

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Na Rathaidhean Co-shìnteach (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 1,383. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,079 corresponds to Litir 1,383. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Anns na ceithir Litrichean **a dh'fhalbh**, bha sinn ann an Gleann Ruaidh ann am Bràigh Loch Abar. Thòisich sinn aig bonn a' ghlinne ann an Drochaid Ruaidh. A-nise tha sinn air ceann shuas a' ghlinne a ruigsinn agus abair àite!

Tha a' phàirt seo de Ghleann Ruaidh ainmeil air feadh an t-saoghail, gu h-àraidh am measg eòlaichean chreagan. Carson? Uill, sin far am faic sibh na 'rathaidhean co-shìnteach' – trì loidhnichean mòra air a' mhonadh a tha co-shìnteach ri chèile. Don t-sùil, tha iad, gu dearbh, coltach ri rathaidhean. Mura robh sibh riamh ann, mholainn an t-àite gu mòr dhuibh.

Ann an seann chunntas mu na rathaidhean a chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an **ochd ceud deug is dhà air fhichead** (1822), tha seo: '*In English, they are now called parallel roads; the inhabitants know them by the name of the King's hunting roads.*' Tha mi an dùil, ma-thà, gur e 'Rathaidhean-seilg an Rìgh' a bh' aig muinntir an àite orra.

A rèir choltais, bha iad dhen bheachd gun deach na rathaidhean a thogail le daoine o chionn fhada. Bha sin gus leigeil le rìghrean na h-Alba a dhol a-steach don bheinn-sheilg nuair a bha iad a' fuireach greis ann an Inbhir Lòchaidh – faisg air far a bheil An Gearasdan an-diugh.

Carson, ge-tà, a bha trì rathaidhean ann? Uill, fear airson an Rìgh agus a chompanaich a bh' air muin-eich, fear airson charbadan agus fear airson ... uill, rudeigin air choreigin eile!

A rèir choltais bha cuid dhen bheachd gur iad na Fianna a thog na rathaidhean airson a dhol a shealg anns na beanntan, ach chan fhaca mi sin ann an dreach sgrìobhte ann an Gàidhlig.

Tha na 'rathaidhean' – aig astar – a' coimhead coltach ri ceumannan-coise dhen t-seann seòrsa, a' dèanamh slighe a-steach do na beanntan. Ach bha mi airson coiseachd air fear dhiubh, airson faicinn an robh e furasta gu leòr coiseachd air.

Shreap mi suas an leathad bhon àite-phàrcaidh, agus chaidh mi seachad air a' chiad rathad co-shìnteach gun fhiosta. Gu fortanach, bha am mapa air a' fòn agam co-cheangailte ri GPS agus thuig mi mo mhearachd. Thill mi sìos. Cha robh an rathad follaiseach idir. Cha bhiodh e furasta falbh air, an tòir air na fèidh. Ma bha an talamh

rud beag còmhnaidh far an robh an ‘rathad’, cha robh e uabhasach follaiseach dhòmhsa.

Anns an naoidheamh linn deug, thòisich luchd-saidheans air sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air na rathaidean co-shìnteach. Bha iad dhen bheachd gur e rud nàdarrach a bh’ ann, ach cha robh iad cinnteach dè dìreach a chruthaich na rathaidean. Ceart gu leòr, bha daoine dhen bheachd gun robh uisge an sàs ann. Chan e a-mhàin gu bheil na trì rathaidean co-shìnteach ri chèile ach gu bheil iad uile còmhnaidh. Dè an rud as motha a sheatlaigeas còmhnaidh agus a dh’atharraicheas cumadh na tìre? Dè ach uisge? An robh seann chladaichean an sin gu h-àrd air monaidhean Ghlinn Ruaidh?

Ann an ochd ceud deug, trithead ’s a h-ochd (1838) thàinig neach-saidheans òg – a bha gu bhith fìor ainmeil – don Ghàidhealtachd. B’ esan Teàrlach Darwin. Bha e dìreach air tilleadh bho a thuras air feadh an t-saoghail air a’ Bheagle. Bha ùidh mhòr aige anns na rathaidean co-shìnteach. Ach, mar a chì sinn, ’s e fear eile a dh’obraich a-mach mar a thàinig iad gu bith ann an Linn na Deighe.

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Faclan na Litreach: Gleann Ruaidh: *Glen Roy*; Bràigh Loch Abar: *Brae Lochaber*; Drochaid Ruaidh: *Roybridge*; rathaidean co-shìnteach: *parallel roads*; mholainn: *I would recommend*; An Gearasdan: *Fort William*; seann chladaichean: *old shorelines*; Linn na Deighe: *The Ice Age*.

Abairtean na Litreach: A-nise tha sinn air ceann shuas a’ ghlinne a ruigsinn agus abair àite!: *now we have reached the upper part of the glen and what a place!*; ainmeil air feadh an t-saoghail, gu h-àraidh am measg eòlaichean chreagan: *famous throughout the world, particularly among geologists*; mura robh sibh riamh ann: *if you have never been there*; gus leigeil le rìghrean na h-Alba a dhol a-steach don bheinn-sheilg: *to allow the kings of Scotland to go to the hunting hill*; nuair a bha iad a’ fuireach greis ann an Inbhir Lòchaidh: *when they were staying for a while in Inverlochy*; agus a chompanaich a bh’ air muin-eich: *and his companions who were on horseback*; rudeigin air choreigin eile: *something or other else*; coltach ri ceumannan-coise dhen t-seann seòrsa: *like old-fashioned walking tracks*; shreap mi suas an leathad bhon àite-phàrcaidh: *I climbed up the slope from the parking area*, chaidh mi seachad air a’ chiad rathad co-shìnteach gun fhiosta: *I went past the first parallel road without realising it*; thuig mi mo mhearachd: *I understood my mistake*; an tòir air na fèidh: *in pursuit of the deer*; cha robh e uabhasach follaiseach dhòmhsa: *it wasn’t particularly obvious to me*; ceart gu leòr, bha daoine dhen bheachd gun robh uisge an sàs ann: *certainly, people reckoned that water was involved*; chan e a-mhàin gu bheil trì rathaidean co-shìnteach ri chèile ach gu bheil iad uile còmhnaidh: *it’s not only that the three roads are parallel to each other but that they are all horizontal*; dè an rud as motha a sheatlaigeas còmhnaidh agus a dh’atharraicheas cumadh na tìre: *what is the thing that most [commonly] settles horizontally and that changes the form of the land*; a bha gu bhith fìor ainmeil: *who was going to become extremely famous*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: ochd ceud deug is dhà air fhichead: 1822. *This is an alternative, and slightly more traditional, way of saying ochd ceud deug, fichead 's a dhà. Also it is worth noting that some people omit the 'ceud' in these dates, following the English model where there is no mention of 'hundred' i.e. ochd deug is dhà air fhichead or ochd deug, fichead 's a dhà.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Anns na ceithir Litrichean a dh'fhalbh: *last/previous four Litrichean.*