

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Nether Lochaber (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 1,409. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,105 corresponds to Litir 1,409. 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 mun Urramach Alasdair Stiùbhart no, **mar a b' fheàrr a dh'aithnicheadh e**, Nether Lochaber. Bha e ainmeil mar sgrìobhadair agus sgoilear na Gàidhlig.

Ann an Courier Inbhir Nis, anns an Fhaoilleach ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a dhà (1872), sgrìobh e colbh anns an robh fiosrachadh inntinneach mu shaobh-chràbhadh Gàidhealach. Bha cunntas aige dhen Phrionnsa Òg, Teàrlach Eideard Stiùbhart. An dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair, bha am Prionnsa **am falach** còmhla ri Loch Iall, Ceann-cinnidh nan Camshronach. Bha iad a' fuireach ann an uaimh eadar Loch Airceig agus Loch Lòchaidh.

Bha fios aig aon duine far an robh iad – fear air an robh MacCoinnich mar ainm. Bhiodh esan a' toirt biadh dhaibh. Bha dùil aig a' Phrionnsa agus Loch Iall gun robh MacCoinnich a' cumail a' ghnòthaich dìomhair.

Ach, aon mhadainn, nochd e aig glasadh an latha, agus cha robh e leis fhèin. Thug e leis a mhac nach robh ach sia no seachd bliadhna a dh'aois. Bha Loch Iall feargach mu dheidhinn ach mhìnich MacCoinnich carson a thug e an gille ann.

Bha e a' fulang le galar ris an canadh iad 'tinneas an rìgh'. Ann am Beurla, 's e *scrofula* no *king's evil* a chanar ris. Bha daoine ann an grunn dùthchannan Eòrpach aig an àm sin a' creidsinn gun robh comas aig rìgh an galar a leigheadh le bhith a' cur a làmhnan air an euslainteach.

Dh'iarr MacCoinnich air a' Phrionnsa a làmhnan a chur air a mhac. Rinn am Prionnsa sin agus thug e bonn airgid don ghille. A rèir na sgrìobh Nether Lochaber, thàinig feabhas air a' ghille. Ghlèidh e am bonn agus bhiodh e ga chur timcheall amhaich dhaoine eile a bha a' fulang le tinneas an rìgh airson leigheas a dhèanamh orra.

Chuala Nether Lochaber an naidheachd sin bho chuideigin eile ach tha e cuideachd ag innse dhuinn mu rud a thachair dha fhèin beagan làithean mus do sgrìobh e mu dheidhinn anns a' phàipear-naidheachd. Thachair e ri caileag a bha mu dheich no dusan bliadhna a dh'aois. Bha e eòlach oirre agus bha fios aige gun robh a bràthair air a bhith gu math tinn.

'Ciamar a tha e?' dh'fhaighnich an Stiùbhartach.

'Och, tha e mòran nas fheàrr on a fhuair e an spàin,' fhreagair a' chaileag.

'On a fhuair e an spàin?!' thuirt am ministear, 'dè an spàin a tha sin?'

Bha a' chaileag ro òg no ro dhiùid airson an gnothach a mhìneachadh. 'S ann nuair a chaidh Nether Lochaber dhachaigh a fhuair e a-mach dè an spàin a bh' ann.

Bha cìoch-shlugain a bràthar air a dhol a dh'at. Bha na daoine a' creidsinn – airson leigheas a dhèanamh air sin – gu feumadh an duine a bha tinn stuth-leighidh a ghabhail air spàin. Ach dh'fheumadh an spàin a bhith air a dèanamh de dh'adharc bà.

Chan e sin a-mhàin ach dh'fheumadh an adharc a bhith air tuiteam far na bà ann an tubaist. Dh'fheumadh a' bhò co-dhiù aon laogh a bhith aice agus bhiodh an spàin na b' èifeachdaiche buileach nam biodh i an dùil laogh eile. Agus aon rud eile – bhiodh draoidheachd na spàine ag obair a-mhàin fhad 's a bha a' bhò beò. Nuair a bhasaich i, bhiodh an draoidheachd a' falbh agus cha bhiodh an spàin ag obair tuilleadh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Am Faoilleach: *January*; Blàr Chùil Lodair: *the Battle of Culloden*; Teàrlach Eideard Stiùbhart: *Charles Edward Stuart*; Ceann-cinnidh nan Camshronach: *the chief of Clan Cameron*; glasadh an latha: *daybreak*; amhaich: *neck*.

Abairtean na Litreach: sgrìobh e colbh anns an robh fiosrachadh inntinneach mu shaobh-chràbhadh Gàidhealach: *he wrote a column in which there was interesting information about a Gaelic superstition*; ann an uaimh eadar Loch Airceig agus Loch Lòchaidh: *in a cave between Loch Arkaig and Loch Lochy*; fear air an robh MacCoinnich mar ainm: *a man called Mackenzie*; bha dùil aig X gun robh Y a' cumail a' ghnòthaich dìomhair: *X expected that Y would keep the matter secret*; thug e leis a mhac nach robh ach sia no seachd bliadhna a dh'aois: *he took with him his son who was only six or seven years of age*; bha e a' fulang le galar ris an canadh iad 'tinneas an rìgh': *he was suffering a disease called 'the king's disease' (scrofula)*; gun robh comas aig rìgh an galar a leigheadh le bhith a' cur a làmhan air an euslainteach: *that a king could cure the disease by placing his hands on the patient*; thug e bonn airgid don ghille: *he gave the lad a silver coin*; bha fios aige gun robh a bràthair air a bhith gu math tinn: *he knew that her brother had been very ill*; on a fhuair e an spàin: *since he got the spoon*; ro òg no ro dhiùid airson an gnothach a mhìneachadh: *too young or too shy to explain the matter*; dh'fheumadh an spàin a bhith air a dèanamh de dh'adharc bà: *the spoon would have to be made of a cow's horn*; dh'fheumadh an adharc a bhith air tuiteam far na bà ann an tubaist: *the horn would have to have fallen off the cow in an accident*; bhiodh draoidheachd na spàine ag obair a-mhàin fhad 's a bha a' bhò beò: *the spoon's magic would only work as long as the cow remained alive*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha am Prionnsa am falach: *the Prince was in hiding*. This Gaelic phrase is equivalent to the English and means 'in hiding' or 'in concealment'. You will also hear it as 'air fhalach'. You might also use the verbal noun and say 'bha e ga fhalachadh fhèin' i.e. 'he was hiding himself'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: mar a b' fheàrr a dh'aithnicheadh e: *as he was best known*.

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