

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Seann Leigheasan airson Lot Nathrach (2)

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 1,214. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 910 corresponds to Litir 1,214. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Ann an Litir mu dheireadh, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu dhiofar dhòighean aig na seann Ghàidheil airson lot nathrach a leigheas. Bu chòir dhomh rudeigin a ràdh mun fhacal airson *snakebite*. Bhiodh na seann daoine gu tric a' dèanamh sgaradh eadar bìdeadh aig, **can**, cù agus an *lotadh* aig nathair. Chanadh iad *lotadh-nathrach* ris an ionnsaigh a tha nathair a' toirt agus *lot nathrach* airson '*snakebite wound*'.

Bha mi a' toirt sùil an t-seachdain sa chaidh air a' chunntas aig Tormod an t-Seòladair à Siabost. Gheall mi dhuibh gun toirinn sùil a bharrachd air fear de na leigheasan aige – suathadh ceann nathrach air an lot.

Tha cunntas dhen dearbh rud air an làraich-lìn – 'Tobar an Dualchais'. Bha Alasdair MacNeacail, Alasdair Shomhairle Mhòir, air a chlàradh le mac a pheathar, am fear-cruinneachaidh beul-aithris, Calum Iain MacGill-Eain. Bha sin ann an naoi ceud deug, caogad 's a naoi (1959). Bha Alasdair às a' Bhràighe anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Bha Gàidhlig air leth aige.

Chunnaic esan coimhearsnach a' suathadh ceann nathrach air an lot no, mar a thuir e fhèin, 'claban-cinn na nathrach'. Bha sin airson at a leigheas air agh. Bha e a' cumail ceann na nathrach air mullach balla taobh a-staigh an taigh aige.

Tha sin a' dol leis na leugh mi aig Tormod an t-Seòladair. Sgrìobh esan gun robh daoine a' gleidheadh ceann aig nathair-nimhe a mharbh iad. Bha iad ga stòradh ann an salann. Agus an tàinig feabhas air an agh? Thàinig – bha i slàn a-rithist an ath mhadainn.

Mus tàinig a choimhearsnach le ceann na nathrach, bha boireannach a b' aithne do dh'Alasdair a' feuchainn ri a leigheas fhèin a dhèanamh. Dh'fheuch i an toiseach le uisge a chaidh a dhòrtadh thairis air airgead. Bha an t-uisge a' tighinn **far an airgid**. Cha do dh'obraich sin.

Dh'fheuch i an uair sin snàithlean dearg a cheangail i 'timcheall air a bheothach'. Agus ghabh i rann leigheis. Cha robh sin soirbheachail. Ach rinn ceann na nathrach a' chùis.

Lorg mi cunntas aig fear eile air Tobar an Dualchais, agus e a' bruidhinn air seann leigheasan aig na Gàidheil airson lot nathrach. Bha am fear sin cuideachd às an Eilean Sgitheanach. Abair gu bheil e na thlachd a bhith ag èisteachd ri a chuid Gàidhlig. B' esan an t-Urramac Tormod Dòmhnallach à Bhaltois anns an Taobh Sear. A-rithist, 's e Calum Iain MacGill-Eain a chlàir e. Bha sin ann an naoi ceud deug, caogad 's a trì (1953).

Bha dà leigheas aig Mgr. Dòmhnallach. Aonan dhiubh, b' e a bhith marbhadh eun, gu sònraichte cearc. Bha iad a' fosgladh na cloaich agus ga cur air an lot, fhad 's a bha i fhathast blàth. Bha sin coltach ris an leigheas a dh'aithris Tormod an t-Seòladair – ach gur e coileach dubh a bhathar a' cleachdadh.

Dh'aithris Mgr. Dòmhnallach gun cuala e mu leigheas eile. Nam faighte grèim air an nathair, bhite ga cur ann an uisge. Bha an t-uisge air a dhòrtadh air an lot. Chan urrainn dhomh na leigheasan seo a dhearbhadh, taobh seach taobh. 'S e as ciallaiche a bhith faiceallach ma chì sibh nathair-nimhe bheò.

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Faclan na Litreach: lot nathrach: *snakebite wound*; Alasdair MacNeacail: *Alexander Nicolson*; coimhearsnach: *a neighbour*; claban-cinn: *top of the head*; soirbheachail: *successful*; faiceallach: *careful*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Gheall mi dhuibh gun toirinn sùil a bharrachd air fear de na leigheasan aige: *I promised you that I would look further at one of his cures*; suathadh ceann nathrach air an lot: *the rubbing of a snake's head on the wound*; air a chlàradh le mac a pheathar, am fear-cruinneachaidh beul-aithris: *recorded by his sister's son, the folklorist*; às a' Bhràighe anns an Eilean Sgitheanach: *from Braes on the Isle of Skye*; airson at a leigheas air agh: *to cure a swelling on a heifer*; air mullach balla taobh a-staigh an taigh aige: *atop a wall inside his house*; tha sin a' dol leis na leugh mi: *that accords with what I read*; an tàinig feabhas air an agh?: *did the heifer's condition improve?*; boireannach a b' aithne do X: *a woman that X knew*; le uisge a chaidh a dhòrtadh thairis air airgead: *with water that was poured over silver*; cha do dh'obraich sin: *that didn't work*; snàithlean dearg a cheangail i 'timcheall air a bheothach': *a red thread that she tied around the beast*; ghabh i rann leigheis: *she incanted a curing verse*; rinn ceann na nathrach a' chùis: *the snake's head did the job*; abair gu bheil e na thlachd a bhith ag èisteachd ri a chuid Gàidhlig: *what a pleasure it is to listen to his Gaelic*; an t-Urramach Tormod Dòmhnallach à Bhaltos anns an Taobh Sear: *the Rev. Norman MacDonald from Valtos in Trotternish*; a' fosgladh na cloaich: *opening the corpse*; nam faighte grèim air an nathair, bhite ga cur ann an uisge: *if the snake were caught, it would be immersed in water*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: eadar bideadh aig, **can**, cù agus an *lotadh* aig nathair: *between the bite/biting of, say, a dog and the bite of a snake*. Can in this structure is a useful idiom. It is the equivalent of the English 'say' but it might also be translated as 'for example' or 'let us say'. Bha mi am beachd tighinn, can, Dimàirt no Diciadain 'I was thinking of coming, say, on Tuesday or Wednesday'; an gabh thu òran – can, Mo Mhàthair?; *will you sing a song – say, Mo Mhàthair?*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Bha an t-uisge a' tighinn **far an airgid**; *the water was coming 'off the silver'*.

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