

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Seumas MacDhonnchaidh, Lus-eòlaiche (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 1,237. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 933 corresponds to Litir 1,237. 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 Sheumas MacDhonnchaidh, an lus-eòlaiche. Eadar an Cèitean agus an Dàmhair ann an seachd ceud deug, seasgad 's a h-ochd (1768) chaidh e air chuairt mhòr ann an **sgìrean Gàidhealach**. Sgrìobh e notaichean mu na daoine.

Cha robh beachd ro mhath aige air na taighean aca. Ach bha na leapannan aca gu math cofhurtail. Bha iad air an dèanamh de fhraoch no de chonnlach le bàrr nan lusan gu h-àrd. Bha iad coltach ri leapannan le spriongaichean mar a th' againn an-diugh oir bhiodh cumadh nan lusan a' tilleadh nuair nach robh na daoine nan laighe orra.

Bidh mi a' fuine aran gu tric agus bha mi riamh a' meòrachadh air mar a ghlèidh daoine beirm anns an t-seann aimsir. Uill, tha Seumas MacDhonnchaidh ag innse dhuinn. Bhiodh iad a' gearradh slat-dharaich mu cheithir no còig òirlich ann an cuairt-thomhas. Bhiodh iad ga snìomh agus an uair sin ga cur ann am beirm ùr airson grunn uairean a thìde. Bhiodh iad a' crochadh na slaite snìomhte airson a tiormachadh.

Nuair a bha iad feumach air beirm, can airson deoch mar leann a dhèanamh, bhiodh iad a' toirt na slaite-daraich sìos agus ga cur ann am poit anns an robh brailis meadh-bhlàth. An ceann dà uair a thìde bhiodh beirm aca deiseil airson cleachdadh.

Airson leathar a chartadh, bha na Sgitheanaich a' cleachdadh nam freumhaichean aig lus beag ris an canar *Cairt-làir* no *Tormentil*. Bhiodh daoine cuideachd a' cartadh no a' glanadh a-mach caolain nan laogh as t-Earrach. Bha na banaraich a' cur dà lus gu feum airson sin.

B' e fear dhiubh *Scots lovage* no *Sunais* ann an Gàidhlig. B' e am fear eile lus brèagha ris an canar *Roseroot* ann am Beurla. Ann an Gàidhlig, 's e sin *Lus nan Laoch*. Thathar ag ràdh gur e as coireach ri ainm gu bheil e doirbh a lorg ach a-mhàin air creagan is bearraidhean. Feumaidh tu a bhith nad laoch airson fhaighinn!

Uill, a rèir na dh'aithriseas Seumas MacDhonnchaidh, 's e *Lus nan Laoch*, chan e *Lus nan Laoch*, a chanadh na Sgitheanach ris. Agus **bhiodh sin gu math coltach**. 'S e lus eile air a bheil 'Lus nan Laoch', ann an cuid de dh'àiteachan, an *Tri-bhileach* no *Bogbean* oir tha sin air a chur gu feum airson slàinte nan laogh anns an aon dòigh.

Cuideachd anns an Eilean Sgitheanach, tha Seumas ag innse dhuinn mu mar a fhuair na daoine diofar dhathan airson clò a dhathadh. Fhuair iad buidhe bho bhàrr an fhraoich. Airson dearg, bha *Lus an Leasaich* no an *Rù* (*Lady's Bedstraw* ann am Beurla) na b' fheàrr na *Màdar*.

Ann am Muile, bhiodh a' chlann gu tric a' fulang le dathagan no *worms*. Airson sin, bhiodh daoine a' gabhail deoch de roid no *Bog-myrtle*. Ann am Muile agus san Eilean Sgitheanach, bhiodh boireannaich ag òl deoch de *Gharbhag an t-Slèibhe (the Fir Clubmoss)* airson casg-breith adhbharachadh. Chan eil MacDhonnchaidh ag innse dhuinn cho èifeachdach 's a bha i no dè na frith-bhuaidhean a bha i ag adhbharachadh.

Agus tha e ag innse dhuinn mu mar a bhiodh na boireannaich a' seinn fhad 's a bha iad a' luadhachadh a' chlà ann an còmhlan. A bheil aithris nas tràithe na seo air na h-òrain luadhachaidh a tha cho ainmeil ann an dualchas nan Gàidheal?

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Faclan na Litreach: Seumas MacDhonnchaidh: *James Robertson*; lus-eòlaiche: *botanist*; leapannan: *beds*; beirm: *yeast*; banaraich: *milking maids*; laoch: *hero*; laogh: *calf*; creagan is bearraidhean: *craggs and cliffs*; dathagan: *intestinal worms*; na h-òrain luadhachaidh: *the waulking songs*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Eadar an Cèitean agus an Dàmhair: *between May and October*; cha robh beachd ro mhath aige air na taighean aca: *he had a poor opinion of their houses*; air an dèanamh de fhraoch no de chonnalach le bàrr nan lusan gu h-àrd: *made of heather or straw with the tops of the plants uppermost*; coltach ri leapannan le spriongaichean: *like beds with springs*; bhiodh cumadh nan lusan a' tilleadh nuair nach robh na daoine nan laighe orra: *the shape of the plants would return when nobody was lying on them*; slat-dharaich mu cheithir no còig òirlich ann an cuairt-thomhas: *an oak rod about four or five inches in circumference*; bhiodh iad ga snìomh: *they would twist it*; can airson deoch mar leann a dhèanamh: *such as for making a drink like beer*; ann am poit anns an robh brailis meadh-bhlàth: *in a pot in which there was lukewarm wort*; airson leathar a chartadh: *to tan leather*; a' glanadh a-mach caolain nan laogh as t-Earrach: *cleaning out the intestines of the calves in the Spring*; a rèir na dh'aithriseas X: *according to what X reports*; mar a fhuair na daoine diofar dhathan airson clò a dhathadh: *how the people obtained various colours for dyeing cloth*; airson casg-breith adhbharachadh: *to cause an abortion*; cho èifeachdach 's a bha i: *how effective it was*; dè na frith-bhuaidhean a bha i ag adhbharachadh: *what side effects it was causing*; fhad 's a bha iad a' luadhachadh a' chlà ann an còmhlan: *while they were waulking the tweed in a group*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: air chuairt mhòr ann an **sgìrean Gàidhealach**: *on a great journey in Highland [Gaelic-speaking] areas*. Remember the rule for leniting an attributive adjective that qualifies a plural noun in the nominative or dative case. Gender is irrelevant. It's all to do with the terminal vowel in the noun. If it is slender (it will almost always be an 'i'), then the adjective is lenited e.g. balaich mhòra, bodaich Shasannach. If it is broad (almost always an 'a') there will be no lenition. Thus, although we say sgìre Ghàidhealach (sgìre being feminine), we say sgìrean Gàidhealach.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: bhiodh sin gu math coltach: *that would be quite likely*.

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