

# **Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh**

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## **Eisirean nan Linneachan (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 1,411. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,107 corresponds to Litir 1,411. 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).*

*Muirsgian, mùsgan, faochag, bàirneach, eisir bheòil dhuinn. Sin liosta de mhaoraich a bhiodh na seann Ghàidheil ag ithe. Ach chan e sin iad uile. Seo an rann gu lèir:*

*Muirsgian, mùsgan, faochag, bàirneach, eisir bheòil dhuinn. Eachan, creachann, feusgan, coilleag: maorach traghad a dh'fhaodar ithe gun a bhith sgàthach.*

*Razorfish, gaper shell, winkle, limpet, brown-mouthed oyster, otter shell, scallop, mussel, cockle: Seashore shellfish that can be eaten without being fearful.*

Tha mi cinnteach gum bi sibh eòlach air **co-dhiù cuid** de na maoraich sin. Math dh'fhaodte gu bheil sibh air feadhainn dhiubh ithe – leithid feusgain, coilleagan agus faochagan. Ann an cuid de na h-eileanan, canaidh na daoine 'srùban' ri coilleag.

Bu mhath leam an-diugh sùil a thoirt air dìreach aonan de na maoraich air an liosta sin. 'S e sin an t-eisir – ann am Beurla, *the oyster*. Bha e aithnichte aig na seann Ghàidheil mar mhaorach a ghabhadh ithe. 'S aithne dhomh co-dhiù aon ainm-àite anns a bheil eisirean air an ainmeachadh. 'S e sin Rubha Àird nan Eisirean, air cladach an iar Mhuile, aig ceann Loch nan Ceall. Feumaidh gun robh daoine a' buain eisirean an sin.

Ach chan e an cladach an t-àite as fheàrr airson eisirean a lorg. Tha iad nas pailte far a' chladaich air oitirean. No, math dh'fhaodte gur e an fhìrinn a th' ann gun robh iad na bu phailte anns na h-uisgeachan sin uaireigin. Bha eisirean uaireigin pailt timcheall costa na h-Alba. Ach chan eil iad pailt an-diugh. Dè thachair dhaibh?

Uill, dh'ionnsaich mi beagan dhen sgeul sin nuair a bha mi a' leughadh Courier Inbhir Nis bhon bhliadhna ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a dhà (1872). Bha aithrisean ann mu dheidhinn iasgach nan eisirean anns na linneachan faisg air Inbhir Nis.

Bha Ban-diùc Chataibh, no A' Bhana-mhorair Chat, air casg laghail a chur an sàs an aghaidh eathraichean a bhith a' dreideadh airson eisirean ann an Linne Chrombaigh. Agus bha aithrisean ann mun t-suidheachadh faisg air làimh ann an Linne Mhoireibh, far an robh dragh ann nach maireadh na h-eisirean fada. Carson? Bha iasgairean à Sasainn a' glacadh cus dhiubh.

Sgrìobh fear MacAnndrais gun deach na h-eisirean a chur ann a dh'aona-ghnothach le a shinn-sheanair, fear MacCoinnich. Bha sin timcheall na bliadhna seachd ceud deug, caogad 's a h-ochd (1758).

Bhuineadh Mgr MacCoinnich a dh'Abhach anns an Eilean Dubh. Tha mi a' dèanamh dheth gur e uachdaran a bh' ann. Fhuair e na h-eisirean ann an Gruinneard air taobh an iar Rois. Bha iad air an cur don mhuir ann an Linne Mhoireibh gu sear air Abhach.

Ach cha b' e sin an gnothach gu lèir. Anns a' bhliadhna seachd ceud deug, naochad 's a trì (1793), chaidh tuilleadh eisirean a thoirt a Linne Mhoireibh. Ach chan e eisirean àbhaisteach a bh' anna. 'S e seòrsa a bh' anna ris an canadh iad '*Pandore oysters*' – feadhainn a bha ainmeil faisg air Dùn Èideann, mar a chì sinn anns an ath Litir.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Rubha Àird nan Eisirean: *the point of the promontory of the oysters*; Loch nan Ceall: *Loch na Keal*; a' buain: *harvesting*; linneachan: *firths (plural of linne)*; Ban-diùc Chataibh/A' Bhana-mhorair Chat: *both of these names mean 'The Duchess of Sutherland'*; Linne Chrombaigh: *The Cromarty Firth*; MacAnndrais: *Anderson*; Abhach: *Avoch*; Gruinneard: *Gruinard*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Math dh'fhaodte gu bheil sibh air feadhainn dhiubh ithe: *perhaps you have eaten some of them*; leithid feusgain, coilleagan agus faochagan: *such as mussels, cockles and winkles*; ann an cuid de na h-eileanan, canaidh na daoine 'srùban' ri coilleag: *in some of the islands, the people call a cockle 'srùban'*; dìreach aonan de na maoraich: *just one of the shellfish*; 's aithne dhomh co-dhiù aon ainm-àite anns a bheil eisirean air an ainmeachadh: *I know at least one place name in which oysters are named*; nas pailte far a' chladaich air oitirean: *more plentiful offshore on shellfish banks*; gun robh iad na bu phailte anns na h-uisgeachan sin uaireigin: *they were more plentiful in those waters at one time*; bha X air casg laghail a chur an sàs an aghaidh eathraichean a bhith a' dreideadh: *X had interdicted against boats dredging*; bha aithrisean ann mun t-suidheachadh faisg air làimh ann an Linne Mhoireibh: *there were reports about the situation close at hand in the Moray Firth*; far an robh dragh ann nach maireadh na h-eisirean fada: *where there was concern that the oysters would not last long*; bha iasgairean à Sasainn a' glacadh cus dhiubh: *fishermen from England were catching too many of them*; gun deach na h-eisirean a chur ann a dh'aona-ghnothach le a shinn-sheanair: *that the oysters were put there deliberately by his great-grandfather*; tha mi a' dèanamh dheth gur e uachdaran a bh' ann: *I reckon he was a laird*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** a dh'fhaodar ithe: *which may be eaten*. The verb faod is here in a passive form and qualifies the verbal noun ithe 'eat'. If you wanted to make the verb active, you would have to name the 'eater' e.g. a dh'fhaodadh tu ithe 'which you could eat' or a dh'fhaodadh duine ithe 'which a person could eat'. Note how useful the passive form is.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Tha mi cinnteach gum bi sibh eòlach air co-dhiù cuid de na maoraich sin: *I'm sure you'll know at least some of those shellfish*.

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