

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Leann-fraoich (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 1,352. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,048 corresponds to Litir 1,352. 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 seann sgeulachd thraidiseanta à Gall-Ghàidhealaibh dhuibh. Bha feachd mòr aig Niall Naoi-ghiallach, Àrd-rìgh na h-Èireann. Bha iad a' toirt ionnsaigh air na Cruithnich mu dheireadh ann an Gall-Ghàidhealaibh. Bha na Cruithnich air an iomain gu tairbeart faisg air Maol Ghall-Ghàidheil. Cha robh ach ceathrar aca air fhàgail beò – seann duine agus a **thriùir mhac**.

Air cùl an tairbeirt bha dig agus uchdan. Tha iad fhathast ann. Canaidh daoine na *double-dykes* riutha. Dh'fhuirich an ceathrar ghaisgeach an sin airson seachdain. Chuir iad stad air na Gàidheil.

Anns an sgeulachd, bha na Cruithnich gan cumail fhèin beò air biadh ris an canar '**biadh nan treun**' – *the food of the heroes*. Ged a tha an cunntas sgrìobhte ann am Beurla, 's e an t-ainm Gàidhlig a chleachd an sgrìobhadair. Ach gu mì-fhortanach, chan eil e a' mìneachadh dè th' ann ann am 'biadh nan treun'.

Mu dheireadh, an dèidh seachdain, cha robh biadh air fhàgail. Dh'aontaich an seann duine bruidhinn ri teachdaire aig Niall. Gheall an teachdaire dhaibh gum biodh iad air leigeil mu sgaoil gun chron nan innseadh iad do na Gàidheil mar a dhèanadh iad leann-fraoich.

Dh'aontaich am bodach, ach air cùmhnant car annasach. Bhiodh e fhèin agus a dhithis mhac a b' òige air an cur gu bàs. Mar sin, chan fhaiceadh iad mar a bha an rùn-dìomhair aca air a thoirt seachad. An uair sin, bhiodh an gille a bu shine aige – air an robh Trost mar ainm – ag innse don t-Sionnach (am fear-brathaidh Cruithneach aig Niall) ann an cagair mar a dhèanadh iad leann-fraoich. 'S e an Sionnach – am brathadair – a bhriseadh dìomhaireachd na reasabaidh. Agus bhiodh Trost air a shaoradh gun chron air.

Dh'aontaich an rìgh ris a' chùmhnant. Chaidh an Sionnach air adhart le claidheamh na làimh. Cha robh armachd sam bith aig Trost. Dh'iarr Trost air an fhear eile dhol cuide ris gu mullach a' Mhaoil. Bha iad air bearradh, gu h-àrd os cionn na mara.

Bha iomagain air an t-Sionnach. Ach bha fios aige nach robh an rìgh dèidheil air. Mura faigheadh e an reasabaidh mar a chaidh iarraidh, bha fios aige gum biodh e air a chur gu bàs. Cha robh roghainn aige. Lean e air Trost gu mullach a' bhearraidh.

'Thig nas fhaisge,' thuirt Trost ris. 'Chan fhaod duine sam bith eile ach thu fhèin an reasabaidh dhìomhair airson leann-fraoich a chluinntinn bho mo bhilean.'

Theannaich an Sionnach a ghrèim air a' chlaidheamh. Thug e sùil air Trost. Agus thug e sùil air ais air na saighdearan Gàidhealach a bha faisg, agus a' fàs mì-fhoighidneach. Bha e a-nise ri taobh a' Chruithnich òig.

Gu h-obann agus gun rabhadh, chuir Trost a ghàirdeanan timcheall an duine eile gus nach togadh e a chlaidheamh. Ghabh Trost grèim teann air. Dh'èigh e gum biodh an rùn-diomhair air a ghlèidheadh gu sìorraidh. Leum e far a' bhearraidh, a' toirt an t-Sionnaich leis. Agus sin mar a chùm na Cruithnich an reasabaidh dìomhair gu sìorraidh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Gall-Ghàidhealaibh: *Galloway*; Niall Naoi-ghiallach: *Neil of the nine hostages*; leann-fraoich: *heather ale*; teachdaire: *messenger*; cagair: *whisper*; brathadair: *traitor*; claidheamh: *sword*; mullach a' Mhaoil: *the summit of the Mull*; grèim: *grip*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bha na Cruithnich air an iomain gu tairbeart faisg air Maol Ghall-Ghàidheil: *the Picts were driven to an isthmus near the Mull of Galloway*; cha robh ach ceathrar aca air fhàgail beò: *only four of them were left alive*; air cùl an tairbeirt bha dìg agus uchdan: *behind the isthmus was a ditch and embankments*; chuir iad stad air X: *they stopped X*; bha na Cruithnich gan cumail fhèin beò air biadh ris an canar: *the Picts were keeping themselves alive on food called*; gheall an teachdaire dhaibh: *the messenger promised them*; gum biodh iad air leigeil mu sgaoil gun chron: *that they would be released without harm*; nan innseadh iad do X mar a dhèanadh iad leann-fraoich: *if they would tell X how they would make heather ale*; dh'aontaich am bodach, ach air cùmhnant car annasach: *the old man agreed but on a slightly strange condition*; bhiodh e fhèin agus a dhithis mhac a b' òige air an cur gu bàs: *he and his two youngest sons would be killed*; air bearradh, gu h-àrd os cionn na mara: *on a cliff high above the sea*; cha robh roghainn aige: *he had no choice*; thug e sùil air ais air na saighdearan Gàidhealach a bha faisg, agus a' fàs mì-fhoighidneach: *he looked back at the Gaelic soldiers who were close, and becoming impatient*; gus nach togadh e a chlaidheamh: *so that he wouldn't lift his sword*; dh'èigh e gum biodh an rùn-diomhair air a ghlèidheadh gu sìorraidh: *he shouted that the secret would be kept forever*; leum e far a' bhearraidh, a' toirt X leis: *he jumped from the cliff, taking X with him*; mar a chùm na Cruithnich an reasabaidh dìomhair gu sìorraidh: *how the Picts kept the recipe secret forever*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **biadh nan treun:** *the food of the heroes. This is the Gaelic name given to the food that sustained the Pictish warriors for the week. However, what it consists of is not explained. Perhaps it was the roots of carra-meille 'the tuberous vetch' which was used as a hunger suppressant by Highland warriors and drovers. If any reader knows what it might have been, I would love to hear from them at fios@learn Gaelic.scot.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **a thriùir mhac:** *his three sons.*

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