

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Seillean-mòr Craoibhe

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 1,418. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,114 corresponds to Litir 1,418. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

O chionn ceithir bliadhna, bha mi an sàs ann an leabhar iongantach. Bha mi nam dheasaiche don phròiseact. 'S e ainm an leabhair 'Bho Bheul an Eòin' agus tha e mu dheidhinn ainmhidhean is lusan a th' air ùr-nochdadh ann an Alba anns na beagan bhliadhnaichean a dh'fhalbh. Tha an leabhar dà-chànanach – Gàidhlig is Beurla – agus bha againn ri ainmean Gàidhlig a chruthachadh do na gnèithean 'ùra' ann.

'S e an neach-ealain Ruairidh MacDhonnchaidh – aig a bheil Gàidhlig – a bh' air cùl a' phròiseict. Tha sgilean air leth aig Ruairidh ann a bhith a' peantadh ìomhaighean nàdair, gu sònraichte eòin.

Aig toiseach an t-samhraidh, chuir mi an leabhar gu feum, mar nach do chuir roimhe, oir nochd sgaoth de sheilleanan-mòra aig ceann an taigh agam. Bha iad a' coimhead airson cothrom neadachaidh. Agus bha iad a' rùrachd far a bheil mullach an taighe agus an guitear a' tighinn còmhla.

Bho gu h-ìosal, bha e doirbh dèanamh a-mach dè an gnè a bh' ann. Le soilleireachd an adhair air an cùlaibh, cha robh mi a' faicinn nan dathan orra. Aig an fhìor thoiseach bha iomagain orm gur e speachan a bh' annta.

Gu fortanach, ge-tà, thuig mi an dèidh greis nach e speachan a bh' annta idir, ach seilleanan de sheòrsa air choreigin. Ach dè an seòrsa? Leis an fhìrinn innse, cha robh mi air a leithid fhaicinn riamh roimhe. Bha iad na bu mhotha na seilleanan-meala. Bha iad dorch. Ach bha an cinn ruadh agus bha an earbail bàn.

Bha iad na bu choltaiche ri nàdar de sheillean-mòr no *bumblebee* seach seillean-meala. Ach bha iad a' sgaothachadh. Cha bhi seilleanan-mòra a' dèanamh a leithid, am bi?

An uair sin thog mi an leabhar 'Bho Bheul an Eòin' far nan sgeilpichean agam. Agus, an sin, leugh mi mu sheillean 'ùr' ris an canar an Seillean-mòr Craoibhe no *Tree Bumblebee*. 'S e sin a bh' agam aig an taigh.

Ràinig an seillean seo Breatainn ann an dà mhìle 's a h-aon (2001) agus ràinig e Alba dusan bliadhna an dèidh sin. Le blàthachadh na Cruinne, **tha e a' sìor sgapadh** agus tha e a-nise ri lorg ann an dùthchannan eile cho fada tuath ris a' Chearcall Artach.

Gu nàdarrach, bidh an gnè seo a' neadachadh ann an tuill ann an craobhan. Ach tha seo sgrìobhte mu deidhinn an neadachaidh anns an leabhar aig Ruairidh

MacDhonnchaidh – ‘... ’s fheàrr leotha rudan a thog mac an duine (leithid bùird-eun, mullaichean [seadh!] agus beàrnan ann an togalaichean), agus tha iad rim faighinn fiù ’s anns a’ mhothtan am broinn fosglaidhean thiormadairean-aodaich.’

Ged a bha mi fo iomagain mun deidhinn anns a’ chiad dol a-mach, chan eil a-nise. Tha an cunntas aig Ruairidh ag innse dhomh nach mair nead ro fhada. Bidh e a’ tighinn gu ceann aig deireadh an t-samhraidh nuair a dh’fhalbhas a’ bhanrigh gu àite eile. Bidh a’ cholonaidh a’ faighinn bàs an uair sin.

Agus aon rud eile mun t-seillean seo. Eucoltach ri seilleanan-meala, cha bhi iad a’ sgobadh. Chan eil cunnart ann bhuapa. Agus, a bharrachd air sin, bha iad trang trang fad an t-samhraidh le bhith a’ poileanachadh nam flùraichean **anns an leas agam**.

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Faclan na Litreach: neach-ealain: *artist*; Ruairidh MacDhonnchaidh: *Derek Robertson*; cothrom neadachaidh: *an opportunity to nest*; soilleireachd: *brightness*; seillean-meala: *honeybee*; blàthachadh na Cruinne: *global warming*.

Abairtean na Litreach: bha mi an sàs ann an leabhar iongantach: *I was involved in an amazing book*; bha mi nam dheasaiche: *I was an editor*; mu dheidhinn ainmhidhean is lusan a th’ air ùr-nochdadh: *about animals and plants that have newly appeared*; anns na beagan bhliadhnaichean a dh’fhalbh: *in the past few years*; bha againn ri ainmean Gàidhlig a chruthachadh do na gnèithean ùra: *we had to create Gaelic names for the new species*; a’ peantadh ìomhaighean nàdair, gu sònraichte eòin: *painting images of nature, particularly birds*; aig toiseach an t-samhraidh, chuir mi an leabhar gu feum, mar nach do chuir roimhe: *at the start of the summer, I put the book to use, in a way I had not previously*; oir nochd sgaoth de sheilleanan-mòra aig ceann an taigh againn: *because a swarm of bumblebees appeared at the end of our house*; bha iad a’ rùrachd far a bheil mullach an taighe agus an guitear a’ tighinn còmhla: *they were rummaging where the house roof and the gutter meet*; bha e doirbh dèanamh a-mach dè an gnè a bh’ ann: *it was hard to make out what species it was*; bha iomagain orm gur e speachan a bh’ ann: *I was anxious that they were wasps*; seilleanan de sheòrsa air choreigin: *bees of some type*; bha iad dorch: *they were dark*; bha an cinn ruadh agus bha an earbail bàn: *their heads were russet and their tails were fair*; cha bhi seilleanan-mòra a’ dèanamh a leithid, am bi?: *bumblebees don’t do such things, do they?* far nan sgeilpichean agam: *off my shelves*; cho fada tuath ris a’ Chearcall Artach: *as far north as the Arctic Circle*; anns a’ mhothtan am broinn fosglaidhean thiormadairean-aodaich: *in the fluff within tumble-dryer vents*; cha bhi iad a’ sgobadh: *they don’t sting*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: a’ poileanachadh nam flùraichean **anns an leas agam**: *pollinating the flowers in my garden*. Leas is a variant of lios ‘garden’ and is common in Ross-shire, Lewis and beyond. Locally, Inverewe Gardens in Wester Ross are known as Leas Inbhir Iù. Lios is more common further south, notably in Argyll as in the island of Lismore An Lios Mòr ‘the great garden’. However, gàrradh, originally meaning ‘drystone wall’ (and still used as such in crofting communities), has come to be regularly used for ‘garden’ (commonly enclosed by a wall) throughout Gaelic Scotland and is probably now the dominant word nationally.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: tha e a' sìor sgapadh: *it is incessantly and consistently spreading.*

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