

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## A' Chaora sa Chreathail

*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](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 1,169. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 865 corresponds to Litir 1,169.*

Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu rann annasach. Tha mi a' ciallachadh le sin òran beag – tàladh – anns a bheil ceithir loidhnichean. Sheinn boireannach e. Bha i ri taobh creathail anns an taigh aice fhèin. Bha i, a rèir choltais, a' gabhail an òrain airson leanabh anns a' chreathail. Ach an robh leanabh sa chreathail?

Seo agaibh an rann: *Bà hó, bà hó, bà hó, mo leanabh; Tha do chàirdean glè lionmhor an ìochdar nan gleannan; Tha cuid an Cinn Tìre nam pìobairean ro mhath; 'S tha cuid dhiubh san Òban air bhòrd san taigh-leanna.*

A bheil sibh a' tuigsinn sin? Tha do chàirdean glè lionmhor an ìochdar nan gleannan – *your relations are plentiful in the low country of the glens.* Tha cuid an Cinn Tìre nam pìobairean ro mhath. Tha sin a' ciallachadh gu bheil cuid de chàirdean 'an leanabh' ann an Cinn Tìre fìor mhath air a' phìob-mhòir. Tha cuid dhiubh san Òban air bhòrd san taigh-leanna. Uill, tha sin a' ciallachadh gu bheil feadhainn eile de chàirdean an leanabh air bòrd-bìdh ann an taigh-seinnse.

Tha mi an dùil gu bheil sibh a' tuigsinn a-nise nach e leanabh a bha sa chreathail ach caora – no closach caorach – a bha am falach.

Seo mar a thachair e. Bha cìobair a' fuireach faisg air Tairbeart Loch Fìn ann an Earra-Ghàidheal. Bha feadhainn a' gabhail amharas air gun robh e ri mèirle chaorach. Agus bha! Aig a' cheann thall, chaidh oifigearan don taigh aige airson fianais na aghaidh a lorg. Cha robh e fhèin a-staigh. Ach bha a bhean a-staigh. Chuir ise fàilte air na h-oifigearan agus gheall i dhaibh gun toireadh i a h-uile taic dhaibh a bha a dhìth.

Ach feumaidh gun robh fios aice gun robh iad a' tighinn. Bha closach caorach aice a-staigh. Chuir i anns a' chreathail e, agus chòmhdaich i e le plaideachan.

Fhad 's a bha na fìr a' sporghail anns an taigh, shuidh am boireannach sìos ri taobh a' chreathail agus ghabh i tàladh airson an 'leanabh' a chumail socair, sàmhach. Tha mi a' dèanamh dheth nach robh Gàidhlig aig na h-oifigearan.

Agus seo an t-òran a ghabh i: *Bà hó, bà hó, bà hó, mo leanabh ... Nam biodh Gàidhlig air a bhith aig na h-oifigearan, 's dòcha gun robh iad air tuigsinn gun robh am boireannach gam mealladh. Ach fhuair i às leis a' mhealladh.*

Nise, airson an t-òran a mhìneachadh ceart ... seo e a-rithist: *Tha do chàirdean glè lionmhor an ìochdar nan gleannan.* Tuigidh sibh gur ann sna gleannan a bhios a' chuid mhòr de na caoraich. *Tha cuid an Cinn Tìre nam pìobairean ro mhath.* Bha feadhainn air an dèanamh nam màlan pìoba-mòire – *bags for bagpipes.* Tha cuid dhiubh san Òban air bhòrd san taigh-leanna. **Sin far an do landaig an fheòil-**

**chaorach** fhèin. Bha na closaichean air an reic, agus landaig iad air truinnsearan ann an taigh-seinnse anns an Òban – pìos air falbh bhon àite-fuirich aig a’ chiobair agus a bhean.

Chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh a bheil an sgeul sin fìor. Tha amharas agam nach eil ann ach naidheachd bhreugach!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** rann: *quatrain, verse*; tàladh: *lullaby*; creathail: *cradle*; leanabh: *baby*; bòrd-bìdh: *a dining table*; màlan pìoba-mòire: *bagpipe bags (made of sheepskin)*; taigh-seinnse: *inn, public house*; naidheachd bhreugach: *a fictional anecdote*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Bà hó, bà hó, bà hó: *these are untranslatable vocables sung in a lullaby*; tha do chàirdean glè lìonmhor an ìochdar nan gleannan: *your relations are plentiful in the low country of the glens*; tha cuid an Cinn Tìre nam pìobairean ro mhath: *some in Kintyre are excellent pipers*; tha mi an dùil gu bheil sibh a’ tuigsinn a-nise: *I expect you now understand*; nach e leanabh a bha sa chreathail ach caora: *that it wasn't a baby that was in the cradle but a sheep*; closach caorach a bha am falach: *a sheep carcass that was hidden*; seo mar a thachair e: *here's how it happened*; bha cìobair a’ fuireach faisg air Tairbeart Loch Fìn ann an Earra-Ghàidheal: *there was a shepherd living near Tarbert Loch Fyne in Argyll*; bha feadhainn a’ gabhail amharas air gun robh e ri mèirle chaorach: *some people were suspecting him of rustling sheep*; chaidh oifigearan don taigh aige airson fianais na aghaidh a lorg: *officers went to his house to find evidence against him*; gheall i dhaibh gun toireadh i a h-uile taic dhaibh a bha a dhìth: *she promised them that she would grant them all the help they needed*; chòmhdach i e le plaideachan: *she covered it with blankets*; fhad 's a bha na fir a’ sporghail anns an taigh: *while the men were rummaging in the house*; ghabh i tàladh airson an ‘leanabh’ a chumail socair, sàmhach: *she sang a lullaby to keep the ‘baby’ at ease and quiet*; nam biodh Gàidhlig air a bhith aig na h-oifigearan: *if the officers had been Gaelic-speakers*; 's dòcha gun robh iad air tuigsinn gun robh am boireannach gam mealladh: *perhaps they would have understood that the woman was deceiving them*; fhuair i às leis a’ mhealladh: *she got away with the deception*; chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh a bheil an sgeul sin fìor: *I can't say if that story is true*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** tha cuid dhiubh san Òban **air bhòrd** san taigh-leanna: *some of them in Oban on a table in the ale-house. The lenition of bòrd here following the preposition air is unnatural in the modern language but reflects an older usage and is still found in Irish Gaelic. We see it ‘fossilised’ in phrases like beag air bheag and mean air mhean.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Sin far an do landaig an fheòil-chaorach: *that's where the mutton landed.*

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