Beealeraght

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Ga dy vel shin cliaghtey smooinaghtyn er Çheer ny Sleityn ayns Nalbin myr ynnyd follym-faase as lhome 'sy laa t'ayn jiu, cha nee shen myr v'eh keayrt dy row. Va cooid vooar jeh'n thalloo er ny choodaghey lesh keyll-juys çhiu enmyssit yn cheyll Chaledonianagh ren gaase seose lurg yn Eash Rio s'jerree. Va ram sleih cummal ayns y çheer ayns ny laghyn shid—as Gaelg Albinagh ec dy chooilley vac dooinney jeu— gys yn hoghtoo as y nuyoo lhing jeig tra va ayrn mooar jeh'n theay ayns ymmodee ardjyn er nyn eebyrt liorish ny çhiarnyn ry-hoi kirree joarree y choyrt lhieu stiagh nyn ynnyd, son dy row tooilley argid ry chosney trooid kirree na trooid tannys. Agh roish shen va cummaltee ny çheerey clearal y cheyll ny veggan as ny veggan cour pastyr, thalloo-beaghee as fuygh dy hroggal thieyn as dy lostey.

Erreish da'n sleih v'er nyn eebyrt er yn aght shoh as ny moddee-oaldey currit naardey dy bollagh, cha row lhiettal dooghyssagh erbee er ny feeaihee (va ny çhiarnyn lhiggey daue bishaghey ry-hoi shelg), as v'adsyn stroie ny va er-mayrn jeh'n cheyll liorish rour fassaghey nagh row lhiggey da biljyn noa gaase. Jiu foddee oo fakin bunnyn-billey noon as noal ayns y voain raad nagh vel billey erbee bio ry akin, ny raad nagh vel ayn agh biljyn feer shenn. Ta peeshyn beggey jeh'n cheyll farraghtyn foast my ta, er-lheh ayns Perthshire, raad ta euar t'ad gra ta'n billey shinney ayns Europe. Oddagh eh ve eddyr daa housane as queig thousaneyn blein dy eash, as rere skeeal va Pontius Pilate ruggit fo.

Va moddee-oaldey ayns Nalbin derrey'n çhiaghtoo lhing jeig, as thousane blein er dy henney va mucawinyn ayn neesht. Va ny Romanee coontey mucawinyn Albinagh dy ve ny mucawinyn stroshey as s'feie ry-hoi caggey rish ny Gladiatoryn. Nish ta paart dy leih geearree coyrt lhieu moddee-oaldey back dys Nalbin, as ad gra dy beagh ad freayll ny feeaihee fo smaght, as, fakin nagh vel monney sleih cummal ayns ny sleityn nish, nagh beagh ad jannoo mooarane assee. Ny-yeih ta ny heirinnee-cheyrragh ny oi, mannagh beagh ad geddyn eeck son sthock caillit. Ta urlee-varrey as shirree-yiargey er ve currit lesh back as ad bishaghey, myr shen cre'n fa nagh voddagh yn un red taghyrt lesh moddee-oaldey?

Though we tend to think of the Scottish Highlands as a barren, desolate place today, it was not always like that. Much of the land was covered by thick pine forest called the Caledonian Forest which developed after the last Ice Age. Many people lived in the region in those days—and they all spoke Scottish Gaelic—until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when a large proportion of the population in many areas were exiled by the landlords to make way for foreign sheep, because there was more money in sheep than in tenants. But before that the inhabitants were gradually clearing the forest for pasture, land to live on and wood for building and fuel.

After the people had been banished in this way and the wolves completely wiped out, there was no natural limit on the deer (the landlords let them multiply for hunting), and they destroyed what was left of the forest by over-grazing which prevented new trees from growing. Today you can see tree-stumps here and there in the moor where there are no living trees visible, or only very old trees. Small areas of the forest still remain though, especially in Perthshire, where there is a yew which is said to be the oldest tree in Europe. It could be between two and five thousand years old, and according to legend Pontius Pilate was born under it.

There were wolves in Scotland until the seventeenth century, and a thousand years ago there were bears too. The Romans considered Scottish bears to be the strongest and fiercest for Gladiatorial contests. Now some wish to reintroduce wolves to Scotland, claiming they would control the deer, and, since there are not many people living in the Highlands now, that they would do little harm. However the sheep farmers are opposed, unless they would get reimbursement for lost livestock. Sea eagles and red kites have been successfully reintroduced, so why couldn't the same happen with wolves?