

An Litir Bheag le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 144 (which corresponds to Litir 448). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Tha an t-seamrag iongantach. A bheil sibh eòlach air an t-seamraig? 'S e lus a tha innte. Tha i ainmeil ann an Èirinn. Ann an Gàidhlig na h-Èireann 's e *seamróg* a chanas iad. Thàinig a' Bheurla *shamrock* bhuaithe sin.

Tha cuid ag ràdh gur e Naomh Pàdraig a thug an t-seamrag a dh'Èirinn. Chuir e às do na nathraichean an toiseach. Cha toigh le nathraichean seamragan, a rèir beul-aithris. Chuir Naomh Pàdraig cluaintean dhen t-seamraig ann an Èirinn. Às dèidh sin, cha robh na nathraichean a' dol a thilleadh!

Ach a bheil e soilleir dè an lus a tha anns an t-seamraig? O shean, b' e a' Ghàidhlig air *clover* – *seamar*. 'S e seamar beag – *seamrag*. 'S e an t-seamrag bhàn a chanas Gàidheil na h-Alba ri *white clover* no *Trifolium repens*. Tha am facal a' nochdadh ann an ainmean-àite. Tha Beinn na Seamraig anns an Eilean Sgitheanach agus tha Loch na Seamraig air a' Pharbh. Tha na h-ainmean sin a' ciallachadh "clover mountain" agus "clover loch".

Ach tha lus eile ann air a bheil "seamrag" uaireannan. 'S e sin *Oxalis acetosella* – *the wood sorrel*. Tha na duilleagan trì-bhileach, mar a tha duilleagan *Trifolium*. An e *Oxalis* no *Trifolium* a chleachd Naomh Pàdraig ann an leasan mun Trianaid? Uill, chan eil sinn cinnteach. Ach bha an lus aige trì-bhileach. Bha an naomh a' mìneachadh teagasg na Trianaid. Thuirt e gun robh Athair, Mac agus an Spiorad Naomh fa leth ach nan aon, dìreach mar a tha duilleagan na seamraig.

Bha an àireamh a trì mar rud sònraichte do na pàganaich mu thràth. Ach càite a bheil sin a' fàgail na seamraig air a bheil ceithir bileagan air gach duilleig? *The four-leaved clover*. Ann am mòran chultaran, tha e a' toirt deagh fhortan do dhuine. 'S e a' Ghàidhlig air *four-leaved clover* "seamrag nam buadh" – *the shamrock of the virtues*. Seamrag nam buadh.

Dè nì thu ma lorgas tu seamrag nam buadh? Uill, cuir fod theanga i. Thathar ag ràdh gum faigh thu comasan ùra – comasan mar an dà-shealladh!

* * * * *

Faclan is abairtean: A bheil sibh eòlach air an t-seamraig?: *are you familiar with the shamrock?*; 's e lus a tha innte: *it [fem] is a plant*; bhuaithe sin: *from that*; a thug an t-seamrag a dh'Èirinn: *who took the shamrock to Ireland*; chuir e às do na nathraichean an toiseach: *he eliminated the snakes to begin with*; cha toigh le

nathraichean seamragan, a rèir beul-aithris: *snakes don't like shamrocks, according to oral tradition*; chuir Naomh Pàdraig cluaintean dhen t-seamraig: *Saint Patrick planted meadows of shamrocks*; a' dol a thilleadh: *going to return*; a bheil e soilleir dè an lus a tha anns an t-seamraig?: *is it clear which plant is the shamrock?*; air a' Pharbh: *at Cape Wrath (NW Sutherland)*; tha na h-ainmean sin a' ciallachadh: *those names mean*; tha lus eile ann air a bheil "seamrag" uaireannan: *there is another plant sometimes called "shamrock"*; tha na duilleagan trì-bhileach: *the leaves are trifoliate*; a' mìneachadh teagasg na Trianaid: *explaining the doctrine of the Trinity*; gun robh Athair, Mac agus an Spiorad Naomh fa leth ach nan aon: *that Father, Son and Holy Spirit were separate but one*; dìreach mar a tha duilleagan na seamraig: *just as the shamrock's leaves are*; sònraichte do na pàganaich mu thràth: *already special to the pagans*; ann am mòran chultaran: *in many cultures*; deagh fhortan: *good luck*; seamrag nam buadh: *four-leaved clover*; dè nì thu ma lorgas tu: *what do you do if you find*; cuir fod theanga i: *put it under your tongue*; thathar ag ràdh gum faigh thu comasan ùra: *it is said you will gain new abilities*; an dà-shealladh: *second sight [lit. the two sights]*.

ends