

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Tairbeartan na h-Alba (5)

*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).*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu àiteachan a tha ainmichte mar tairbeart – ‘*isthmus*’ no ‘*portage place*’. Tha iad uile an ìre mhath soilleir agus faodaidh sinn am mineachadh le eòlas air cumadh na tìre no air eachdraidh an àite.

Ach tha aon àite eile le ainm car coltach – a tha **rudeigin** dùbhlach. 'S e sin *Toirbheartan* ann an Ros an Iar. *Torridon* ann am Beurla. Thathar a' dèanamh dheth gun robh e air fhuaimneachadh 'Toirbheartan' anns an t-seann aimsir. Bha am 'bh' ann am meadhan an fhacail air fhuaimneachadh mar 'v'.

An-diugh, tha sinn ga sgrìobhadh leis a' 'bh' ann, ach cha bhi sinn ga fhuaimneachadh. Canaidh sinn 'Toir(bh)eartan'. **Chan eil e na iongnadh gun deach am fuaim sin a chall.** Chaill sinn e ann an *Abhach* anns an Eilean Dubh. Canaidh sinn an-diugh 'Abhach' agus ann am Beurla '*Avoch*' – A-V-O-C-H. Tha am 'v' ann am Beurla a' sealltainn gu robh am 'bh' ann an Gàidhlig air fhuaimneachadh uaireigin mar 'v'.

A bheil *Toirbheartan* a' ciallachadh 'àite far am biodh bàtaichean air an slaodadh thar tìr'? Ma-thà, carson a tha am 'b' ann an *tairbeart* air a shèimheachadh ann an *Toirbheartan*? Anns a h-uile eisimpleir eile ann an Alba, 's e *tairbeart* a chanas sinn, seach *tairbheart*. Chan urrainn dhomh sin a fhreagairt le cinnt. Math dh'fhaodte gun robh an t-ainm air a chruthachadh aig àm eadar-dhealaichte bhon fheadhainn eile. Nam biomaid ga chruthachadh an-diugh, bhiodh sèimheachadh ann gu nàdarrach. Ach tha a' chuid as motha de na tairbeartan gu math sean.

Tha gu leòr de dhaoine a' smaoinneachadh air *Torridon* mar bhaile aig ceann Loch Thoirbheartain. Ach, anns an leabhar aige '*The Place-Names of Loch Torridon*', tha Murchadh Dòmhnallach, a bhuineas don àite, a' cur nar cuimhne gur e ainm sgèireil a th' ann an *Toirbheartan*. Bha ainm eadar-dhealaichte air gach baile.

Tha Murchadh ag aideachadh gur dòcha gu bheil *Toirbheartan* a' ciallachadh '*place of transference*'. Tha Uilleam MacBhàtair ag ràdh gu bheil sin a' buntainn ris mar a chaidh bàtaichean a ghiùlan thar tìr eadar ceann Loch Thoirbheartain agus Loch Ma-ruibhe.

Bha mi riamh dhen bheachd gu bheil sin eucoltach. Nam biodh daoine ag amas a-mhàin air bàta a chur air Loch Ma-ruibhe, bhiodh e fada na b' fhasa aig ceann eile an locha – à Poll Iù. Tha Murchadh Dòmhnallach cuideachd a' cur teagamh anns an sgeul sin. Tha an t-slighe tro Ghleann Thoirbheartain fada agus garbh.

Tha slighe eile ann, ge-tà, a bhiodh na bu choltaiche. Tha sin eadar Loch Thoirbheartain agus Loch Ciseorn tro Loch Damh, Loch Caoltraidh agus Loch an Lòin. Leigeadh sin le maraichean rubha mòr na Comraich a sheachnadh. Ach chan eil e soilleir carson a bhiodh sin riatanach ach a-mhàin ann am fìor dhroch shìde.

Math dh'fhaodte gum b' e Toirbheartan àite far am biodh bàtaichean air an tarraing gu tìr – aig ceann an locha – airson a' gheamhraidh. Leis na coilltean a bha pailt ann, bhiodh fiodh gu leòr ann airson bàtaichean a chàradh. Chan eil fhios a'm. Cumaidh mi m' inntinn fosgailte air an ainm-àite Toirbheartan.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Toirbheartan: *Torridon*; Abhach: *Avoch*; an t-Eilean Dubh: *the Black Isle*; Murchadh Dòmhnallach: *Murdoch MacDonald*; pongail: *eloquent*; eucoltach: *unlikely*; Poll Iù: *Poolewe*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Tha iad uile an ìre mhath soilleir: *they are all pretty clear*; faodaidh sinn am mìneachadh le eòlas air cumadh na tìre no air eachdraidh an àite: *we can explain them with knowledge of the topography or the history of the place*; cha bhi sinn ga fhuaimneachadh: *we don't pronounce it/make the sound*; àite far am biodh bàtaichean air an slaodadh thar tìr: *a place where boats would be hauled across land*; chan urrainn dhomh sin a fhreagairt le cinnt: *I can't answer that with certainty*; math dh'fhaodte gun robh an t-ainm air a chruthachadh aig àm eadar-dhealaichte: *perhaps the name was created at a different time*; nam biomaid ga chruthachadh an-diugh, bhiodh sèimheachadh ann gu nàdarrach: *if we were creating it today, there would naturally be lenition*; gur e ainm sgìreil a th' ann: *that its an area name*; tha Uilleam MacBhàtair ag ràdh gu bheil sin a' buntainn ris mar a chaidh bàtaichean a ghiùlan thar tìr eadar ceann Loch Thoirbheartain agus Loch Ma-ruibhe: *William (J) Watson says that it concerns how boats were carried across land between the head of Loch Torridon and Loch Maree*; tha X cuideachd a' cur teagamh anns an sgeul sin: *X also doubts that story*; tha slighe eile ann, ge-tà, a bhiodh na bu choltaiche: *there is another route, however, that would be more likely*; leigeadh sin le maraichean rubha mòr na Comraich a sheachnadh: *that would allow mariners to avoid the big Applecross peninsula*; carson a bhiodh sin riatanach ach a-mhàin ann am fìor dhroch shìde: *why that would be necessary except in extremely bad weather*; bhiodh fiodh gu leòr ann airson bàtaichean a chàradh: *there would be enough wood (timber) for repairing boats*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Chan eil e na iongnadh gun deach am fuaim sin a chall: *it's not a surprise that that sound was lost. Do not automatically assume that the 'bh' in the middle of a word will be pronounced like a 'v'. Sometimes it represents an old 'v' sound which has been lost in recent centuries, at least dialectally. An example is to be found in the word marbhadh 'killing'. You will hear it pronounced [approximately] 'MAR-av-ugh' or 'MAR-a-ugh'. But the root word marbh is still generally pronounced MAR-av.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** a tha rudeigin dùbhlanach: *which is somewhat challenging*.

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