

## 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 402 (which corresponds to Litir 706). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk).

*Last year, a paper came out about the history of eagles in Britain and Ireland. The research was based on place names. The researchers looked at words like iolaire, eagle and eryr in Welsh.*

*They were looking at the [white-tailed] sea eagle and the golden eagle. But, if it's only eagle or iolaire that's in the name, how will we know what type it is? Ecologists were helpful. Sea eagles nest on lower ground than the golden eagle. And closer to water.*

*They found more than seven hundred names. Scottish Gaelic was the language which was most prolific for names. There were 276 Gaelic names. In the Gaelic names, the golden eagle was more numerous. But, when every language was taken into account, the sea eagle was a bit more numerous.*

*The researchers estimated the number of each eagle that was living in the year 500 AD/CE. They were of the opinion that there were between 1,000 and 1,500 pairs of golden eagles. And there were between 800 and 1,400 pairs of sea eagles. Eagles were much more*

An-uiridh, thàinig paipear a-mach mu eachdraidh iolairean ann am Breatainn agus Èirinn. Bha an rannsachadh stèidhichte air ainmean-àite. Choimhead an luchd-rannsachaidh air faclan mar *iolaire, eagle* agus *eryr* ann an Cuimris.

Bha iad a' coimhead air an iolaire-mhara agus an iolaire-bhuidhe. Ach, mas e dìreach *eagle* no *iolaire* a tha anns an ainm, ciamar a bhios fios againn dè an seòrsa a tha ann? Bha eag-eòlaichean cuideachail. Bidh iolairean-mara a' neadachadh air talamh nas isle na 'n iolaire-bhuidhe. Agus nas fhaisge air uisge.

Lorg iad còrr is seachd ceud ainm. B' e a' Ghàidhlig an cànan a bu mhotha san robh ainmean. Bha dà cheud, seachdad 's a sia (276) ainmean Gàidhlig ann. Anns na h-ainmean Gàidhlig bha an iolaire-bhuidhe na bu phailte. Ach nuair a bha a h-uile cànan air a thoirt a-steach, bha an iolaire-mhara beagan na bu phailte.

Rinn an luchd-rannsachaidh tomhas air an àireimh de gach iolaire a bha beò anns a' bhliadhna còig ceud AC. Bha iad dhen bheachd gun robh eadar mìle is mìle gu leth paidhir dhen iolaire-bhuidhe ann. Agus bha eadar ochd ceud is mìle 's ceithir cheud paidhir ann dhen iolaire-mhara. Bha iolairean mòran na bu

*plentiful then than they are now. Particularly the sea eagle. The sea eagle became extinct here. It was reintroduced from Norway.*

*I promised last week that I was going to surprise you with a place name in which an animal is named that has become extinct. And here it is. In the south of the Isle of Bute, there is a place called Beaver Wood. That's right, Beaver. The beaver is named on the map of Scotland!*

*Were beavers once living on Bute? Yes! But the name on the map, it's not terribly old. It came from an experiment that the Marquis of Bute conducted. He introduced some. That was in the 1870s.*

*Those beavers were successful for a few years. Then they became extinct. It's not clear what happened. But the affair is remembered on the map of Bute to this day.*

phailte an uair sin na tha iad a-nise. Gu h-àraidh an iolaire-mhara. Chaidh an iolaire-mhara à bith an seo. Bha i air a toirt a-steach às ùr à Nirribhidh.

Gheall mi an t-seachdain sa chaidh gun robh mi a' dol a chur iongnadh oirbh le ainm-àite anns a bheil beathach a chaidh à bith. Agus seo e. Ann an ceann a deas Eilean Bhòid, tha àite ann air a bheil *Beaver Wood*. Seadh, *Beaver*. Tha am bìobhair air ainmeachadh air mapa na h-Alba!

An robh bìobhairean uaireigin beò ann an Eilean Bhòid? Bha! Ach an t-ainm air a' mhapa, chan eil e uabhasach sean. Thàinig e bho dheuchainn a rinn Marcuis Bhòid. Thug esan feadhainn a-steach. Bha sin anns na seachdadan dhen naoidheamh linn deug.

Bha na bìobhairean sin soirbheachail airson beagan bhliadhnaichean. An uair sin chaidh iad à bith. Chan eil e soilleir dè thachair. Ach tha an gnothach air a chuimhneachadh air mapa Eilean Bhòid chun an latha an-diugh.