

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

‘Breun’ ann an Ainmean-àite

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 1,307. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,003 corresponds to Litir 1,307. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha mi ann an Beinn nam Fadhla turas. Thuirte cuideigin rudeigin rium mu dheidhinn ‘Stinky Bay’ – camas air taobh an iar an eilein. Chuir sin iongnadh orm oir bha sinn a’ còmhradh ann an Gàidhlig. Tha e coltach gur e sin an t-ainm a thathar a’ cleachdadh a-nise anns an eilean – ann am Beurla agus Gàidhlig.

An latha a bha mise ann, cha robh fàileadh neo-àbhaisteach ann air an tràigh. Ach, aig amannan, bidh brùchdan feamainn ann. Nuair a tha an fheamainn a’ grodadh, bidh fàileadh ann.

Thug sin orm smaoinichadh mu ainmean-àite Gàidhlig. A bheil gin ann a tha a’ comharrachadh fàileadh no boladh? Uill, tha, agus tha iad uaireannan co-cheangailte ri feamainn.

Cumaibh sùil a-mach airson na h-eileamaid breun – B-R-E-U-N. Seo na tha am Faclair Beag ag ràdh. *Breun*: foetid, putrid, disgusting, filthy, nasty, stinking. Tha *im breun* a’ ciallachadh ‘rancid butter’. Tha *breun-anail* a’ ciallachadh ‘bad breath’. Agus tha an samhla seo ann: **cho breun ri saobhaidh an t-sionnaich** ‘as foul-smelling as the fox’s den’. Cho breun ri saobhaidh an t-sionnaich.

Anns a’ Ghearasdan, tha camas mòr ann eadar beul a’ Chanàil Chailleannaich agus beul na h-aibhne. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ air *Am Breun Chamas*. Tha an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais a’ dearbhadh gur e an fheamainn a bhios a’ grodadh an sin as coireach ris an ainm.

Ann an Eilean Dhiùra, tha dà àite air a’ chladach an iar air a bheil *Breun-Phort* mar ainm. *Stinky harbour*. Tha e inntinneach anns a h-uile eisimpleir sin gu bheil *breun* a’ tighinn ron ainmear. Breun-Phort seach Port Breun.

Chithear sin cuideachd anns na h-ainmean-àite *Allt na Breun-choille* agus *Cnoc na Breun-choille* ann am **Bràigh Chat**. Cha chreid mi gu bheil coille nàdarrach sam bith ann an sin a-nise, ach feumaidh gun robh uaireigin. Tha an talamh fliuch agus feumaidh gun robh a’ choille fhèin fliuch le fàileadh de ghrodadh ann.

Chan ann a-mhàin ann an Diùra a tha an t-ainm Breun-Phort a’ nochdadh. Tha àite air a’ chladach faisg air Breacais anns an Eilean Sgitheanach, agus ’s e Breun-Phort a chanas muinntir an àite ris. A rèir Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba, a rinn rannsachadh air an ainm (nach eil air mapa sam bith), tha e a’ ciallachadh ‘putrid port, a smelly area of stale water’. Tha mi a’ dèanamh dheth gu bheil Brainport (B-R-A-I-N) air Loch Fìne ann an Earra-Ghàidheal a’ ciallachadh an aon rud.

Ann an Gleann Afraig, ann an Siorrachd Inbhir Nis, tha àite air taobh a deas Loch Beinn a' Mheadhain air a bheil *Breun-leitir*. Faisg air làimh, tha *Bealach na Breun-leitir*. Bhithinn an dùil gu bheil Breun-leitir a' ciallachadh '*hillside that smells of decomposition*'. Ge-tà, tha an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais a' cumail a-mach gu bheil *breun* an sin a' ciallachadh '*coarse*'. Chan eil fhios a'm dè tha ceart, ach tha *Sròn na Breun-leitir* ann an Loch Abar faisg air Gleann Cuaich. Tha an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais ag ràdh gu bheil sin a' ciallachadh '*snout of the stinking or corrupt hillside*'. Tha mi cinnteach, air latha grianach, gu bheil an t-àite brèagha gu leòr!

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Beinn nam Fadhla: *Benbecula*; brùchdan feamainn: *piles of seaweed washed up in storms*; a' grodadh: *rotting*; boladh: *stink*; gin: *any*; moladh: *praise, recommendation*; samhladh: *simile*; Eilean Dhiùra: *the Isle of Jura*; Breacais: *Breakish*; Loch Fìne: *Loch Fyne*; Gleann Afraig: *Glen Affric*; Gleann Cuaich: *Glen Quoich*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Thuirt cuideigin rudeigin rium: *somebody said something to me*; camas air taobh an iar an eilein: *a bay on the western side of the island*; chuir sin iongnadh orm oir bha sinn a' còmhradh ann an Gàidhlig: *that surprised me because we were conversing in Gaelic*; cha robh faileadh neo-àbhaisteach ann air an tràigh: *there wasn't an unusual smell on the beach*; cumaibh sùil a-mach: *keep an eye out*; anns a' Ghearasdan: *in Fort William*; tha camas mòr ann eadar beul a' Chanàil Chailleannaich agus beul na h-aibhne: *there is a big bay between the mouth of the Caledonian Canal and the mouth of the river*; cha chreid mi gu bheil coille nàdarrach sam bith ann: *I don't there is any natural wood[land] there*; ach feumaidh gun robh uaireigin: *but there must have been at one time*; bhithinn an dùil: *I would expect*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bràigh Chat: *this is one of the traditional Gaelic land-divisions of the County of Sutherland (Siorrachd Chataibh) and I am not aware of any English equivalent. In the Gaelic mind, Sutherland is divided as follows going from west to east via the north: Asainte (Assynt); Eadar Dhà Chaolas (Eddrachillis), between the Caolas Cumhang (Kylesku) and Caolas Dhiùranais (Kyle of Durness); Dùthaich MhicAoidh (the Mackay Country) between the Kyle of Durness and Strath Halladale. These all have English equivalents and note that some people consider Dùthaich MhicAoidh to include all the country between Assynt and the Caithness border. Cataibh (which, strictly speaking, is only East Sutherland) is divided into three further areas – Dìthreabh Chat 'wilderness of cats' (the barely inhabited country of central Sutherland), Bràigh Chat 'upland of cats', the country that rises inland from the coast, such as in the Strath of Kildonan and Strath Brora, and Machair Chat 'the flat land of cats' which is the flat coastal strip on the east of the county. This is where Morair Chat 'lord of cats' – the Duke of Sutherland – has his castle.*

Samhladh na Litreach: cho breun ri saobhaidh an t-sionnaich: *as foul-smelling as the fox's den.*

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