

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Gille Dubh Thangusdail

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. This is Litir 841. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 537 corresponds to Litir 841.

*Till an crodh, Dhòmhnaill, 's gheibh thu bean bheadarach,
Till an crodh, Dhòmhnaill, 's gheibh thu bean bhòidheach,
Till an crodh, fair an crodh, ruaig an crodh, lean an crodh,
Till an crodh, Dhòmhnaill, 's gheibh thu bean bhòidheach.*

An cuala sibh a-riamh mu Ghille Dubh Thangusdail dha robh an t-òran sin air a dhèanamh? 'S ann à Tangusdal ann am Barraigh a bha e. 'S e creachadair a bh' ann **ri linn nan creach**.

Bha dà rud annasach mu dheidhinn, ge-tà. Bha a' chuid a bu mhotha de na creachadairean a' togail creach air a' Ghàidhealtachd no air talamh ìosal na Galltachd. Ach chaidh an Gille Dubh a Shealtainn. Agus dhiùlt e **an fheudail** a thoirt dhachaigh. Seo agaibh an stòiridh:

Bha MacNèill Bharraigh a' dèanamh air Sealtainn airson creach a thogail, agus thug e leis fear mòr làidir à Tangusdal. B' esan an Gille Dubh. Mus do dh'fhàg iad Barraigh, dh'inns an ceann-cinnidh do chàch gum biodh aige ri sabaid an aghaidh fear ann an Sealtainn. 'S e am Boc Sealtainneach am far-ainm a bh' air. Bhiodh esan a' dìon crodh Shealtainn bho na creachadairean Barrach.

Ràinig iad Sealtainn. Agus nochd am Boc Sealtainneach. Thòisich sabaid eadar am Boc is MacNèill Bharraigh. Bha a' chùis a' dol leis an t-Sealtainneach. An uair sin, leum an Gille Dubh a-steach agus mharbh e am Boc Sealtainneach. Dh'òrdaich MacNèill air na Barraich an crodh a thrusadh agus a chur air bòrd na bìrlinn aca.

Ach bha an Gille Dubh a' meòrachadh air na rinn e. Bha e a' gabhail aithreachas airson am Boc Sealtainneach a mharbhadh. Thuirt an Gille Dubh ri MacNèill a chasan a thoirt leis no gun dèanadh e an aon rud airsan 's a rinn e air a' Bhoc. Bhiodh aig MacNèill ri falbh às aonais a' chruidh. Ach bha an t-eagal air ron Ghille Dhubh, agus dh'fhalbh e.

Dh'fhuirich an Gille Dubh ann an Sealtainn agus phòs e nighean a' Bhuic Shealtainnich. Tha an sliochd aca ann an Sealtainn chun an latha an-diugh. Agus 's ann dhàsan a chaidh an t-òran *Till an crodh, Dhòmhnaill* a sgrìobhadh. Feumaidh gun robh 'Dòmhnall' air a' Ghille Dhubh mar ainm-baistidh.

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Tha an naidheachd sin mu Ghille Dubh Thangusdail a' nochdadh ann an leabhar a thàinig a-mach am-bliadhna. 'S e leabhar priseil a th' ann, leis an tiotal *Ri Luinneig mun Chrò*. Tha e mu dheidhinn 'Crodh ann am Beatha agus Dualchas nan Gàidheal'. 'S i Seònaid Ghriogair, tidsear à Dùn Èideann, an t-ùghdar, agus abair gun do rinn i rannsachadh mòr.

Tha cha mhòr trì cheud òran is dàn ann, agus na briathran gu lèir air an son, eadar feadhainn ceangailte ri bleoghann, an àirigh, dròbhaireachd, creach is eile. Tha an leabhar gu lèir ann an Gàidhlig bhrèagha, shiùbhlach. Ma tha ùidh agaibh ann an dualchas nan Gàidheal co-cheangailte ri crodh, feumaidh sibh lethbhreac fhaighinn dhuibh fhèin! Mo bheannachd air Seònaid chòir agus air Grace Note Publications ann an Siorrachd Pheairt airson an leabhar a chur ann an clò. Agus air a' Ghille Dhubh airson an crodh Sealtainneach a thilleadh!

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Faclan na Litreach: Sealtainn: *Shetland*; MacNèill Bharraigh: *The MacNeil of Barra*; am Boc Sealtainneach: *'the Shetland Buck'*; far-ainm: *nickname*; a' dìon: *protecting*; phòs e: *he married*; sliochd: *descendants*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Till an crodh, Dhòmhnail, 's gheibh thu bean bheadarach: *return the cattle, Donald, and you'll get a lovely wife*; fair an crodh, ruaig an crodh, lean an crodh: *watch the cattle, chase the cattle, follow the cattle*; bha a' chuid a bu mhotha de na creachadairean a' togail creach air a' Ghàidhealtachd: *most of the raiders were raiding in the Highlands*; talamh ìosal na Galltachd: *the low country of the Lowlands*; a' dèanamh air Sealtainn airson creach a thogail: *making for Shetland to lift cattle*; dh'inns an ceann-cinnidh do chàch gum biodh aige ri sabaid: *the clan chief told the others that he'd have to fight*; bha a' chùis a' dol leis an t-Sealtainneach: *the Shetlander was winning*; dh'òrdaich MacNèill air na Barraich an crodh a thrusadh: *MacNeil ordered the Barra men to gather the cattle*; agus a chur air bòrd na bìrlinn aca: *and to put them on board their birlinn*; a' meòrachadh air na rinn e: *considering what he had done*; a' gabhail aithreachas airson X a mharbhadh: *regretting killing X*; a chasan a thoirt leis: *to be off*; no gun dèanadh e an aon rud airsan 's a rinn e air a' Bhoc: *or he'd do the same to him as he did to the Buck*; bhiodh aig X ri falbh às aonais a' chruidh: *X would have to leave without the cattle*; bha an t-eagal air ro: *he was scared of*; 's ann dhàsan a chaidh an t-òran a sgrìobhadh: *it was for him that the song was written*; feumaidh gun robh 'Dòmhnall' air X mar ainm-baistidh: *X must have had the given (baptism) name of 'Donald'*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: dhiùlt e an fheudail a thoirt dhachaigh: *he refused to take the plunder (ie cattle) home*. Feudail was so treasured that it gave rise to the expression m' fheudail 'my treasure', usually rendered today as m' eudail. This is a common term of endearment from a parent for a young child.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: 'S e creachadair a bh' ann ri linn nan creach: *he was a plunderer in the age of forays*. This is the name we give to the period of Highland history following the suppression of the Lordship of the Isles in 1493 when cattle raiding and clan warfare became endemic.

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