

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Coilltean-calltainn (3)

*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](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 699. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 395 corresponds to Litir 699.*

Bha mi a’ bruidhinn, an t-seachdain sa chaidh, mun chraobh-challtainn. Thàinig leabhar ùr a-mach o chionn ghoirid air a bheil *Atlantic Hazel: Scotland’s Special Woodlands*. Tha na ùghdaran, Sandy agus Brian Coppins, ag ràdh nach eil sinn anns an fharsaingeachd a’ tuigsinn mar a tha na coilltean-calltainn ag obair. Tha iad gu sònraichte a’ bruidhinn mu Choilltean-calltainn a’ Chuain Siar – *the Atlantic Hazel Woods*.

Tha iad ag ràdh nach eil e idir fìor gu bi calltainn a’ fàs gu nàdarrach a-mhàin mar phreas fo dhuilleach na coille. Tha coilltean ann far as e calltainn cha mhòr an aon chraobh annta, agus tha na Coppins dhen bheachd gu bheil cuid dhiubh air a bhith seasmhach mar sin fad ceudan bhliadhnaichean. ’S dòcha mìltean bhliadhnaichean. ’S e sin rud ris an can an t-eag-eòlaiche *climax vegetation*. Ma dh’fhanas an t-sìde mar a tha i, chan atharraich a’ choille gu ìre mhòr sam bith. Cha tig craobhan eile a-steach airson àite nan craobh-calltainn a ghabhail thairis.

Agus bidh na craobhan-calltainn a’ fàs uabhasach fhèin sean. ’S e as coireach ri sin gum bi iad a’ cur stocan ùra an-àirde airson àite na seann fheadhainn a ghabhail. Ged a tha e ro dhorch air làr na coille airson leigeil le craobhan òga fàs – mar an darach no a’ bheithe – fàsaidh a’ challtainn gun duilgheadas.

Chan eil an sgitheach coltach ri sin. Fàsaidh an sgitheach gu tiugh agus cha bhi dàd a’ fàs fodha, oir tha e ro dhorch. Ach chan ùraich an sgitheach e fhèin. Bidh a’ chraobh a’ bàsachadh an ceann ùine, le aois, mus bi cothrom ann do chraobhan eile fàs air an làraich sin. Anns an dòigh sin, tha a’ chraobh-challtainn car neo-àbhaisteach.

**’S e na thug air** Sandy is Brian Coppins **aithneachadh** gun robh cuid de na coilltean-calltainn Albannach uabhasach sean gun robh iad ag obair air na crotail a tha à fàs air na craobhan. ’S e eòlaichean chrotal a th’ annta. Agus tha Coilltean-calltainn a’ Chuain Siar cudromach gu h-eadar-nàiseanta airson na tha a’ fàs annta de chrotail, fungi agus lusan an àirneig.

Thathar a’ dèanamh dheth nach fhàs cuid de na crotail ach a-mhàin ann am fìor sheann choilltean. Chan fhàs iad far an do rinneadh preasarlach. No ann an coilltean òga. Agus, leis an sin, thathar an ìre mhath cinnteach gu bheil cuid de na coilltean Albannach cianail fhèin sean. Bha iad ann, mar a bha fios aig ar sinnsirean, ri linn Oisein. Agus ri linn athar-san!

An ath thuras a tha sibh a-muigh ann an coille-chnò no coille-challtainn, tha mi airson ’s gun cùm sibh ur sùilean a-mach airson fungus sònraichte. Tha e ruadh agus bidh e a’ fàs air stocan agus geugan chraobh-calltainn. Tha e coltach ri meuran no

miotag a tha a' greimeachadh air a' ghèig. 'S e *hazel gloves fungus* a thathar a' gabhair air ann am Beurla – fungus miotag calltainn. Agus, faodaidh sibh a bhith cinnteach, ma tha am fungus sin a' fàs, gu bheil a' choille gu math sean.

Tha Coilltean-calltainn a' Chuain Siar mar phàirt de dh'àrainn a tha gann air feadh an t-saoghail. 'S e sin coilltean-uisge neo-theth nan cladaichean. Agus an seòrsa ann an Alba is Èirinn, 's e *Coille-uisge Cheilteach* a chanas iad rithe. Nach brèagha an t-ainm sin!

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**Faclan na Litreach:** craobh-challtainn: *hazel tree*; ùghdaran: *authors*; crotal: *lichen [crotle]*; Coilltean-challtainn a' Chuain Siar: *The Atlantic Hazelwoods*; eag-eòlaiche: *ecologist*; lusan an àirneig: *liverworts*; fungus: *fungus*; geugan: *branches*; àrainn: *habitat*; Coille-uisge Cheilteach: *Celtic rainforest*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** anns an fharsaingeachd: *in general*; a-mhàin mar phreas fo dhuilleach na coille: *only as a shrub under the woodland canopy*; seasmhach fad ceudan bhliadhnaichean: *stable for centuries*; ma dh'fhanas an t-sìde mar a tha i: *if the weather remains as it is*; chan atharraich a' choille: *the wood will not change*; airson àite na seann fheadhainn a ghabhail: *to take the place of the old ones*; ro dhorch air làr na coille airson leigeil le craobhan òga fàs : *too dark on the floor of the wood to allow young trees to grow*; mar an darach no a' bheithe: *such as the oak or birch*; fàsaidh an sgitheach gu tiugh agus cha bhi dàd a' fàs fodha: *the hawthorn grows densely and nothing grows under it*; chan ùraich an sgitheach e fhèin: *the hawthorn doesn't renew itself*; a' bàsachadh an ceann ùine: *eventually dying*; 's e eòlaichean chrotal a th' annta: *they are lichenologists*; thathar a' dèanamh dheth nach fhàs cuid de na crotail: *it's reckoned some of the lichens will not grow*; cianail fhèin sean: *extremely old*; ri linn Oisein: *in the time of Ossian (a long time ago)*; ri linn athar-san: *in the time of his father (Fionn)*; meuran no miotag a tha a' greimeachadh air a' ghèig: *fingers or a glove that is gripping the branch*; coilltean-uisge neo-theth nan cladaichean: *coastal temperate rainforests*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *If you have any Gaelic lore specific to the hazel tree or hazel wood, I'd love to hear from you. Dwelly's dictionary carries some interesting terms in the light of this Litir and the previous one. The first is casan-eunain ('little bird's feet' which he defines as 'shoots from a hazel stump'. This must refer to the early phase of the shoot – have a look at one next spring and see if you agree with the description! Two others are calbh 'shoot or rising tree, especially of hazel'; this also applies to the rib of an osier basket (hazel being one of the species used in their construction). And grinne means a 'bundle of hazel or other wands or withes, scraped free of bark and ready to be made into a basket or creel'.*

**Gnàthas -cainnt na Litreach:** 'S e na thug air X aithneachadh: what caused X to recognise.

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