

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Teintean rainich air Oidhche Shamhna

*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 1,234. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 930 corresponds to Litir 1,234. The Litir is also available at [www.bbc.co.uk/litir](http://www.bbc.co.uk/litir) and [www.learnghaelic.scot/litir](http://www.learnghaelic.scot/litir). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learnghaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learnghaelic.scot).*

Tha fhios a'm nach e seo an t-àm dhen bhliadhna airson a bhith a' beachdachadh air Oidhche Shamhna. Ach tha mi a' beachdachadh air Oidhche Shamhna! Tha mi air a bhith a' leughadh cunntas mu na teintean rainich a bhiodh ann o shean air Oidhche Shamhna air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Tha mi a' ciallachadh le sin '*fern fires*'. Cha do sgrìobh an duine '*bracken*' ged a tha mi a' smaoinichadh gur e sin a bha e a' ciallachadh. Sgrìobh e '*ferns*'.

Bhiodh feadhainn òga a' cruinneachadh na rainich tron latha. Bha an connadh air a chàrnadh air mullach cnuic faisg air a' bhaile. Aig ciaradh an fheasgair, bha an teine air a lasadh. Bidh fios agaibh gu bheil raineach donn is tioram aig an àm sin dhen bhliadhna. Tha e furasta a cur na smàl. Bhiodh na h-uibhir a' nochdadh aig a' bhraidseal. Bha iad a' dèanamh gàirdeachas.

Nuair a bha an teine air a dhol sìos, gheibheadh gach duine a bha an làthair clach bheag. Bha comharra eadar-dhealaichte air gach clach. Chuireadh an neach a bu shine a' chlach acasan air an talamh, aig oir luathre an teine. **Bhiodh iad ag ràdh ri càch gur ann leothasan a bha a' chlach.**

Bhiodh an fheadhainn eile ga leantainn, a' cur an clachan fhèin ann gus an robh clachan timcheall luathre an teine gu lèir. Nam biodh duine sa bhaile gun chomas a dhol ann, bhiodh dlùth-charaid dhaibh a' cur clach ann dhaibh.

Tha mi an dùil gun deach na daoine deiseil timcheall an teine. 'S ann deiseil a bhiodh na seann Ghàidheil a' dol timcheall rud sam bith co-cheangailte ri creideamh, co-dhiù bha sin Crìosdail no ro-Chrìosdail.

Cha bhiodh duine a' dol faisg air an àite tron oidhche. An ath mhadainn, **bheireadh iad sùil air** an luathre agus air na clachan. Nam biodh clach sam bith air a dhol far an àite aice thairis air an oidhche, bha iad a' creidsinn gum biodh an neach a chuir ann i a' faighinn bàs taobh a-staigh bliadhna. Bha an aon rud fìor nam biodh lorg-coise an duine ri fhaicinn anns an luathre.

Cha robh deas-ghnàth na Samhna seachad aige sin, ge-tà. Bha an fheadhainn òga a' feuchainn ri faighinn a-mach cò bha iad a' dol a phòsadh. Tha an cunntas ag innse dhuinn aon dòigh airson sin a dhèanamh. Bhiodh an neach a' dol gu sabhal anns an robh doras aig gach ceann dheth. Bha na dorsan air am fosgladh.

Anns an t-sabhal, bha criathar air a thoirt don neach a bha ag iarraidh faighinn a-mach cò bha iad a' dol a phòsadh. Bha pìos airgid no seud air a chur ann. Bhiodh an neach an uair sin a' criathradh ann an ainm an Droch Fhir.

Nuair a bha seo a' dol air adhart, bhiodh daoine a' faicinn samhla de dhuine a' tighinn a-steach. Bhiodh e a' toirt a' chriathair on duine a bha a' criathradh. Agus bhiodh coltas air mar choltas a chèile a bhiodh ann san àm ri teachd.

Carson a tha mi ag innse seo dhuibh? Uill, bha mi a' smaoineachadh an t-seachdain sa chaidh gun robh mi deiseil leis an Urramach Seumas MacDhonnchaidh à Calasraid. Ach cha robh, oir is esan a sgrìobh an cunntas seo ann an seachd ceud deug, naochad 's a h-aon (1791).

\* \* \* \* \*

**Faclan na Litreach:** feadhainn òga: *young folk*; donn is tioram: *brown and dry*; dlùth-charaid: *a close relative*; deiseil: *sunwise*; deas-ghnàth na Samhna: *the Halloween ceremony*; lorg-coise: *footprint*; sabhal: *barn*; criathar: *riddle*; samhla de dhuine: *an apparition of a person*; An t-Urramach Seumas MacDhonnchaidh: *The Rev. James Robertson*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** tha mi a' beachdachadh air Oidhche Shamhna: *I'm giving an opinion about Halloween*; cunntas mu na teintean rainich a bhiodh ann o shean: *an account about fern-fires that would be held in olden times*; bha an connadh air a chàrnadh air mullach cnuic faisg air a' bhaile: *the fuel was piled up on a hilltop near the village*; aig ciaradh an fheasgair, bha an teine air a lasadh: *at dusk, the fire was lit*; furasta a cur na smàl: *easy to make it into a conflagration*; bhiodh na h-uibhir a' nochdadh aig a' bhraidseal: *many people would appear at the bonfire*; bha iad a' dèanamh gàirdeachas: *they were expressing pleasure*; bha comharra eadar-dhealaichte air gach clach: *there was a different mark on each stone*; chuireadh an neach a bu shine a' chlach acasan air an talamh: *the oldest person would put their stone on the ground*; oir luathre an teine: *the edge of the fire's ashes*; nam biodh duine gun chomas a dhol ann: *if anyone was unable to go*; nam biodh clach sam bith air a dhol far an àite aice: *if any stone had gone from its place*; a' feuchainn ri faighinn a-mach cò bha iad a' dol a phòsadh: *trying to find out whom they were going to marry*; bhiodh an neach an uair sin a' criathradh ann an ainm an Droch Fhir: *the person would then riddle in the name of the Devil*; mar choltas a chèile a bhiodh ann san àm ri teachd: *like the appearance of his spouse that would be there in the future*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Bhiodh iad ag ràdh ri càch gur ann leothasan a bha a' chlach: *they would tell the others that was their stone*. Do you notice that I've used the third person plural pronoun iad to represent a single person here? This is an alternative to saying 'e no i', giving both masculine and feminine pronouns (because the writer in 1791 made it clear what he was saying could apply to male or female). This reflects a linguistic response to societal changes in which a binary definition of gender is no longer universally employed. Iad is gender-neutral.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** bheireadh iad sùil air an luathre: *they would look at the ash*.

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