

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Loch an Eich-uisge (3)

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 1,321. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,017 corresponds to Litir 1,321. 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 Loch na Doireanaich ann an Slèite. Tha an t-ainm a' tighinn bho Loch Doir' an Eich. Agus dè an t-each a th' ann? Tha an t-each-uisge a bha a' fuireach anns an loch!

A rèir beul-aithris, bhiodh an t-each-uisge a' nochdadh **ann an cruth caillich**. 'S e rud annasach a bha sin. Mar bu trice, 's ann an riochd fear eireachdail a bhitheadh iad air tìr. Co-dhiù, bhiodh a' chailleach seo a' falbh a thadhal air na caileagan aig an àirigh ann an Gleann Sàsaig. Bhiodh i gam marbhadh. Ach aon turas, mhair tè dhiubh beò agus dh'inns i do dhaoine mar a thachair.

Chaidh na fir a-mach agus mharbh iad an t-each-uisge. Thiodhlaic iad e. Bha fios fhathast aig daoine tràth anns an fhicheadamh linn far an robh an sloc.

Chuir Loch Doir' an Eich smuain nam cheann. A bheil lochan eile air a' Ghàidhealtachd air a bheil 'Loch an Eich'? Agus am faodadh na h-ainmean sin a bhith ceangailte ri each-uisge a bha beò anns an loch?

Tha deagh adhbhar agam airson a' cheist sin a chur. Ged a tha sinn eòlach air faclan fillte mar *madaidh-allaidh* agus *madadh-ruadh*, 's iomadh ainm-àite a tha às aonais na dàrna eileamaid – mar Loch a' Mhadaidh, Cnoc a' Mhadaidh agus Fèith a' Mhadaidh. A bheil loch ann air a bheil Loch an Eich, ach a tha a' ciallachadh Loch an Eich-uisge?

Chan eil mi cinnteach. Tha Loch an Eich ann am Pàirc ann an Leòdhas. Ach chan aithne dhomh sgeul mu dheidhinn each-uisge an sin. Na lochan eile a tha ainmichte airson each – tha eileamaid eile anns an ainm. Loch an Eich Bhàin ann an Ros an Ear, Loch an Eich Dhuibh ann an Ros an Iar agus Loch an Eich Uidhir ann an Asainte. Carson a bha na lochan sin air an ainmeachadh airson each?

Faisg air Loch an Eich Bhàin, tha loch mòr ri taobh an rathaid an A835. Ann am Beurla, canaidh sinn Loch Garve ris. Ann an Gàidhlig, 's e Loch Maol Fhinn a th' air. Tha sgeul mu dheidhinn each-uisge ann, agus 's e sgeul annasach a th' ann.

Ged a bhiodh an t-each-uisge seo a' giùlan clann-nighean gu grunn an locha, cha bhiodh e gam marbhadh. Bhiodh na nigheanan beò an sin agus bha èisg gu leòr aca ri ithe. Ach bhiodh iad fuar. Ged a bha coltas air an each-uisge mar each, bha e fuar-fhuileach, coltach ri iasg. **Bha e coma ged a bhiodh an taigh aige, air grunn an locha, cho fuar ris a' phuinnsean.**

Latha a bha seo, ge-tà, bha aon nighean a' gul gun sguir. Bha i ag ràdh, 'Tha mi cho fuar, tha mi cho fuar!' Chaidh an t-each-uisge gu taigh clachair ann am baile Ghairbh. Thug e air a' chlachair dhol leis gu grunn an locha far an do thog e àite-teine agus similear airson a' chaileag a chumail blàth. Mar dhuais, bhiodh an t-each-uisge a' toirt èisg dha uair sam bith a dh'iarradh an clachair.

Agus rud annasach eile. Nuair a bha geamhraidhean fuara againn, bhiodh Loch Maol Fhinn a' reothadh. Ach a-mhàin aon phàirt dheth aig a' cheann an ear. Carson nach biodh e a' reothadh an sin? A chionn 's gur ann an sin a bha similear taigh an eich-uisge!

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Faclan na Litreach: Thiodhlaic: *buried*; madaidh-allaidh: *wolf*; madadh-ruadh: *fox*; Asainte: *Assynt*; fuar-fhuileach: *cold-blooded*; duais: *reward*; a' reothadh: *freezing*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mar bu trice, 's ann an riochd fear eireachdail a bhitheadh iad air tìr: *most usually, it was in the form of a handsome man that they would be [appear] on land*; bhiodh a' chailleach seo a' falbh a thadhal air na caileagan aig an àirigh ann an Gleann Sàsaig: *this old woman would go and visit the girls at the shieling in Glen Saasaig*; mhair tè dhiubh beò: *one of them survived*; bha fios fhathast aig daoine tràth anns an fhicheadamh linn far an robh an sloc: *people in the early twentieth century still knew where the burial site was*; ged a tha sinn eòlach air faclan fillte mar X agus Y: *although we are familiar with compound words like X and Y*; 's iomadh ainm-àite a tha às aonais na dàrna eileamaid: *many place names are without the second element*; Loch an Eich Uidhir: *'the loch of the dun horse'*; ged a bhiodh X a' giùlan clann-nighean gu grunn an locha, cha bhiodh e gam marbhadh: *although X would carry girls to the bottom of the loch, he would not kill them*; a' gul gun sguir: *crying without cease*; gu taigh clachair ann am baile Ghairbh: *to a stonemason's house in the village of Garve*; far an do thog e àite-teine agus similear airson a' chaileag a chumail blàth: *where he built a fireplace and chimney to keep the girl warm*; uair sam bith a dh'iarradh X: *any time X would wish*; a chionn 's gur ann an sin a bha similear taigh an eich-uisge: *because it's there that the water-horse's house chimney was*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bha e coma ged a bhiodh an taigh aige, air grunn an locha, cho fuar ris a' phuinnsean: *he couldn't care less that his house, at the bottom of the loch, was as cold as the poison* (cho fuar ris a' phuinnsean is a common Gaelic expression). *I could have said bha e coma gun robh ... but it is common to include the conjunction ged 'although' in this type of expression.* Bhithinn coma ged a bhiodh an t-uisge ann fad an t-samhraidh, fhad 's a bhiodh an turadh ann as t-fhoghar *'I wouldn't care if it rained all summer, as long as it was dry in autumn.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: bhiodh an t-each-uisge a' nochdadh ann an cruth caillich: *the water horse would appear in the form of an old woman.*

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