

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Seann Leigheasan airson Lot Nathrach (1)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,213. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 909 corresponds to Litir 1,213. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Tha seanfhacal ann an Gàidhlig a tha car inntinneach dhomh. **Thèid nathair tro theine dearg mun tèid i tro dhuilleach an uinnsinn** 'a snake will go through a red-hot fire sooner than through the leaves of the ash tree'. Thèid nathair tro theine dearg mun tèid i tro dhuilleach an uinnsinn.

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, bha mi ag aithris sgeulachd dhuibh à taobh siar Leòdhais. B' e am fear a chruinnich i Tormod an t-Seòladair, Tormod Moireasdan, à Siabost. Bha Tormod na shàr-eòlaiche air nathraichean-nimhe. Anns an leabhar aige 'The Life Story of the Adder', tha e ag innse mu na seann leigheasan aig na Gàidheil airson lot nathrach. Nam measg, bhathar a' cleachdadh rùsg na craoibh-uinnsinn.

Bhiodh daoine a' goil an rùsg **airson a leithid seo de dh'ùine**. Bha an leann air a shìolachadh tro chlà mìn. Bhiodh iad a' bogadh pìos clòtha anns an leann agus ga chur air an lot.

Bha Tormod na neach-saidheans. Bha e cuideachd na Ghàidheal. Bha e dhen bheachd gum faodadh gun robh stuth ceimigeach ann an rùsg an uinnsinn a bha ag obair an aghaidh buaidh an nimhe air a' bhodhaig. Math dh'fhaodte gu bheil rudeigin anns a' chraoibh-uinnsinn a tha ag adhbharachadh fuath ann an nathraichean.

Chaidh innse do Thormod nach biodh nathair ri lorg uair sam bith faisg air craobh-uinnsinn. Dh'aidich e nach fhaca e fhèin nathair ann an suidheachadh mar sin riamh.

A rèir Thormoid, bha trì dòighean eile aig na seann Ghàidheil airson leigheas a dhèanamh air lot nathrach. Anns a' chiad dol a-mach, bhiodh cuideigin a' marbhadh coileach dubh agus ga sgoltadh sìos a bhroilleach. Tha mi a' ciallachadh le sin coileach dubh aig croitear no tuathanach, seach coileach-dubh fiadhaich. Bhiodh iad a' cur an eòin mar sin air an lot. Tha Tormod ag innse dhuinn gum b' e sin an leigheas a bu chumanta aig na seann daoine.

Anns an dàrna àite, bha daoine a' cleachdadh clach-nathrach. B' e sin clach chruinn rèidh, mu thrì òirlich ann an leud, agus le toll anns a' mheadhan. Bha na seann daoine a' creidsinn gur e nathair a rinn an toll agus bhon a thachair sin gum biodh draoidheachd air choreigin co-cheangailte ris a' chloich. Nan cuirte clach-nathrach air an lot, bhiodh an ataireachd a' sgrù agus thigeadh feabhas air an euslainteach.

Sgrìobh Tormod gun robh clachan-nathrach gu math tearc, agus nach robh ach mu leth-dhusan dhiubh air a' Ghàidhealtachd air fad. Bha iad air an lorg, mar bu trice, ann an glinn agus uillt air leth iomallach.

B' e an leigheas mu dheireadh airson lot nathrach gum biodh daoine a' cleachdadh ceann aig nathair mharbh agus ga shuathadh air an lot, agus tha mi a' dol a thoirt sùil air sin an-ath-sheachdain.

Ach bu mhath leam innse dhuibh mu rud eile a sgrìobh Tormod an t-Seòladair mun nathair-nimhe. Nuair a bha e na bhalach òg chuala e daoine a' bruidhinn mu 'gaoth na nathrach'. Dh'eadar-theangaich e sin gu Beurla mar '*the serpent's breath*'. Bha daoine ag ràdh nam biodh duine air taobh an fhasgaidh dhen nathair, gun robh gaoth – no anail – na nathrach cho puinnseanta 's gun adhbharaicheadh e puinnseanachadh ann am fuil an duine fhèin.

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Faclan na Litreach: nathair: *snake, serpent*; leigheas: *cure, treatment*; lot nathrach: *snakebite*; neach-saidheans: *scientist*; dh'aidich e: *he admitted*; clach-nathrach: *serpent-stone*; toll: *hole*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bha Tormod na shàr-eòlaiche air nathraichean-nimhe: *Norman was an expert on adders*; bhathar a' cleachdadh rùsg na craoibh-uinnsinn: *the bark of the ash tree was being used*; bha an leann air a shiolachadh tro chlà mìn: *the liquid was strained through fine cloth*; a' bogadh pìos clòtha anns an leann agus ga chur air an lot: *soaking a piece of cloth in the liquid and putting it on the wound*; gum faodadh gun robh stuth ceimigeach ann an X: *that perhaps there was a chemical in X*; buaidh an nimhe air a' bhodhaig: *the effect of the poison on the body*; ag adhbharachadh fuath ann an nathraichean: *that is repulsive to snakes*; bhiodh cuideigin a' marbhadh coileach dubh: *somebody would kill a black cockerel*; agus ga sgoltadh sìos a bhroilleach: *and split it down the front*; clach chruinn rèidh, mu thrì òirlich ann an leud: *a flat round stone about three inches across*; gum biodh draoidheachd air choreigin co-cheangailte ris a' chloich: *that there would magic of some nature connected to the stone*; nan cuirte clach-nathrach air X: *if a serpent-stone were put on X*; bhiodh an ataireachd a' sgar: *the swelling would stop*; thigeadh feabhas air an euslainteach: *the patient would get better*; nam biodh duine air taobh an fhasgaidh dhen nathair: *if a person were on the lee side of the snake*; gun robh anail na nathrach cho puinnseanta 's gun adhbharaicheadh e puinnseanachadh ann am fuil an duine fhèin: *that the snake's breath was so poisonous that it would cause poisoning in the person's own blood*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bhiodh daoine a' goil an rùisg airson a leithid seo de dh'ùine: *people would boil the bark for a certain period of time*. A leithid seo 'the equivalent, equal, like of this' is a useful phrase and is used widely in idiom. Here are four examples: air a leithid seo de latha 'on such and such a day'; bha a leithid seo de dhuine ann 'so-and-so was there'; chan fhaca mi a leithid seo riamh 'I never saw anything like this'; am bithear a' dèanamh a leithid seo anns an dùthaich agad fhèin? 'is anything like this done in your country?'

Seanfhacal na Litreach: Thèid nathair tro theine dearg mun tèid i tro dhuilleach an uinnsinn 'a snake will go through a red-hot fire sooner than through the leaves of the ash tree'.

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