

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Nether Lochaber (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 1,410. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,106 corresponds to Litir 1,410. 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 'spàin de dh'adharc bheò' a bh' air a cleachdadh ann an leigheas. *A spoon of living horn* – spàin de dh'adharc bheò'. Sgrìobh an t-Urramach Alasdair Stiùbhart, 'Nether Lochaber' mu a deidhinn anns a' cholbh aige ann an Courier Inbhir Nis. Bha sin anns an Fhaoilleach, ochd ceud deug, seachdadaidh 's a dhà (1872).

Dh'inns e don leughadair gur e saobh-chràbhadh a bh' ann nach cuala e fhèin mu dheidhinn riamh roimhe. Bha e mion-eòlach air dualchas nan Gàidheal. Mar sin, **bhite an dùil** gur e cleachdadh àrsaidh a bh' ann a bh' air a dhol à bith.

Ach cha b' e. Anns an ath cholbh aige, anns a' Ghearran, sgrìobh Nether Lochaber mu litir a fhuair e bho leughadair. Dhearbh 'D.R.' às a' Chròic ann an Cataibh gun robh an cleachdadh sin aithnichte anns an sgìre aige fhèin.

Dh'inns 'D.R.' gun robh spàin dhen t-seòrsa sin aig fear de na nàbaidhean aige. Bha i air a dèanamh dìreach dà bhliadhna roimhe. Thàinig an adharc bho bhò a bha sia bliadhna a dh'aois. Bha i fhathast beò. Bha dà laogh aice agus bha i an dùil treas fear a bhith aice. A bharrachd air sin, chaill i an adharc ann an 'tubaist', nuair a bha i a' sabaid le bò eile. Tha a h-uile càil a tha sin a' ciallachadh gum biodh spàin de dh'adharc aicese gu math fàbharach.

Mar sheann chleachdadh, bha na daoine a' creidsinn gum faodadh a leithid de spàin an gnothach a dhèanamh air galar sam bith. Ach, anns a' Chròic, anns na seachdadan dhen naoidheamh linn deug, bhathar a' creidsinn gun dèanadh i leigheas air dìreach aon ghalar. 'S e sin an triuthach no *whooping cough*.

Bhiodh duine a' bha a' fulang leis an triuthaich a' gabhail a bhìdh leis an spàin sin aig gach diathad. Chan fhada gum biodh an duine slàn, fallain a-rithist.

Sgrìobh D.R. gun robh dà spàin eile dhen t-seòrsa sin anns an sgìre aige. Ach cha robh iad gu feum sam bith an aghaidh na triuthaich. Carson? Uill, bha na bà às an tàinig iad air a bhith marbh o chionn fhada. Dh'inns e mu aon spàin a bh' air a bhith aig teaghlach airson còig bliadhna fichead. Cha robh i ag obair an aghaidh na triuthaich tuilleadh, ach bhiodh i air a cur gu feum aig diathad nuair a bha sluagh mòr anns an taigh – mar eisimpleir airson banais no nuair a bhathar a' buain na mònach.

Dh'inns D.R. gun robh saobh-chràbhadh no dhà eile co-cheangailte ris a' ghalar sin. Mar eisimpleir, nam biodh an triuthach a' nochdadh ann an taigh,

bhiodh nàbaidhean a' cur ìm ùr thuca. Chanadh iad 'ìm gun iarraidh' ris. Bha na seann Ghàidheil a' creidsinn gum biodh leigheas a' tighinn an cois stuth-slànachaidh a thigeadh gun iarraidh.

Bha an saobh-chràbhadh eile gu math annasach. Bhathar a' creidsinn gun tigeadh leigheas an cois uisge a bha a' sruthadh no a' **maoimeadh à creag**. Ach, airson a bhith èifeachdach, dh'fheumadh an t-euslainteach an t-uisge a ghabhail le spàin a bh' air a dèanamh, chan ann de dh'adharc bà, ach de dh'fhiodh na craoibh-chrithinn. Bha D.R. dhen bheachd gun robh sin co-cheangailte ris a' chreideamh Chrìosdail, oir bha na seann daoine a' creidsinn gun robh an crann-ceusaidh air a dhèanamh dhen dearbh fhiodh.

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Faclan na Litreach: adharc: *horn*; nàbaidhean: *neighbours*; an triuthach: *whooping cough*; diathad: *meal*; ìm ùr: *fresh butter*; gun iarraidh: *unsought, unrequested*; Crìosdail: *Christian*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Dh'inns e don leughadair gur e saobh-chràbhadh a bh' ann nach cuala e fhèin mu dheidhinn riamh roimhe: *he told the reader that it was a superstition that he had never heard before*; mion-eòlach air dualchas nan Gàidheal: *minutely knowledgeable about the heritage of the Gaels*; bh' air a dhol à bith: *that had gone out of existence*; anns an ath cholbh aige, anns a' Ghearran: *in his next column, in February*; às a' Chròic ann an Cataibh: *from Croick in Sutherland*; gun robh an cleachdadh sin aithnichte anns an sgìre aige fhèin: *that that practice was known in his own area*; bha dà laogh aice agus bha i an dùil treas fear a bhith aice: *she had two calves and was expecting another*; chaill i an adharc ann an tubaist: *she lost the horn in an accident*, nuair a bha i a' sabaid le bò eile: *when she was fighting with another cow*; gum biodh spàin de dh'adharc aicese gu math fàbharach: *that a spoon [made] of her horn would be very auspicious*; gum faodadh a leithid de spàin an gnothach a dhèanamh air galar sam bith: *that a spoon of that type could cure any disease*; gum dèanadh i leigheas air dìreach aon ghalar: *that it would cure only one disease*; chan fhada gum biodh an duine slàn, fallain a-rithist: *it wouldn't be long until the person was fit and healthy again*; cha robh iad gu feum sam bith: *they weren't of any use*; airson banais no nuair a bhathar a' buain na mònach: *for a wedding or when peat was being cut*; gum biodh leigheas a' tighinn an cois stuth-slànachaidh a thigeadh gun iarraidh: *that a cure would come with curative material that came without being sought*; de dh'fhiodh na craoibh-chrithinn: *of the wood of the aspen tree*; bha na seann daoine a' creidsinn gun robh an crann-ceusaidh air a dhèanamh dhen dearbh fhiodh: *the old people were believing that the crucifixion cross was made of the same wood*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **bhite an dùil** gur e cleachdadh àrsaidh a bh' ann: **it would be thought** that it was an archaic practice. Bhite is a past passive form of bi, the verb 'to be'. Bhite an dòchas gum biodh .. 'it would be hoped that ...

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a' maoimeadh à creag: **bursting forth from a rock**.

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