

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Tairbeartan na h-Alba (3)

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 1,347. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,043 corresponds to Litir 1,347. 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 cho bitheanta 's a tha an t-ainm-àite *Tarbat* – An Tairbeart – ann am Port mo Cholmaig ann an Taobh Sear Rois. Ach bha mi ag ràdh nach eil sgeul air an tairbeart fhèin – *isthmus* no *portage place* – no fear a tha follaiseach, co-dhiù.

Tha taigh-tasgaidh ann am Port mo Cholmaig a chaidh a dhèanamh ann an seann eaglais a b' fheudar càradh. 'S e *Tarbat Discovery Centre* a th' air an àite mar ainm. Thathar a' taisbeanadh airceòlas agus eachdraidh na làraich agus na sgìre. Bha manachainn ann agus chaidh clachan a lorg a bh' air an snaidheadh ann an dòigh nan Cruithneach. 'S e làrach eachdraidheil a th' ann. Mura robh sibh riamh ann, mholainn an t-àite dhuibh.

Cheannaich mi leabhar ann. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air '*Portmahomack: Monastery of the Picts*'. Chaidh a sgrìobhadh leis an àrc-eòlaiche Martin Carver. Tha an t-ùghdar ag innse dhuinn – na bheachdsan co-dhiù – far an robh an tairbeart.

Bha e a' ceangal Caolas Dhòrnaich anns a' cheann a tuath ri Caolas Chrombaigh anns a' cheann a deas. Chan eil an dà chaolas sin cho fada bho chèile. Ge-tà, airson seòladh eatarra, bhiodh aig maraichean ri dhol seachad air Rubha Thairbeirt gu cuan fosgailte. Ann an droch shìde, bhiodh seachdainean ann nuair nach biodh comas aig bàtaichean beaga dhol eadar an dà chaolas.

Ach bhitheadh cothrom aca air an tairbeart. Airson tuigsinn mar a bha sin ag obair, feumaidh fios a bhith againn gu bheil loch mòr ann air an t-slighe. 'S e sin *Loch Eye* no ann an Gàidhlig Loch na h-Uidhe. Tha cuid dhen bheachd gu bheil sin a' ciallachadh '*the loch of the isthmus*'. Agus tha sin cuideachail dhuinn!

Ach math dh'fhaodte gu bheil e a' ciallachadh '*the loch connected to the slow stream*'. Tha seann mhapaichean – leithid aig Timothy Pont anns an t-siathamh linn deug agus Clement Lempriere anns an ochdamh linn deug – a' sealltainn sruth coltach ri canàl a' ruith eadar ceann a deas Loch na h-Uidhe agus Linne Chrombaigh. Agus tha mapaichean na Suirbhìdh Òrdanais ag ainmeachadh na th' air fhàgail dheth mar '*The Canal*'.

A bharrachd air sin, tha mapa, a chaidh a dhèanamh ann am meadhan an ochdamh linn deug, a' sealltainn **dà loch bheag** eadar Loch na h-Uidhe agus Caolas Dhòrnaich le sruth agus boglaichean eatarra. Math dh'fhaodte gur e an loch as motha de na dhà – Loch Slinn, a tha Uilleam MacBhàtair ag ainmeachadh anns an leabhar aige *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty*. Air cladach Caolas Dhòrnaich, tha baile beag

ris an canar *Inver*. Ann an Gàidhlig, 's e sin Inbhir Loch Slinn, ag innse dhuinn gun robh uisge a' sruthadh bhon loch gu Caolas Dhòrnaich aig a' bhaile sin.

Tha e doirbh a bhith cinnteach. Chan eil na mapaichean uile a' dol a rèir a chèile. Ach tha e a' coimhead coltach gun robh slighe-uisge ann bho Inbhir Loch Slinn gu Loch Slinn, an uair sin Loch na h-Uidhe, an uair sin tro chanàl seachad air Manachainn Rois a Chaolas Chrombaidh. Slighe shàbhailte ann an droch shìde.

Tha Loch na h-Uidhe fhathast ann, ach bha na lochan eile agus na boglaichean timcheall orra air an drèanadh o chionn fhada. Chan eil an tairbeart a bh' ann uaireigin follaiseach an-diugh, mas e 's gun robh e ann idir.

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Faclan na Litreach: bitheanta: *frequent, common*; Port mo Cholmaig: *Portmahomack*; Taobh Sear Rois: *Easter Ross (equivalent to Ros an Ear)*; taigh-tasgaidh: *museum, archive centre*; àrc-eòlaiche: *archaeologist*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a' gearan nach eil sgeul air an tairbeart fhèin: *complaining that there is no sign of the tarbert itself*; no fear a tha follaiseach, co-dhiù: *or one that is obvious, anyway*; thathar a' taisbeanadh airceòlas agus eachdraidh na làraich agus na sgìre: *the archaeology and history of the site and the area are exhibited*; chaidh clachan a lorg a bh' air an snaidheadh ann an dòigh nan Cruithneach: *stones were found that were carved in the manner of the Picts*; a' ceangal Caolas Dhòrnaich anns a' cheann a tuath ri Caolas Chrombaigh anns a' cheann a deas: *linking the Dornoch Firth in the north with the Cromarty Firth in the south*; bhiodh aig maraichean ri dhol seachad air Rubha Thairbeirt gu cuan fosgailte: *mariners would have to go past Tarbat Ness into an open ocean*; feumaidh fios a bhith againn gu bheil loch mòr ann air an t-slighe: *we need to know that there is a large loch on the route*; leithid aig X anns an t-siathamh linn deug: *such as that of X in the sixteenth century*; ag ainmeachadh na th' air fhàgail dheth mar: *naming what is left of it as*; le sruth agus boglaichean eatarra: *with a stream and bogs between them*; tha Uilleam MacBhàtair ag ainmeachadh anns an leabhar aige: *William (J) Watson names in his book*; chan eil na mapaichean uile a' dol a rèir a chèile: *not all the maps agree with each other*; tro chanàl seachad air Manachainn Rois: *through a canal past Fearn (Abbey)*; bha X air an drèanadh o chionn fhada: *X were drained a long time ago*; mas e 's gun robh e ann idir: *if it was (actually ever) there at all*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **dà loch bheag: two small lochs.** *The numeral dà commands a noun in the dual case, rather than the singular (which is the 'shorthand' version taught to early-stage Gaelic learners). One of the differences between the dual and singular cases is the lenition of a qualifying adjective. Loch is masculine; in the singular we say an loch beag. But, in the dual case, we say dà loch bheag. The plural form is shown with trì i.e. trì lochan beaga. Other examples with masculine nouns are dà chù bheag and dà chat mhòr.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: ann an seann eaglais a b' fheudar càradh: *in an old church that had to be repaired.*

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