fear sin aig àm a' Chiad Chogaidh. Agus tha cunntas clàraichte air làrach-lìn Tobar an Dualchais anns a bheil dithis a' bruidhinn mun chaillich. Tha tè dhiubh ag ràdh gun robh a seanmhair a' toirt biadh don chaillich agus gun do leig i leatha – i fhèin agus a mucan – fuireach anns an t-sabhal aice.

Tuigidh sibh gun robh mi airson a' chlach a lorg! Ge-tà, cha robh fiosrachadh mionaideach anns na cunntasan mun àite san robh i. Lorg mi clachan a bha mòr ach cha robh cumadh ceart air gin dhiubh. Cha robh pìos a' stobadh a-mach a bheireadh fasnadh do chailleach mar a bha na cunntasan a' cumail a-mach.

Bha mi an impis an gnothach a leigeil seachad nuair a thachair mi ri Alasdair Foirbeis, tuathanach à Srath Narann le buntanas fada don àite. 'O, Clach Cailleach nam Muc,' thuirt e, 'tha i air an fhearann agam fhìn. Bheir mi ann thu, agus innsidh mi an stòiridh dhut.' Cha b' e ruith ach leum!

Air latha sneachdach, thug Alasdair ann mi. Air mullach cnoc creagach ann am meadhan coille bheithe, bha clach àrd le talamh dubh fòidhpe far nach robh an sneachd na laighe. 'Sin far an d' fhuair a' chailleach bàs, air a h-ithe le a mucan

fhèin,' thuir Alasdair. Tha esan dhen bheachd gun do dh'ith na mucan i an dèidh gun do chaochail i gu nàdarrach.

Fhuair Alasdair an sgeul à beul-aithris. Chan ann à Leòdhas a bha a' chailleach, ach à Dùn Magh Ghlais ** ann an Srath Fharagaig. Gach bliadhna bhiodh i a' coiseachd a dh'Inbhir Nis le a mucan airson an reic aig margaidh. Ghabhadh an turas aice dà latha. Bhiodh i a' stad letheach-slighe gach rathad ann an àite far nach cuireadh i dragh air daoine –fon chloich sin. Agus 's e sin sgeul Cailleach nam Muc agus na cloiche aice ann an Srath Narann.

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Faclan na Litreach: Srath Narann: *Strathnairn*; Anndra Cuimeanach nach maireann: *the late Andy Cumming*; Gleann Moireasdan: *Glenmoriston*; a seanmhair: *her grandmother*; fiosrachadh mionaideach: *detailed information*; Alasdair Foirbeis: *Alasdair Forbes*; tuathanach: *farmer*; cumadh: *shape*; Dùn Mac Glais: *Dunmaglass*; Srath Fharagaig: *Stratherrick*; letheach-slighe: *halfway*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Na bu tràithe dhen bhliadhna seo: *earlier this year*; chuir mi crìoch air leabhar: *I finished a book*; thug e cothrom dhomh sùil a thoirt air iomadh àite inntinneach: *it gave me an opportunity to look at many interesting places*; timcheall a' bhaile sa bheil mi a' fuireach: *around the city in which I live*; 's iomadh ainm-àite sònraichte a sheasas nam chuimhne: *many special place-names stand out in my memory*; ged nach robh iad buileach soilleir cà' robh a' chlach: *although they weren't entirely sure where the stone was*; lorg mi cunntas le eachdraiche ionadail: *I found an account by a local historian*; gur ann à Eilean Leòdhais a bha a' chailleach: *that the old woman was from the Isle of Lewis*; bhiodh i a' falbh eadar na glinn is srathan air gach taobh de Loch Nis le treud de mhucan: *she would go between the glens and straths on each side of Loch Ness with a herd of pigs*; sin far an d' fhuair i bàs: *that's where she died*; bha i air a h-ith le a mucan fhèin: *she was eaten by her own pigs*; abair sgeul: *what a story*; chaochail am fear sin aig àm a' Chiad Chogaidh: *that man died at the time of the First World War*; gun do leig i leatha fuireach anns an t-sabhal aice: *that she allowed her to stay in her barn*; cha robh pìos a' stobadh a-mach: *there wasn't a piece sticking out*; a bheireadh fàsadh do chailleach: *that would provide shelter for an old woman*; air an fhearann agam fhìn: *on my own land*; cha b' e ruith ach leum: *I jumped at the chance*; clach àrd le talamh dubh fòidhpe: *a high stone with black ground under it*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Clach Cailleach nam Muc 'the stone of the old woman of the pigs'. Notice that in a noun phrase of this nature only the final noun goes in the genitive form although the second one (cailleach) has a genitive meaning ('of the old woman'). If muc were not there, the stone would be Clach na Caillich 'the stone of the old woman'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: aig àm nuair a bha e toirmisgte a dhol fada bhon dachaigh: *at a time when it was forbidden to go far from home*.

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