

## 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 232 (which corresponds to Litir 536). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk).

Glen Golly, Glen Golly,  
Glen Golly of the trees  
Who could see it and not praise it,  
Glen Golly of the trees  
*You'll remember that verse from last week. I was telling you about the famous poet from the Mackay Country – Rob Donn (“brown-haired Rob”). He was living for a time in Strath More, south of Loch Hope. He was alive in the Eighteenth Century.*  
*The clan chiefs weren't too pleased with Rob. In the Year of the Prince (1745-6), the chiefs of the Mackays were supportive of the Hanoverians. But Rob was supportive of the Jacobites. Here's a verse he wrote:*  
Now, young Charles Stewart  
Every clan places its hope in you  
That sought to crown you  
And set the country alight;  
*Then he represents the clans as snakes.*  
They're like hidden snakes  
Which cast their skins last year  
But are making ready their fangs  
To arise on the day of your coming.  
*Not only that, but the chiefs were stopping people from hunting the deer. Rob Donn was against them. He was of the opinion that it was part of the*

*Gleanna Gollaidh, Gleanna Gollaidh,  
Gleanna Gollaidh nan craobh,  
Cò a chì e nach mol e,  
Gleanna Gollaidh nan craobh.*  
Bidh cuimhne agaibh air an  
rainn sin bhon t-seachdain sa chaidh.  
Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun bhàrd  
ainmeil à Dùthaich MhicAoidh – Rob  
Donn. Bha e a' fuireach fad ùine anns  
an t-Srath Mhòr, deas air Loch Hòb.  
Bha e beò anns an ochdamh linn deug.  
Cha robh na cinn-chinnidh ro  
thoilichte le Rob. Ann am Bliadhna a'  
Phrionnsa, bha cinn-chinnidh Clann 'ic  
Aoidh taiceil do na Hanobhèirianaich.  
Ach bha Rob taiceil do na Seumasaich.  
Seo rann a sgrìobh e:  
*Nis, a Theàrlaich Òig Stiùbhairt,  
Riut tha dùil aig gach fine  
Chaidh a chothachadh crùin dhut  
'S a leig an dùthaich na teine;*  
An uair sin tha e a' samhlachadh  
nam fineachan mar nathraichean.  
*Tha iad mar nathraichean falaicht'  
A chaill an earradh an-uiridh  
Ach tha 'g ath-ghleusadh an gathan  
Gu èirigh latha do thighinn.*  
A bharrachd air sin, bha na  
h-uachdarain a' cur stad air daoine bho  
bhith a' sealg nam fiadh. Bha Rob  
Donn nan aghaidh. Bha esan dhen

*Gaels' heritage to be hunting the deer. Here's a wee piece he wrote about his brother, Donald:*

There was blood on the front of your shirt,  
And it wasn't the blood of the dark goat  
But the blood of the deer in the rut  
And he was no robber, black-haired wee Donald.

Hogaidh hò, my Donald Dubh  
Hunter of venison, Donald Dubh,  
Not a talkative man, Donald Dubh  
And he'll have a reward for the chase.

*Some people think that Rob had to move out of Strath More. Then he was then living on the shore. And he wasn't at all near Glen Golly. Perhaps it is then that he wrote the poem Gleanna Gollaidh:*

The view of the frontier heights  
Is enticing me yonder  
And I thought I would stay  
In Glen Golly of the trees.

Glen Golly, Glen Golly,  
Glen Golly of the trees  
Who could see it and not praise it,  
Glen Golly of the trees.

bheachd gun robh e mar phàirt de dhualchas nan Gàidheal a bhith a' sealg nam fiadh. Seo pìos beag a sgrìobh e mu a bhràthair, Dòmhnall:  
*Bha fuil am broilleach do lèine,  
'S cha b' e fuil na gaibhre cèire  
Ach fuil an fhèidh a bha san dàmhair,  
'S cha bu mhèirleach Dòmhnallan Dubh.*

*Hogaidh hò, mo Dhòmhnallan Dubh,  
Sealgair sìthne, Dòmhnallan Dubh,  
'S fear neo-bhruidhneach, Dòmhnallan Dubh,  
'S gheibh e an nì a chionn a bhith ruith.*

Tha cuid a' smaoinichadh gum b' fheudar do Rob gluasad a-mach às an t-Srath Mhòr. Bha e an uair sin a' fuireach air a' chladach. Agus cha robh e idir faisg air Gleanna Gollaidh. 'S dòcha gur ann an uair sin a sgrìobh e an dàn Gleanna Gollaidh:

*Ri faicinn crìoch àrdain  
Ga mo bhreugadh gu taobh,  
'S ann a smuainich mi fanadh  
An Gleanna Gollaidh nan craobh.*

*Gleanna Gollaidh, Gleanna Gollaidh,  
Gleanna Gollaidh nan craobh,  
Cò a chì e nach mol e,  
Gleanna Gollaidh nan craobh.*