

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Clò Mòr (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 1,300. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 996 corresponds to Litir 1,300. 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 alt Gàidhlig anns an iris 'An Gàidheal'. Bha e le Ruairidh Caimbeul à Mionaird air cladach Loch Fine. B' e an cuspair 'An Clò Mòr'. Tha an t-ùghdar a' mìneachadh gach pàirt dhen phròiseas airson clò a dhèanamh. An t-seachdain sa chaidh, thug sinn sùil air smeuradh agus rùsgadh nan caorach.

'S e an t-ath cheum anns a' phròiseas – nigheadh na clòimhe. A rèir Ruairidh, bhiodh na boireannaich 'cas-rùisgte a' bogadh na clòimhe le 'n casan ann an tubaichean mòra ri taobh na h-aibhne'.

Tha e inntinneach na chanas e mu na bhiodh a' chlann a' dèanamh nuair a bha an nigheadh a' dol air adhart. Bhiodh an fheadhainn òga 'ri màgaran san fheur ghorm mun cuairt'. A bheil an abairt sin agaibh? Tha a' chlann bheag **ri màgaran**. *The young children are crawling on all fours.*

Agus na gilleann na bu shine? Dè bhiodh iadsan a' dèanamh fhad 's a bha am màthraichean a' nigheadh na clòimhe? Uill, bhiodh iad a' dèanamh **leum-loga** anns an abhainn. A bheil an abairt sin agaibh? Tha e a' ciallachadh *'the lads were skimming stones on the water'* – bha iad a' dèanamh leum-loga.

Nuair a bha a' chlàimh glan, bha i air a tiormachadh. An uair sin, bha i air a cur ann am pocannan anns an t-sabhal gus an tigeadh àm a' chalanais anns a' gheamhradh. Tha *an calanas* a' ciallachadh 'cìreadh agus snìomh na clòimhe'. Bha sin a' tachairt an tac an teine anns a' gheamhradh nuair nach robh daoine ag obair a-muigh.

An uair sin, bhiodh an dathadh ann. Tha Ruairidh Caimbeul ag ràdh 'dath na clòimhe' seach 'dathadh na clòimhe'. *The dyeing of the wool*. Tha e ag ràdh gu bheil e duilich 'aideachadh nach eil boireannaich an latha seo idir cho ealanta ann an obrachadh nan dathan spèisealta a chunnaic sinn nuair a bha sinn òg'. Bha seo anns na tritheadan, cha mhòr ceud bliadhna air ais. Feumaidh gun robh Ruairidh dhen bheachd gur e obair nam ban a bh' ann an dathadh.

Nuair a bha Ruairidh beò, bha na Gàidheil mu thràth gu ìre mhòr air a dhol gu cleachdadh 'dathan bùtha' leis gun robh iad cho 'goireasach'. Ach tha e ag innse dhuinn gun robh cùisean eadar-dhealaichte thairis air na ceudan roimhe sin. Bha mòran lusan dùthchasach air an cur gu feum. Fhuair Ruairidh eòlas air cuid dhiubh na òige – agus seo iad.

Bha na seann daoine a' cleachdadh còig lusan airson clòimh a dhathadh dubh. B' iad sin seileastair, feàrna, grainnseag, preas nan àirneag agus copag. A bheil sibh eòlach air na lusan sin? Seileastair – *flag iris*; feàrna – *alder*; grainnseag – *bearberry*; preas nan àirneag – *blackthorn*; agus copag – *docken*. Gu mì-fhortanach, chan eil Ruairidh ag innse dhuinn dè am pàirt de na lusan a bhathar a' cleachdadh.

Bha dà lus air an cur gu feum airson clòimh a dhathadh gorm. B' iad sin an droman 'elder' agus braoileagan 'blaeberrries'. Tha e a' toirt trì ainmean Gàidhlig eile airson *blaeberrries* – dearc an fhraoich, curra-mhiag agus lus nan dearc. Airson curra-mhiag, bidh cuid ag ràdh *caora-mhitheag*. Chuala mi sin ann an Eilean Leòdhais. Sin, ma-thà, dubh agus gorm. Bheir sinn sùil air dathan eile an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: nigheadh na clòimhe: *the washing of the wool*; cas-rùisgte: *barefoot*; na òige: *in his youth*.

Abairtean na Litreach: à Mionaird air cladach Loch Fìne: *from Minard on the shore of Loch Fyne*; tha an t-ùghdar a' mineachadh gach pàirt dhen phròiseas airson clò a dhèanamh: *the author explains each part of the process for making tweed*; smeuradh agus rùsgadh nan caorach: *the smearing and shearing of the sheep*; a' bogadh na clòimhe le 'n casan ann an tubaichean mòra ri taobh na h-aibhne: *immersing the wool with their feet in large tubs beside the river*; nuair a bha an nigheadh a' dol air adhart: *when the washing was happening*; na gillean na bu shine: *the older lads*; fhad 's a bha am màthraichean a' nigheadh na clòimhe: *while their mothers were washing the wool*; bha i air a tiormachadh: *it was dried*; ann am pocannan anns an t-sabhal: *in bags in the barn*; cireadh agus snìomh na clòimhe: *the carding and spinning of the wool*; an tac an teine: *next to the fire*; na tritheadan, cha mhòr ceud bliadhna air ais: *the thirties, almost a hundred years ago*; bha na Gàidheil mu thràth gu ìre mhòr air a dhol gu cleachdadh 'dathan bùtha': *the Gaels had already largely gone over to using 'shop dyes'*; leis gun robh iad cho 'goireasach': *because they were so convenient*; gun robh cùisean eadar-dhealaichte thairis air na ceudan roimhe sin: *that matters were different over the centuries before that*; dè am pàirt de na lusan a bhathar a' cleachdadh airson dathadh: *which part of the plants were being used for dyeing*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bhiodh iad a' dèanamh **leum-loga** anns an abhainn: *they would be **skimming stones** in the river. If you know some fluent native speakers, why not ask them what their Gaelic is for 'skimming stones in water'. The Faclair Beag (www.faclair.com) has the following for 'stone skimming': spitheag, sniog-sneog, spoth an t-sìl, struidearachd, leac an rìgh, leacan teithe teintean. For a skimming stone, it has: buill-leog agus ceum-neog. However, there is no entry in the faclair, or in Dwelly, for leum-loga.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Tha a' chlann bheag **ri màgaran**: *the young children are **crawling on all fours**.*

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