

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## An Clò Mòr (1)

*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 1,299. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 995 corresponds to Litir 1,299. The Litir is also available at [www.bbc.co.uk/litir](http://www.bbc.co.uk/litir) and [www.learnghaelic.scot/litir](http://www.learnghaelic.scot/litir). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learnghaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learnghaelic.scot).*

An latha eile, **thàinig mi tarsainn air** seann alt anns an iris 'An Gàidheal'. Chaidh fhoillseachadh as t-Sultain naoi ceud deug, trithead 's a trì (1933). B' e an t-ùghdar Ruairidh Caimbeul à Mionaird air cladach Loch Fìne ann an Earra-Ghàidheal. Nochd an t-alt an toiseach mar aiste ann am farpais aig Mòd Dhùn Omhain trì bliadhna roimhe sin.

B' e an cuspair 'An Clò Mòr'. Tha an t-ùghdar ag innse dhuinn gach pàirt dhen phròiseas eadar smeuradh no smiùradh nan caorach agus luadhach a' chlà.

Tha Ruairidh a' sgrìobhadh seo: 'Chan eil a leithid de rud agus smiùradh air a chleachdadh an àite sam bith an-diugh, a chionn, le Achd lagha, feumaidh caoraich a bhith air an tumadh ann an stuth-glanaidh dà uair sa bhliadhna.' Ach tha e ag innse dhuinn mar a bhiodh gach teaghlach anns an t-seann aimsir a' comharrachadh oidhche shònraichte anns a' gheamhradh airson smiùradh nan caorach.

Tha Ruairidh a' leantainn: 'Bhiodh prais mhòr, ris an cainte a' **phrais-thearra**, air a cumail, gu daonnan, anns gach dachaigh, agus nuair nach biodh feum dhith, bhiodh i air a cumail air a beul fòidhpe an cùil air choreigin mun taigh. Dh'fheumadh an teàrr a bhith aig tigheadachd shònraichte agus b' e ola èisg, mar bu trice, a bha air a cleachdadh gu a tanachadh.'

Tha e laghach a bhith a' leughadh Gàidhlig Loch Fìne – dualchainnt nach cluinnear ach ainneamh an-diugh. Agus tha Ruairidh ag innse dhuinn, ged a bha an obair-smiùraidh gu math cruaidh, gum b' e sin deagh àm airson sgeulachdan innse.

B' e an ath ìre dhen phròiseas an rùsgadh. B' e latha faing-an-rùsgaidh latha glè mhòr anns a' choimhearsnachd. Anns an latha an-diugh, bidh sinn gu tric ag ràdh 'meadhan-latha' airson *noon*. Ach tha Ruairidh Caimbeul a' cleachdadh seann abairt – *tràth-nòin*. Seo na th' aige anns an alt aige: 'bhiodh na caoraich gu cumanta anns an fhaing aig tràth-nòin agus mu leth-uair an uaireadair an dèidh sin, bhiodh a chaoraich fhèin ceangailte aig gach fear air an rèidhlean ghorm ri taobh na fainge ...

Tha Ruairidh a' dèanamh aithris air na fuaimnean a bhiodh ann. An toiseach fuaim nan deamhaisean. A bheil sibh eòlach air an fhacal sin? Fuaim nan deamhaisean – *the sound of the hand shears*. Tha e cuideachd ag innse dhuinn na bhiodh na rùsgadairean ag èigheachd air a chèile. Mar eisimpleir, 'Thoir dhomh spearrach!' *Give me a fetter*. Thoir dhomh spearrach.

‘S e caora fhuadain a tha seo.’ *This sheep is a straggler.* ‘S e caora fhuadain a tha seo. Bhiodh na croitearan ag aithneachadh nan caorach, agus cò bu leis iad, air na comharraidhean-cluaise – *ear marks*. Seo cuid de na comharraidhean air an robh Ruairidh eòlach – beum, bàrr na cluaise, clisinn, toll agus sùbhlag.

Tha na faclan air am mìneachadh ann am faclair Dwelly: Beum – pìos leth-chearcallach air a ghearradh à taobh fodha na cluaise; bàrr na cluaise – am pìos as fhaide a-mach dhen chluais air a ghearradh dheth; clisinn – tha mi an dùil gu bheil seo co-ionann ri slisinn – sliseag air a ghearradh de thaobh na cluaise; toll – toll cruinn ann am meadhan na cluaise; agus mu dheireadh, sùbhlag – cumadh-V air a ghearradh à bàrr na cluaise. Bidh tuilleadh agam air caoraich, clòimh agus an clò mòr anns an ath Litir.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** clò: *tweed*; Achd lagha: *an Act of Law*; tigheadachd: *thickness, viscosity (often tigheachd)*; sliseag: *slice*; clòimh: *wool*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Chaidh fhoillseachadh as t-Sultain: *it was published in September*; b’ e an t-ùghdar X à Mionaird air cladach Loch Fìne ann an Earra-Ghàidheal: *the author was X from Minard on the shore of Loch Fyne in Argyll*; nochd an t-alt an toiseach mar aiste ann am farpais aig Mòd Dhùn Omhain trì bliadhna roimhe sin: *the article first appeared as an essay in a competition at the Dunoon Mod three years before that*; eadar smeuradh no smiùradh nan caorach agus luadhadh a’ chlà: *between the smearing of the sheep and the waulking of the tweed*; feumaidh caoraich a bhith air an tumadh ann an stuth-glanaidh dà uair sa bhliadhna: *sheep must be dipped in cleansing material twice in the year*; oidhche shònraichte anns a’ gheamhradh: *a special night in the winter*; bhiodh i air a cumail air a beul fòidhpe an cùil air choreigin mun taigh: *it would be kept upside-down in some nook or other around the house*; b’ e ola èisg, mar bu trice, a bha air a cleachdadh gu a tanachadh: *it was fish oil, usually, that was used to thin it*; dualchainnt nach cluinnear ach ainneamh an-diugh: *a dialect that is not often heard today*; gum b’ e sin deagh àm airson sgeulachdan innse: *that that was a good time for telling stories*; bhiodh na caoraich gu cumanta anns an fhaing aig tràth-nòin: *the sheep would often be in the fank at noon*; mu leth-uair an uaireadair an dèidh sin, bhiodh a chaoraich fhèin ceangailte aig gach fear air an rèidhlean ghorm ri taobh na fainge: *about half an hour after that, each man would have his sheep on the sward next to the fank*; ag aithneachadh nan caorach, agus cò bu leis iad: *recognising the sheep and to whom they belonged*; pìos leth-chearcallach air a ghearradh à taobh fodha na cluaise: *a semi-circular cut from the underside of the ear*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Bhiodh prais mhòr, ris an cainte a’ phrais-thearra, air a cumail, gu daonnan, anns gach dachaigh: *a large pot, which was called the tar-pot, was kept, always, in each house. The genitive form of teàrr ‘tar’ is tearra (without an accent). However, it is lenited in the compound noun prais-thearra because prais is a feminine noun and tearra is operating as an adjective c.f. a’ phrais mhòr ‘the big pot’.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** thàinig mi tarsainn air seann alt: *I came across an old article.*

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