

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Am Madadh-allaidh mu Dheireadh an Suaineart

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 1,201. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 897 corresponds to Litir 1,201. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Dh'fhàg Calum Iain MacGillEathain, an cruinniche beul-aithris, tòrr chlàran iongantach againn. Nam measg, tha cunntas dhen mhadadh-allaidh mu dheireadh ann an sgìre Shuaineirt, faisg air Sròn an t-Sìthein. Chruinnich Calum agus Francis Collinson an sgeul bho fhear a bhuineadh do Shròn an t-Sìthein, Dòmhnall Mac a' Phearsain, Dòmhnall Donn, ann an naoi ceud deug, caogad 's a ceithir (1954).

Cha robh Dòmhnall cinnteach dè cho fada air ais agus a thachair bàs a' mhadaidh-allaidh, ach bha e ga thomhas aig ceithir no còig ceud bliadhna.

Bha daoine anns an sgìre sin dhen bheachd gun robh iad air a h-uile madadh-allaidh a mharbhadh ach aonan. Latha a bha seo, bha boireannach à Àird Ghobhar a' toirt eallach clòimhe air a druim don mhuileann-chàrdaidh faisg air Sròn an t-Sìthein. B' e meadhan a' gheamhraidh a bh' ann agus thug am boireannach fad an latha coiseachd tro Ghleann nan Gobhar. Bha i leatha fhèin. Bha e air fàs dorch. Chaidh am boireannach a mharbhadh an sin leis a' mhadadh-allaidh.

Nuair nach do nochd i aig a' mhuileann-chàrdaidh, chaidh feadhainn a-mach a choimhead air a son. Lorg iad a corp. Bha fhios aca gur e madadh-allaidh a thug bàs dhi. Thug iad a corp gu bothan-àirigh faisg air làimh. Rinn iad **caithris na h-oidhche** air a corp. Faisg air briseadh an latha chuala iad fuaim agus chunnaic iad am madadh. Bha e a' feuchainn ri faighinn a-steach don bhothan!

Leum na daoine suas agus ghabh iad pìosan fiodha leth-loisgte bhon teine. Theich am madadh-allaidh romhpa.

Dh'fhalbh feadhainn le corp a' bhoireannaich airson a thiodhlacadh. Ach **dh'fhuirich** feadhainn eile shuas anns a' ghleann airson am madadh a lorg. B' e an ceannard aca Iain Dhruim an Torrain. Thuirt Dòmhnall Donn gur e 'fiùran smearail' a bh' ann an Iain. Bha cù aige – mialchù gu math comasach – air an robh Torm mar ainm.

Chaidh Iain, Torm agus feadhainn eile is na coin aca a-mach a lorg a' mhadaidh. Ach cha robh cùisean a' dol gu math. Thuirt Iain gum biodh e na b' fheàrr nam biodh iad a' leigeil leis fhèin agus le Torm a lorg. Tha an sgeulaiche ag innse mun turas a ghabh iad thairis air glinn is beanntan a' tòiseachadh aig Gleann Mhic Phàil. Tha e ag ainmeachadh tòrr ainmean-àite agus tha feadhainn na chunntas nach nochd idir air mapaichean an latha an-diugh.

'S e Torm a lorg am madadh. Bha e aig beul uamha faisg air doire beithe ann an àite gu math iomallach. Nise, 's ann aig Iain a bha a' chiad ghunna-fùdair a thàinig riamh don àird an iar. Loisg Iain urchair air a' mhadadh. Bha e air a leòn ach cha robh e air a mharbhadh.

Chaidh Iain sìos far an robh am madadh. Seo na thuirt Dòmhnall Donn mu dheidhinn: 'tharraing e a chorc-seilg à osan a' chalpa [agus] chuir e crìoch dheireannach air a' mhadadh-allaidh mu dheireadh a bha an Suaineart ... thog e am madadh air a dhruim 's ... chroch e air craobh e ... faisg air an àite ris an abrar Àth na h-Èilde'.

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Faclan na Litreach: Dòmhnall Mac a' Phearsain: *Donald MacPherson*; Àird Ghobhar: *Ardgour*; Gleann nan Gobhar: *Glen Gour*; leatha fhèin: *on her own*; briseadh an latha: *dawn*; Iain Dhruim an Torrain: *John of Drumnatorran*; fiùran smearail: *a hardy and handsome lad*; mialchù: *greyhound*; coin: *dogs*; Àth na h-Èilde: *Anaheilt*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Calum Iain MacGillEathain, an cruinniche beul-aithris: *Calum Iain Maclean, the collector of folklore*; cunntas dhen mhadadh-allaidh mu dheireadh ann an sgìre Shuaineirt, faisg air Sròn an t-Sìthein: *an account of the last wolf in the Sunart area, near Strontian*; gun robh iad air a h-uile madadh-allaidh a mharbhadh ach aonan: *that they had killed all of the wolves except one*; latha a bha seo: *one day*; a' toirt eallach clòimhe air a druim don mhuileann-chàrdaidh: *taking a load of wool on her back to the carding mill*; meadhan a' gheamhraidh: *the middle of winter*; chaidh am boireannach a mharbhadh: *the woman was killed*; a thug bàs dhi: *that killed her*; thug iad a corp gu bothan-àirigh: *they took her body to a shieling bothy*; pìosan fiodha leth-loisgte bhon teine: *half-burned pieces of wood from the fire*; theich am madadh-allaidh romhpa: *the wolf fled ahead of them*; airson a thiodhlacadh: *to bury it*; tha feadhainn na chunntas nach nochd idir air mapaichean an latha an-diugh: *some in his account do not appear on modern maps*; a' chiad ghunna-fùdair a thàinig riamh don àird an iar: *the first ever powder-gun that came to the west*; loisg Iain urchair: *John fired a shot*; tharraing e a chorc-seilg à osan a' chalpa: *he drew his hunting knife from his calf-stocking*; chroch e air craobh e: *he hung it on a tree*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Ach dh'fhuirich feadhainn eile shuas anns a' ghleann: *but some others stayed/remained up in the glen*. The reason for the dh' being at the beginning of this verbal form is because the lenited 'f' is silent. So it is simply there to avoid starting the word with a silent letter combination. Note that, as it is a past tense form, it is slenderised (the final vowel is an 'i'). The verbal noun form is fuireach so we would say chaidh mi a dh'fhuireach ann an Glaschu 'I went to live in Glasgow'. Again the dh' (without a following space) is there to separate the two adjacent vowel sounds of 'a' and '[fh]uireach'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Rinn iad caithris na h-oidhche air a corp: *they kept a night-watch on the body*.

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