

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Caisteal Loch nan Doirb (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 1,312. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,008 corresponds to Litir 1,312. 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 Chaisteal Loch nan Doirb. Chaidh a thogail o chionn còrr is seachd ceud bliadhna, ach **tha e na thobhta** a-nise.

Thathar a' smaoinneachadh gu bheil Loch nan Doirb a' ciallachadh '*the loch of the minnows*'. 'S e an t-allt a ruitheas a-mach às an loch an *Dorback Burn*. Tha mi an dùil gur e sin *Allt nan Doirbeag* ann an Gàidhlig. Agus tha *doirbeag* a' ciallachadh '*minnow, tadpole or any very small fish*'.

Thug mi sùil air a' mhapa mus do thòisich mi air mo thuras. Air tìr-mòr, air taobh an iar an locha, tha ainm-àite air leth inntinneach – *Achadh na Deanntaige* '*the field of the nettle*'. Math dh'fhaodte gur e sin àite far am biodh daoine a' cruinneachadh nan deanntag anns an t-seann aimsir.

Bu chòir dhomh a bhith mothachail dha sin air an latha, ach cha robh. Chaidh mi a-null don eilean ann an geòla rubair. Chuir mi briogais ghoirid orm agus brògan spòrs gun stocainnean oir bha mo chasan gu bhith bog fliuch. Ach, nuair a ràinig mi an t-eilean, dè bha romham ach an t-uabhas de dheanntagan! Ged a bha copagan agus slàn-lusan ann cuideachd – **a chuireas bìdeadh deanntaig am feabhas** – bha pàirtean dhen eilean far nach robh comas agam coiseachd.

Tha an caisteal iongantach. Tha na ballachan tiugh agus àrd. Tha pàirtean mòra dhiubh a' seasamh gu math fhathast. Tha iad aig oir an eilein, os cionn a' chladaich. Anns a' mheadhan, eadar na ballachan, tha mar gum biodh achadh, làn feòir. Tha e mu acaire ann am meud. Sin far an robh uaireigin togalaichean eile – togalaichean fiodha, tha mi an dùil – a bh' air an dìon bhon taobh a-muigh leis na ballachan – agus le uisge an locha. Nuair a chaidh an caisteal a thogail, cha robh gunnaichean aig daoine ann an Alba. Bha iad a' sabaid le bogha is saighead, claidheamh is sleagh.

'S ann leis na Cuimeanaich – *the Comyns* – a bha Loch nan Doirb. 'S e cinneadh inntinneach a th' annta. Thathar ag ràdh gur ann à faisg air Lille anns an Fhraing a thàinig iad bho thùs. Bha sinnsear aca cuide ri Uilleam, Diùc Normandaidh, a rinn a' chùis air na Sasannaich aig Blàr Hastings. Bha iad buadhach is comasach, agus fhuair iad fearann ann an Alba.

B' e Bhaltair Cuimeanach, aig an robh caisteal ann an Ruadhainn – faisg air Ceann a' Ghiùthsaidh – Tighearna Bhàideanach. Chaochail e ann an dà cheud deug, caogad 's a h-ochd (1258). Bha daoine air feadh Alba eòlach air Bhaltair agus a

dhroch chliù. Dh'inns mi dhuibh mun mhallachd *Dìol Bhaltair an Gàdhaig ort!* ann an Litir 1018.

Anns an treas linn deug, bha na Cuimeanaich am measg nan teaghlaichean a bu chumhachdaiche ann an Alba. Nuair a chaochail Rìgh Alasdair III, a' fàgail Alba gun mhonarc, bha Iain Cuimeanach am measg an t-sianair a bha a' riaghladh na dùthcha gus an tigeadh Mairead, Òigh Nirribhidh, gu ìre. Ged a bha e Normanach air aon taobh, bha a shinnsireachd air an taobh eile a' dol air ais gu Dòmhnall Bàn, an Rìgh Gàidhealach mu dheireadh againn. Bidh tuilleadh agam mu na Cuimeanaich agus Loch nan Doirb an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Loch nan Doirb: *Lochindorb*; geòla rubair: *rubber dinghy*; copagan: *dockens*; slàn-lusan: *ribwort plantains [the juice of both these plants relieves nettle stings]*; togalaichean fiodha: *wooden buildings*; buadhach is comasach: *talented and capable*; Bhaltair Cuimeanach: *Walter Comyn*; Ruadhainn: *Ruthven*; Ceann a' Ghiùthsaidh: *Kingussie*; Tighearna Bhàideanach: *Lord of Badenoch*; mallachd: *curse*.

Abairtean na Litreach: thug mi sùil air a' mhapa mus do thòisich mi air mo thuras: *I looked at the map before I commenced my journey*; math dh'fhaodte gur e sin àite far am biodh daoine a' cruinneachadh nan deanntag: *that is perhaps a place where people would collect [the] nettles*; bu chòir dhomh a bhith mothachail dha: *I should have been aware of*; chuir mi briogais ghoirid orm agus brògan spòrs oir bha mo chasan gu bhith bog fliuch: *I put on short trousers and sports shoes because my feet were going to be soaked*; dè bha romham ach an t-uabhas de dheanntagan; *what was in front of me but masses of nettles*; tha mar gum biodh achadh, làn feòir: *there is, as it were, a field, full of grass*; mu acaire ann am meud: *about an acre in extent*; a' sabaid le bogha is saighead, claidheamh is sleagh: *fighting with bow and arrow, sword and spear*; bha sinnsear aca cuide ri Uilleam, Diùc Normandaidh, a rinn a' chùis air na Sasannaich aig Blàr Hastings: *they had an ancestor along with William, Duke of Normandy, that vanquished the English at the Battle of Hastings*; am measg nan teaghlaichean a bu chumhachdaiche: *among the most powerful families*; a' fàgail Alba gun mhonarc: *leaving Scotland without a monarch*; am measg an t-sianair a bha a' riaghladh na dùthcha: *among the six people who were running the country*; gus an tigeadh Mairead, Òigh Nirribhidh, gu ìre: *until Margaret, Maid of Norway, reached maturity*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: a chuireas bideadh deanntaig am feabhas: *that cure or ameliorate a nettle sting. Although in English we use the word 'sting' to refer to the manner of both a nettle leaf and a bee or wasp inflicting pain, it's not quite the same in Gaelic. Why not ask your Gaelic teacher or mentor (if you have one) how they would say both? A bee or wasp sting can be a gath (gath-seillein or gath-speacha) although for 'I was stung' (by an insect) we might say chaidh mo sgobadh (le seillean). For a nettle sting we might say dh'fhuiling mi tachas na deanntaig or chaidh mo bhìdeadh le deanntag.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: tha e na thobhta: *it is a ruin.*

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