

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Murchadh nan Gobhar (2)

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 1,386. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,082 corresponds to Litir 1,386. 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 mu dhaoine air a' Ghàidhealtachd a bh' air an ainmeachadh air gobhair. Bha barrachd air aon duine air an robh 'Murchadh nan Gobhar' mar ainm. Bu mhath leam, anns an Litir seo, innse dhuibh mu fhear aca.

Tha e a' nochdadh, le dealbh dheth, ann an alt anns an iris 'Scotland's Magazine' anns an Ògmhios naoi ceud deug is seasgad (1960). 'S e tiotal an uilt 'The Last of the Highland Goat-herds'.

Rugadh Murchadh nan Gobhar – Murchadh MacIllFhinnein – ann an Gleann Eilg air taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd, aig toiseach an naoidheamh linn deug. Bha treud ghobhar aig athair, le còrr is ceud gobhar ann, agus bhiodh Murchadh a' cumail sùil orra, gan treòrachadh thar a' mhonaidh.

Nise, an robh sibh riamh a' dràibheadh tro Chinn t-Sàile, eadar Cluainidh agus ceann Loch Dubhthaich? Ma bha, bidh sibh eòlach air na gobhair a bhios gu tric rim faicinn faisg air an rathad. Saoil a bheil ceangal ann eadar an treud sin agus na gobhair aig Murchadh, oir bha iadsan stèidhichte ann an Cinn t-Sàile?

An dèidh do Mhurchadh aois còig-deug a ruigsinn, bhiodh am fèileadh-beag an-còmhnaidh air. Bha deagh adhbhar aige airson sin. Mus do ràinig e an aois sin, bhiodh briogais air mar bu trice. Ach, latha a bha seo, bha Murchadh ag iomain treud tarsainn allt ann an Cinn t-Sàile. Bha an t-allt làn uisge agus a' sruthadh gu bras. Bha Murchadh an dùil gum biodh an snaodaire – sin am beathach a tha na 'cheannard' ann an treud – a' dol tarsainn air thoiseach air a h-uile fear eile.

Ach b' e an snaodaire aigesan boc-goibhre ris an canadh iad 'Sàtan'. Math dh'fhaodte gun robh deagh adhbhar aca airson an ainm! Co-dhiù, cha robh Sàtan deònach a dhol a-null. Chaill Murchadh a chuid fhoighidinn leis. Ghabh e grèim air adharcan na goibhre agus tharraing e a-steach don allt e.

Bha iad letheach tarsainn an uillt nuair a dh'èirich am boc air a chasan-deiridh. Chaidh Murchadh a shadail don uisge. Bha a bhriogais bog fliuch agus bha an gille gu math mì-chofhurtail. Chuir e roimhe gun bhriogais a bhith air tuilleadh.

Nuair a ràinig e a dhachaigh, deich mìle bhon allt, dh'iarr e air a mhàthair fèileadh-beag a dhèanamh dha. Rinn i sin, agus bhon latha sin **chun an latha a chaochail e**, cha robh air Murchadh mar aodach ach am fèileadh.

B' e an deoch a b' fheàrr leis bainne nan gobhar. Bha e eòlach air cùbair – fear a bhiodh a' dèanamh bharaillean. Bhiodh am fear sin a' dèanamh bharaillean beaga airson nan daoine a bha ri staileadh uisge-bheatha – gnothach a bha an aghaidh lagh na stàite. Rinn e baraille beag do Mhurchadh anns an cumadh am buachaille-ghobhar a chuid bainne. Bhiodh am baraille ceangailte ri a ghuailnean le crios.

Bhiodh Murchadh a' bleoghainn gobhair dà thuras gach latha, a' lìonadh a bharaille gach turas. Bhiodh e ag òl a' bhainne sin a latha 's a dh'oidhche agus bhiodh e ag ithe brochan a bh' air a dhèanamh de mhin-eòrna, le beagan meala uaireannan air a cur ris. Bha e a' cumail a-mach robh riamh pathadh no acras air, agus gun robh e slàn, fallain fad a bheatha.

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Faclan na Litreach: Murchadh nan Gobhar: *Murdo of the Goats*; dealbh dheth: *a picture of him*; MacIllFhinnein: *MacLennan*; snaodaire: *the lead or dominant animal in a herd*; a chasan-deiridh: *his hind legs*; bog fliuch: *saturated*; mì-chofhurtail: *uncomfortable*; cùbair: *cooper*; a' bleoghainn: *milking*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mu dhaoine a bh' air an ainmeachadh air gobhair: *about people that were named after goats*; bha treud ghobhar aig athair: *his father had a herd of goats*; gan treòrachadh thar a' mhonaidh: *leading them over the hill[s]*; an robh sibh riamh a' dràibheadh tro Chinn t-Sàile: *were you ever driving through Kintail*; eadar Cluainidh agus ceann Loch Dubhthaich: *between Cluanie and the head of Loch Duich*; na gobhair a bhios gu tric rim faicinn faisg air an rathad: *the goats that are often seen near the road*; bhiodh am fèileadh-beag an-còmhnaidh air: *he always wore a kilt*; ag iomain treud tarsainn allt: *driving a herd across a burn*; boc-goibhre ris an canadh iad 'Sàtan': *a buck [billy goat] called 'Satan'*; dà thastan air a' chiad tè: *two shillings for the first one*; chaill X a chuid fhoighidinn leis: *X lost his patience with him*; ghabh e grèim air adharcan na goibhre agus tharraing e a-steach don allt e: *he gripped the goat's horns and pulled him into to the burn*; chuir e roimhe gun bhriogais a bhith air tuilleadh: *he determined never to wear trousers again*; dh'iarr e air a mhàthair fèileadh-beag a dhèanamh dha: *he asked his mother to make him a kilt*; b' e an deoch a b' fheàrr leis bainne nan gobhar: *his favourite drink was goats' milk*; rinn e baraille beag anns an cumadh am buachaille-ghobhar a chuid bainne: *he made a small barrel in which the goatherd would keep his milk*; ceangailte ri a ghuailnean le crios: *tied to his shoulders with a strap*; brochan a bh' air a dhèanamh de mhin-eòrna, le beagan meala uaireannan air a cur ris: *porridge that was made of barley meal, with a little honey sometimes added to it*; nach robh riamh pathadh no acras air: *that he was never thirsty or hungry*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: An dèidh do Mhurchadh aois còig-deug a ruigsinn: *after Murdo reached fifteen years of age*. This is a structure worth remembering. Here are other examples: an dèidh do Phàdraig aideachadh gun robh e na mhèirleach ... 'after Peter admitted he was a robber ...'; an dèidh dhi a dhol ann ... 'after her going there ...'.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: bhon latha sin chun an latha a chaochail e: *from that day until the day he died*.

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