

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Beul-àtha nan Trì Allt (1)

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.maclea@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 768. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 464 corresponds to Litir 768.

Ma tha sibh air a bhith a’ dràibheadh anns an Eilean Sgitheanach eadar Dùn Bheagain agus an t-Aodann Bàn, bidh sibh eòlach air drochaid air a bheil *The Fairy Bridge*. Tha an t-àite co-cheangailte ris na sìthichean agus, a rèir choltais, ro mheadhan an naoidheamh linn deug, ’s e fear treun a-mhàin a rachadh thairis oirre air an oidhche. Carson a dh’atharraich cùisean ann am meadhan an naoidheamh linn deug, ma-thà? Uill, thig sinn gu sin an-ceartuair.

Bha feadhainn dhen bheachd gum faiceadh eich na sìthichean a’ dannsadh air an fheur ri taobh na drochaid. Anns an leabhar *Skye: The Island and its Legends*, tha Otta Swire ag innse dhuinn mu a seanair, Iain MacDhonnchaidh à Orabost. Ghabh Iain iongnadh mu eich agus mar a ghabhadh iad eagal ron drochaid. Cha robh e gu diofar an robh marcaiche air an each gus nach robh, no co-dhiù bha duine ga tharraing no ga phutadh a-null.

Bha an aon rud a’ tachairt ri eich Iain, ged nach robh e fhèin a’ creidsinn ann an sìthichean. Bha e dhen bheachd gur e an duine a bha còmhla ris an each a bha a’ toirt buaidh air an each, is gun togadh am beathach eagal bhon duine, nam biodh an duine a’ creidsinn anns na sìthichean.

Rinn Iain deuchainn air buaidh na drochaid air each. Cheannaich e each ùr à Èirinn. Thàinig an t-each air bàta a Dhùn Bheagain; mar sin cha robh e air a bhith faisg air drochaid nan sìthichean.

Aig an aon àm, **bha caraid a’ fuireach aige** a bhuineadh do cheann a deas na dùthcha. Cha robh a charaid air a bhith anns an Eilean Sgitheanach roimhe. Cha robh e eòlach air an eilean no air dualchas an eilein. Dh’fhaighnich e de dh’Iain am biodh cead aige falbh a-mach air an each ùr aige. Thuig Iain gun robh cothrom aige deuchainn a chur air buaidh na drochaid, agus dh’aontaich e. Thug e stiùireadh do a charaid mun rathad – a bheireadh e tarsainn na drochaid dà thuras – air an rathad a-mach agus air an rathad air ais.

Dh’fhalbh a charaid air muin an eich. Nuair a thill e, chuir Iain ceistean air mun each. Tha e math, thuirt am fear eile. Tha e dòigheil is socrach ach tha aon trioblaid aige – tha eagal air ro uisge. Dh’fhaighnich Iain mun uisge. Agus thuirt a charaid gur ann aig drochaid, a’ dol tarsainn allt, a dh’èirich an t-each air a chasan deiridh le eagal – an dà chuid air an rathad a-mach agus air an rathad air ais. Dìreach an aon drochaid. Cha do chuir tè sam bith eile dragh air. Agus dè an drochaid a bha sin? Tuigidh sibh cò tè a bh’ ann.

Ann am Beurla, canar *Fairybridge* ris an àite. Ach tha ainm gu tur eadar-dhealaichte air ann an Gàidhlig – Beul-àtha nan Trì Allt. Agus tha an t-àite ainmeil ann an dualchas nan Gàidheal airson a bhith na àite-coinneachaidh do mhuinntir ceann a tuath an Eilein Sgitheanaich. Aig àm **Briseadh na h-Eaglaise** ann an ochd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a trì (1843) bha an t-Urramach Ruairidh MacLeòid à Sniothasort a' cumail sheirbheisean an sin airson nam mìltean de dhaoine. Aig an àm sin, sguir na Sgitheanaich bho bhith a' gabhail eagal ron drochaid, uill a' chuid a bu mhotha aca co-dhiù.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: an-ceartuair: *presently, shortly*; deuchainn: *test, experiment*; dh'aontaich: *agreed*; Beul-àtha nan Trì Allt: *'the ford of the three burns'*; Sniothasort: *Snizort*.

Abairtean na Litreach: eadar Dùn Bheagain agus an t-Aodann Bàn: *between Dunvegan and Edinbane*; co-cheangailte ris na sìthichean: *connected to the fairies*; 's e fear treun a-mhàin a rachadh thairis oirre: *it's only a brave man that would go over it*; gum faiceadh eich na sìthichean a' dannsadh air an fheur: *that horses would see the fairies dancing on the grass*; mu a seanair, Iain MacDhonnchaidh: *about her grandfather, John Robertson*; mar a ghabhadh iad eagal ron drochaid: *how they would be scared of the bridge*; an robh marcaiche air an each gus nach robh: *whether there was a rider on the horse or not*; a' toirt buaidh air an each: *affecting the horse*; a bhuineadh do cheann a deas na dùthcha: *who belonged to the south of the country*; dh'fhaighnich e de dh'Iain am biodh cead aige falbh a-mach air an each ùr aige: *he asked John for permission to ride his new horse*; a bheireadh e tarsainn na drochaid dà thuras: *that would take him over the bridge twice*; tha e dòigheil is socrach ach tha aon trioblaid aige – tha eagal air ro uisge: *it's well-behaved and gentle but it has one problem – it's scared of water*; a dh'èirich an t-each air a chasan deiridh: *that the horse shied*; cha do chuir tè sam bith eile dragh air: *no other one [fem] upset it*; airson a bhith na àite-coinneachaidh do mhuinntir ceann a tuath an Eilein Sgitheanaich: *for being a meeting place for the people of north Skye*; sguir na Sgitheanaich bho bhith a' gabhail eagal ron drochaid: *the Skye people stopped being afraid of the bridge*; a' chuid a bu mhotha aca co-dhiù: *most of them anyway*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha caraaid a' fuireach aige: *he had a friend staying with him [in his home]*. We can use the preposition aig in this idiom with fuirich cf 'with' in English. Bha thu a-staigh agam turas, nach robh? *'you visited me once [in my home], didn't you?'*; bha mi a' fuireach aice nuair a bha mi beag *'I was staying with her when I was small'*; dh'fhuirich mi aca airson dà oidhche *'I stayed with them for two nights [in their house]'*. Also with a-staigh: bha thu a-staigh againn turas *'you visited us at home once'*; bha mi a-staigh agaibh cuide ri Seumas *'I visited you along with James'*.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **Briseadh na h-Eaglaise:** *the Church Disruption of 1843 which saw the birth of the Free Church of Scotland*.

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