

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Tairbeartan na h-Alba (4)

*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 1,348. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,044 corresponds to Litir 1,348. 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).*

Anns an Litir mu dheireadh bha mi a' bruidhinn mun 'tairbeart' faisg air Port mo Cholmaig ann an Ros an Ear. Bha an t-àrc-eòlaiche, Martin Carver, dhen bheachd gur dòcha gun robh slighe ann eadar Caolas Dhòrnaich agus Caolas Chrombaigh tro Loch na h-Uidhe, agus gum b' e sin an 'tairbeart'.

An t-seachdain seo, tha mi a' dol a dh'fhoillseachadh beachd eile. Tha e a' tighinn bho Liz Curtis, a tha na h-eòlaiche air eachdraidh agus ainmean-àite. Tha ise dhen bheachd gun robh tairbeart ann, ceart gu leòr, ach gun robh e na bu ghiorra na 'n t-slighe aig an Oll. Carver. Cha robh e a' ruith eadar Caolas Dhòrnaich agus Caolas Chrombaigh, a bh' air a bhith doirbh oir bidh na h-oitirean ann an ceann a deas Chaolais Dhòrnaich ag atharrachadh fad na h-ùine. Tha Liz Curtis ag ràdh gun robh an tairbeart eadar Port mo Cholmaig agus baile beag air cladach an ear Rubha Thairbeirt, air a bheil *Rockfield* mar ainm ann am Beurla.

Nise, 's e a' Ghàidhlig air *Rockfield* Creag Tarail Bheag no Creag Tarail Bhige. Tha Liz Curtis dhen bheachd gu bheil am facal *Taral* ag innse dhuinn mu shlighe a bhiodh daoine a' gabhail. Tha e a' tighinn bho *tar* agus *ail*, a' ciallachadh '*over [the] cliff*'. Bha daoine a' dol thar na creige an sin.

Carson a bha iad a' dol thar na creige, ge-tà? Bha, a chionn 's gum b' e sin deireadh – no toiseach - an tairbeirt. Ach a-mhàin a' chreag sin, bha an t-slighe air fad còmhnaidh, agus furasta gu leòr airson eathraichean beaga a ghluasad thar tìr.

Tha Curtis ag innse dhuinn gun robh slighe dhìreach ann eadar seann Eaglais an Tairbeirt, far an robh manachainn ainmeil, agus Creag Tarail Bheag far an robh uaireigin seann chill no seipeal. Tha i cileameatair gu leth ann am fad. Chan eil loch, abhainn no canàl mar phàirt dhith.

Chan eil astar mòr ann aig muir eadar Port mo Cholmaig agus Rubha Thairbeirt. Carson, ma-thà, nach biodh daoine a' seòladh eadar am port agus Creag Tarail Bheag? Uill, bhitheadh **ann an deagh shìde**. Ach, **ann an droch shìde**, bhiodh e na bu shàbhailte Rubha Thairbeirt a sheachnadh **buileach glan**.

Agus chan ann a-mhàin ann an droch shìde. Bhruidhinn Liz Curtis ri iasgairean à port Chreag Tarail Bheag, far a bheil acarsaid bheag an-diugh. Bha iad ag innse dhi gu bheil dà rud a' dèanamh Rubha Thairbeirt cunnartach do dh'eathraichean beaga. Anns a' chiad dol a-mach, tha sgeirean a' ruith a-mach gu muir bhon rubha (far a bheil taigh-solais an-diugh). Agus, a bharrachd air sin, tha dà

shruth-mhara a' coinneachadh aig an rubha – fear à Caolas Dhòrnaich agus fear à Linne Mhoireibh. Far am bi iad a' coinneachadh, bidh a' mhuir gu math garbh gu math tric.

Mar sin, a rèir Liz Curtis, ann an seann aimsir nan eathraichean leathair, bha e air a bhith na bu shàbhailte – gu math tric – do mharaiche a bha a' dol eadar, can, Ros Mhaircnidh anns an Eilean Dubh agus Port mo Cholmaig, stad aig Creag Tarail Bheag. Bhiodh am pìos mu dheireadh dhen turas aca air tìr.

Chan urrainn a bhith cinnteach. Ach tha na h-ainmean-àite ag innse dhuinn gun robh tairbeart – no *portage place* – faisg air Port mo Cholmaig seach puirt eile air a' chosta sin.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Port mo Cholmaig: *Portmahomack*; Ros an Ear: *Easter Ross* àrc-eòlaiche: *archaeologist*; Rubha Thairbeirt: *Tarbat Ness*; Creag Tarail Bheag: *Rockfield*; seann chill no seipeal: *an old cell or chapel*; acarsaid: *anchorage*; Linne Mhoireibh: *the Moray Firth*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** gun robh slighe ann eadar Caolas Dhòrnaich agus Caolas Chrombaigh tro Loch na h-Uidhe: *that there was a route between the Dornoch Firth and the Cromarty Firth through Loch Eye*; a tha na h-eòlaiche air eachdraidh agus ainmean-àite: *who is an expert on history and place-names*; gun robh tairbeart ann, ceart gu leòr: *that there was certainly a portage place*; gun robh e na bu ghiorra na 'n t-slighe aig X: *that it was shorter than X's route*; a bh' air a bhith doirbh: *that would have been difficult*; bidh na h-oitirean ann an ceann a deas Chaolais Dhòrnaich ag atharrachadh fad na h-ùine: *the sandbanks on the southern side of the Dornoch Firth change all the time*; a' dol tarsainn na creige an sin: *going over the cliff there*; ach a-mhàin a' chreag sin: *apart from that cliff*; bha an t-slighe air fad còmhnaidh: *the entire route was level*; furasta gu leòr airson eathraichean beaga a ghluasad thar tìr: *easy enough for moving small boats over land*; tha sgeirean a' ruith a-mach gu muir bhon rubha: *skerries run out to sea from the point*; tha dà shruth-mhara a' coinneachadh aig an rubha: *two marine currents meet at the point*; ann an seann aimsir nan eathraichean leathair: *in the old days of leather boats*; bha e air a bhith na bu shàbhailte do mharaiche: *it would have been safer for a mariner*; a bha a' dol eadar, can, Ros Mhaircnidh anns an Eilean Dubh agus Port mo Cholmaig: *who was going between, say, Rosemarkie on the Black Isle and Portmahomack*; stad aig Creag Tarail Bheag: *to stop at Rockfield*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** ann an deagh shìde/ ann an droch shìde: *in good weather/ in bad weather*. We often use the descriptors *deagh* and *droch* in preference to *math* and note two things about their use – they come before the noun they describe and they cause lenition of a lenitable initial consonant. Because of their initial position, one does not have to consider the gender of the noun (for lenition of the adjective) and thus they are often favoured by learners of the language!

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** bhiodh e na bu shàbhailte Rubha Thairbeirt a sheachnadh **buileach glan**: *it would be safer to avoid Tarbat Ness completely*.

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