

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 1,114 (which corresponds to Litir 1,418). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Four years ago, I was an editor for an amazing book. The book's name is 'From the Bird's Mouth'. It is about animals and plants that have newly appeared in Scotland recently. The book is bilingual – Gaelic and English. We had to create Gaelic names for the 'new' species.

It's the artist Derek Robertson that was behind the project. He has Gaelic. And he has fantastic skills in painting images of nature, particularly birds.

At the start of the summer, I put the book to use in a manner I had not previously. A swarm of bumblebees appeared at the end of my house. They were looking for an opportunity to build a nest under the roof.

From below, it was difficult to make out what species it was. But, when I got a good view of them, it was obvious that I had never seen the like before. They were dark, with russet heads and white tails.

They were more like a type of bumblebee than a honeybee.

O chionn ceithir bliadhna, bha mi nam dheasaiche aig leabhar iongantach. 'S e ainm an leabhair 'Bho Bheul an Eòin'. Tha e mu dheidhinn ainmhidhean is lusan a tha air ùr-nochdadh ann an Alba o chionn ghoirid. Tha an leabhar dà-chànanach – Gàidhlig is Beurla. Bha againn ri ainmean Gàidhlig a chruthachadh do na gnèithean 'ùra'.

'S e an neach-ealain Ruairidh MacDhonnchaidh a bha air cùl a' phròiseict. Tha Gàidhlig aige. Agus tha sgilean air leth aige le bhith a' peantadh ìomhaighean nàdair, gu sònraichte eòin.

Aig toiseach an t-samhraidh, chuir mi an leabhar gu feum, mar nach do chuir roimhe. Nochd sgaoth de sheilleanan-mòra aig ceann an taigh agam. Bha iad a' coimhead airson cothrom neadachaidh fon mhullach.

Bho gu h-ìosal, bha e doirbh dèanamh a-mach dè an gnè a bha ann. Ach, nuair a fhuair mi deagh shealladh orra, bha e follaiseach nach robh mi air a leithid fhaicinn riamh roimhe. Bha iad dorch, le cinn ruadha agus earbail bhàna.

Bha iad na bu choltaiche ri nàdar de sheillean-mòr no *bumblebee* seach seillean-meala. Ach bha iad a'

But they were swarming. Do bumblebees do that?

I picked the book 'From the Bird's Mouth' off my shelves. And I read about a 'new' bee called the Tree Bumblebee. That's what I had at the house. In nature, they nest in holes in trees.

This bee reached Britain in 2001. It reached Scotland twelve years after that. With global warming, it is continually expanding its range.

Although I was anxious about it to begin with, I am not now. Derek's account tells me that a nest does not last long. It comes to an end at the end of the summer when the queen leaves for another place. The colony then dies.

And one other thing about this bee. They pollinate the flowers but, unlike honeybees, they don't sting. Isn't that good!

sgaothachadh. Am bi seilleanan-mòra a' dèanamh sin?

Thog mi an leabhar 'Bho Bheul an Eòin' far nan sgeilpichean agam. Agus leugh mi mu sheillean 'ùr' ris an canar an 'Seillean-mòr Craoibhe' no *Tree Bumblebee*. 'S e sin a bha agam aig an taigh. Gu nàdarrach, bidh iad a' neadachadh ann an tuill ann an craobhan.

Ràinig an seillean seo Breatainn ann an dà mhìle 's a h-aon (2001). Ràinig e Alba dusan bliadhna an dèidh sin. Le blàthachadh na Cruinne, tha e a' sìor sgapadh.

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. Bidh iad a' poileanachadh nam flùraichean ach, eucoltach ri seilleanan-meala, cha bhi iad a' sgobadh. Nach math sin!