

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## **Àirigh na h-Aon Oidhche**

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 749. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 445 corresponds to Litir 749.*

Tha an Litir an t-seachdain seo gar toirt gu taobh siar Eilean Leòdhais. Ma thèid sibh chun na mòintich à Bràgar, deas air a’ bhaile, ruigidh sibh loch beag air a bheil Loch Àirigh na h-Aon Oidhche. Ciamar a fhuair an àirigh ainm cho annasach? Carson a bhiodh daoine a’ fuireach ann airson dìreach aon oidhche? Uill, a rèir beul-aithris, seo mar a thachair...

Fad’ air ais, timcheall meadhan an t-seachdamh linn deug, thàinig dà theaghlach còmhla airson bothan a thogail air an àirigh sin. Chan ann à Bràgar a bha iad, ach à Siabost, an ath bhaile siar air Bràgar. Air feasgar brèagha san Ògmhios, chaidh dithis boireannach òg ann airson an oidhche a chur seachad air an àirigh. Bha iad timcheall air fichead bliadhna a dh’aois, agus ’s e co-oghaichean a bh’ anna. Bha iad le chèile àrd agus brèagha. B’ iad na h-ainmean orra Màiri Bhàn agus Màiri Dhubh.

Às dèidh dhaibh a’ bhleoghann a dhèanamh, bha iad nan suidhe còmhla aig **doras a’ bhothain-àirigh**. Bha iad ann an deagh shunnd, agus air leth toilichte a bhith ann an àite cho bòidheach.

Bha a’ ghrian a’ dol fodha anns an àird an iar, no anns an iar-thuath mar a bhitheas aig an àm sin dhen bhliadhna. Bha Màiri Bhàn agus Màiri Dhubh **a’ dol a dhèanamh deiseil a dhol innte** nuair a chunnaic iad boireannach a’ tighinn dhan ionnsaigh. Thàinig i bho air cùl tom a bha faisg air a’ bhothan. Bha i na meadhan-aoiseach, àrd, dreachmhor, agus bha aodach oirre mar a bh’ air na boireannaich àbhaisteach ann an Leòdhas.

Chuir na boireannaich òga fàilte oirre. Thuirt am boireannach ùr gun robh i sgìth agus gun robh a casan goirt. Dh’iarr i air an dithis sa bhothan-àirigh cuid na h-oidhche a thoirt dhi. Dh’aontaich iadsan sa bhad, oir b’ e sin an cleachdadh aig an àm. Nan tigeadh srainnsear don doras agaibh, bheireadh sibh biadh is fasnadh dha.

Ghabh an trìuir biadh còmhla agus chaidh iad innte. Bha am boireannach ùr air earrainn chùil na leapa, bha Màiri Bhàn ri a taobh agus bha Màiri Dhubh air earrainn aghaidh na leapa.

Mu àm na camhanaich, dhùisg Màiri Dhubh le clisgeadh. Dh’fhairich i sruth de lionn blàth fòidhpe. Leum i às an leabaidh. Lorg i gun robh an srainnsear air teicheadh. Cha robh sgeul oirre. Tharraing i an t-aodach far na leapa agus ghabh i oillt is uabhas. Bha a co-ogha, Màiri Bhàn, marbh. Bha fuil a’ sruthadh às a’ bhroilleach aice.

Bha doras a' bhothain fosgailte. Thionndaidh Màiri Dhubh chun an dorais agus chunnaic i, pìos beag air falbh, each glas a' dèanamh air a' mhòintich. Thuig i nach e boireannach a bh' air a bhith a' fuireach aca, ach each-uisge. Bha an t-each-uisge a' fuireach ann am fear de na lochan air a' mhòintich. Agus bha e air riochd boireannaich a ghabhail air fhèin an oidhche roimhe.

Bha dust Màiri Bhàn air a thiodhacadh air leathad gorm gu sear air an àirigh. Agus, air sàillibh na thachair, cha do chuir duine sam bith seachad oidhche anns a' bhothan sin a-rithist. 'S e sin as coireach gur e ainm an àite 'Àirigh na h-Aon Oidhche'. Agus, co-dhiù tha an t-each-uisge, no a shliochd, fhathast beò, chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Loch Àirigh na h-Aon Oidhche: *'the loch of the shieling of the one night'*; Siabost: *Shawbost*; camhanaich: *dawn*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** gar toirt gu taobh siar Eilean Leòdhais: *taking us to the west side of the Isle of Lewis*; ma thèid sibh chun na mòintich à Bràgar: *if you go on to the moors from Bragar*; 's e co-oghaichean a bh' annta: *they were cousins*; às dèidh dhaibh a' bhleoghann a dhèanamh: *after they had done the milking*; bha i na meadhan-aoiseach, àrd, dreachmhor: *she was a middle-aged person, tall and attractive*; dh'iarr i air X cuid na h-oidhche a thoirt dhi: *she asked X to give her a night's hospitality*; dh'aontaich iadsan sa bhad, oir b' e sin an cleachdadh aig an àm: *they immediately agreed, for that was the custom at the time*; bheireadh sibh biadh is fasgadh dhaibh: *you would give them food and shelter*; air earrainn chùil na leaba: *on the rear part of the bed*; dhùisg X le clisgeadh: *X awoke with a start*; gun robh an srainnsear air teicheadh: *that the stranger had gone*; tharraing i an t-aodach far na leapa: *she pulled the bedclothes from the bed*; ghabh i oillt is uabhas: *she was utterly horrified*; bha fuil a' sruthadh às a' bhroilleach aice: *blood was oozing from her breast*; each glas a' dèanamh air a' mhòintich: *a grey horse making for the moor*; bha e air riochd boireannaich a ghabhail air fhèin: *he had taken on the form of a woman*; bha dust X air a thiodhacadh air leathad gorm: *X's remains were buried on a green slope*; air sàillibh na thachair: *because of what happened*; co-dhiù tha an t-each-uisge, no a shliochd, fhathast beò: *whether [or not] the water-horse, or its offspring, are still alive*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** bha iad nan suidhe còmhla aig doras a' bhothain-àirigh: *they were sitting together at the door of the shieling bothy*. Do you understand why bothan is slenderised here? It is because it is in the genitive singular case (as it would be in doras a' bhothain). Don't be put off by the presence of àirigh. It doesn't inflect in this compound, it is simply in the genitive singular case, qualifying bothan, which is the basic word of the compound. You might, therefore, expect bothan-àirighe rather than bothan-àirigh and there would be nothing wrong with that. But, in modern usage, we are tending to leave off the terminal 'e' as a genitive marker in feminine words of more than one syllable, particularly in compounds.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** a' dol a dhèanamh deiseil a dhol innte: *going to make ready to go to bed*.

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