

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Dòmhnall Alasdair MacCoinnich (4)

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 1,284. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 980 corresponds to Litir 1,284. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Aonghas agus Brìde ann am *Wonder Tales from Scottish Myth and Legend* le Dòmhnall Alasdair MacCoinnich. B' e Aonghas mac na Caillich Bheura. Cha tigeadh aois air oir bhiodh e a' fuireach fad a' gheamhraidh ann an Eilean Uaine an Iar far nach tig seann aois air duine.

Chunnaic Aonghas Brìde ann an aisling an toiseach. Bhruidhinn e ri Rìgh an Eilein Uaine mu a deidhinn. Thuirt an Rìgh, 'S e Brìde a chunnaic thu. Nuair a thig an samhradh, bidh i ri do thaobh mar Bhanrigh an t-Samhraidh. Ge-tà, tha do mhàthair airson cumhachd a bhith aice **cho fada 's as urrainn**. Cha leig i leat a dhol faisg air Brìde. Fan thus' an seo gus am bi na flùraichean a' tighinn an-àirde.'

'Feumaidh mi dhol a lorg Brìde an-dràsta,' ars Aonghas.

'Tha am Faoillean ann,' fhreagair an Rìgh. 'Chan eil e iomchaidh.'

'Cuiridh mi geas air a' mhuir agus air an tìr,' thuirt Aonghas. 'Bheir mi trì latha iasaid bhon Lùnastal don Fhaoilleach.' Rinn e sin agus bha trì latha àlainn aca, ged as e am Faoillean a bh' ann. Chleachd Aonghas na làithean sin airson Brìde a lorg. Cha robh e soirbheachail, ge-tà, agus thill an droch shìde. B' fheudar do Aonghas tilleadh dhachaigh.

'S ann nuair a bha flùraichean an earraich air nochdadh a dh'fheuch Aonghas a-rithist. An turas seo, bha e soirbheachail. Lorg e Brìde anns a' chaisteal far an robh i am bràighdeanas. 'Bho seo a-mach, bidh daoine a' cuimhneachadh an latha seo mar Latha Brìde,' ars Aonghas. Agus 's e sin an latha a bhios na Gàidheil a' comharrachadh fhathast mar a' chiad latha dhen earrach.

Thàinig sìthichean airson fàilte a chur air Brìde. Chuir Banrigh nan Sìthichean geas air Brìde. Dh'atharraich an t-aodach a bh' oirre don t-seòrsa a bu shnasaile.

B' e **am bigean-Brìde** a' chiad eun a chuir fàilte air Brìde. Thuirt a' Bhanrigh gum biodh an t-eun sin an uair sin aithnichte mar 'eun-Brìde'. Agus, air a' chladach bha a' phioghaid-mhara a' seinn le toileachas. Bhon uair sin, tha na Gàidheil air a bhith eòlach air an eun seo mar am Brìdean no Gille-Brìde.

Phòs Aonghas agus Brìde ann an lùchairt Banrigh nan Sìthichean. Bha na daoine agus na h-ainmhidhean toilichte. Ach cha robh a' Chailleach Bheur toilichte. Nuair a chunnaic i am fear a' fàs bha an cuthach oirre.

Bha each dubh aig a' Chaillich. Leum a' Chailleach air muin an eich agus dh'fheuch i ri Aonghas a lorg. Ach theich Aonghas agus Brìde. Ged a bha an t-

earrach air tighinn, chruthaich a' Chailleach gaothan gus am biodh coltas a' gheamhraidh ann fhathast. An toiseach bha an Fheadag. Bha clachan-meallain na cois. Mhair i trì latha. Chaidh caoraich agus uain a mharbhadh leis an fhuachd.

An uair sin, bha a' Ghobag. Bha i mar ghob eòin, a' gobachadh air a h-uile rud. Mhair i naoi latha. An uair sin, bha an Sguabag ann. Bha a' ghaoth cho làidir 's gun do reub i geugan far nan craobh. Ach an do bhuannaich a' Chailleach Bheura? Chì sinn nuair a chuireas mi crìoch air na stòiridhean seo an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Dòmhnall Alasdair MacCoinnich: *Donald Alexander Mackenzie*; aisling: *dream*; am Faoilleach: *'the wolf month' (originally mid-January to mid-February)*; am bràighdeanas: *in captivity*; lùchairt: *palace*; gaothan: *winds*; an Fheadag: *'the whistle'*; a' Ghobag: *'the sharp-billed wind'*; a' gobachadh air: *pecking*; an Sguabag: *'the sweeper'*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Cha tigeadh aois air: *he wouldn't grow old*; oir bhiodh e a' fuireach fad a' gheamhraidh ann an Eilean Uaine an Iar far nach tig seann aois air duine: *because he would live all winter in the Green Isle of the West where nobody grows old*; tha do mhàthair airson cumhachd a bhith aicese: *your mother wants to have power*; cha leig i leat a dhol faisg air X: *she won't let you get close to X*; fan thus' an seo gus am bi na flùraichean a' tighinn an-àirde: *stay here until the flowers are appearing*; cuiridh mi geas air X: *I'll put a spell on X*; bheir mi trì latha iasaid bhon Lùnastal: *I'll take three borrowing days from Lammas (August)*; thill an droch shìde: *the bad weather returned*; b' fheudar do Aonghas tilleadh dhachaigh: *Angus had to return home*; thàinig sìthichean airson fàilte a chur air Brìde: *fairies came to welcome Bride*; dh'atharraich an t-aodach a bh' oirre don t-seòrsa a bu shnasaile: *her clothes changed to the most attractive sort*; nuair a chunnaic i am feur a' fàs bha an cuthach oirre: *when she saw the grass growing, she was livid*; bha clachan-meallain na cois: *it was accompanied by hailstones*; chaidh caoraich agus uain a mharbhadh leis an fhuachd: *sheep and lambs were killed by the cold*; cho làidir 's gun do reub i geugan far nan craobh: *so strong that she ripped branches from the trees*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: am bigean-Brìde: *the linnet*. Two birds have particularly strong connections to Bride. One is the linnet whose name literally means *'the little bird [bigean is from beag-eun] of Bride.'* The *'sea magpie'* (pioghaid-mhara or pioghaid-mar in Strathspey), known in English as the *'oystercatcher'*, is also connected to Bride; it is known as the Brìdean (*'Brid-eun'*) or Gille-Brìde, depending on location or dialect. Both species of bird are said to sing to welcome the return of Bride, goddess of Spring.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: cho fada 's as urrainn: *as long as possible*.

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