

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 325 (which corresponds to Litir 629). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

This is in Dwelly's dictionary – ùruisg: 'being supposed to haunt lonely and sequestered places, water-god'. People were believing in urisks in many places. They were strong in Perthshire. A verse names the best-known ones in Bread-albane:

Peallaidh of the Spout and Brownie of the Little Waterfall

Babaidh of the Lochan and Brownie of the Island

Padarlan of Fearnan, Peadragan, Patragan

Black-trews from Fortingall, the Spectre of Coire Ghamhnain

Swift-foot of Leitir, Black Amhlagan

Grey-headed Little Cat and the Black Urisk of Amhlagan Falls.

Peallaidh of the Spout was the one that was living at Moness near the town of Aberfeldy. He gave his name to Aberfeldy. Brownie of the Little Waterfall was living in the same stream, just above Peallaidh. They were coming out in the night. They were annoying the townsfolk.

The urisks weren't evil but they were annoying. I have a story from Blairmore on the north side of Loch Tay. There is a burn there, with a

Tha seo ann am faclair Dwelly – ùruisg: 'being supposed to haunt lonely and sequestered places, water-god'. Bha daoine a' creidsinn ann an ùruisgean ann am mòran àiteachan. Bha iad làidir ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. Tha rann ag ainmeachadh an fheadhainn a b' ainmeile ann am Braghad Albann:

Peallaidh an Spùit is Brùnaidh an Easain

Babaidh an Lochain is Brùnaidh an Eilein

Padarlan à Feàrnan, Peadragan, Patragan

Triubhas-dubh à Fairturchill, Fuath Coire Ghamhnain

Cas-luath Leitir, Amhlagan Dubh Catan Ceann-liath, is Ùruisg Dubh Eas Amhlagan

B' e Peallaidh an Spùit am fear a bha a' fuireach ann am Bun Eas faisg air baile Obar Pheallaidh. Thug e ainm do dh'Obar Pheallaidh. Bha Brùnaidh an Easain a' fuireach anns an aon allt, dìreach os cionn Pheallaidh. Bha iad a' tighinn a-mach air an oidhche. Bha iad a' cur dragh air muinntir a' bhaile.

Cha robh na h-ùruisgean olc ach bha iad draghail. Tha stòiridh agam bhon Bhlàr Mhòr air taobh a tuath Loch Tatha. Tha allt ann, le linne air a bheil

pool called 'the pool of the shell'. A long time ago, an urisk was living there. He was called Sligeachan.

Sligeachan had a son. He was often annoying the old wife at Blairmore. He was asking her what her name was. But she was cunning. She only said, "I am myself."

One day, he was really annoying. "What is your name?" he asked again. "Myself, myself," the woman replied. She got fed up of the young urisk. She threw a pan of hot water on his bare legs.

The young urisk let out a yell. Sligeachan heard him. He went there. "What happened?" he asked. "My legs were scalded with hot water," said the young urisk. "And who did it?" Sligeachan asked. "Myself, myself!" said the young one. "That's good," said Sligeachan, "if someone else had done it, I would punish him."

The young urisk didn't bother the woman again. And Sligeachan never found out who threw hot water on his son.

Linne na Slige. O chionn fhada bha ùruisg a' fuireach ann. 'S e Sligeachan an t-ainm a bha air.

Bha mac aig Sligeachan. Bha esan gu tric a' cur dragh air an t-seann bhean air a' Bhlàr Mhòr. Bha e a' faighneachd gu dè an t-ainm a bha oirre. Ach bha i seòlta. Cha tuirt i ach, "Is mise mi fhìn."

Latha a bha seo bha e uabhasach draghail. "Dè an t-ainm a tha ort?" dh'fhaighnich e a-rithist. "Mi fhìn, mi fhìn," fhreagair am boireannach. Dh'fhàs i sgìth dhen ùruisg òg. Thilg i pana uisge teth air a chasan rùisgte.

Leig an t-ùruisg òg sgreuch. Chuala Sligeachan e. Chaidh e ann. "Dè thachair?" dh'fhaighnich e. "Chaidh mo chasan a sgaldadh le uisge teth," thuirt an t-ùruisg òg. "Agus cò rinn e?" dh'fhaighnich Sligeachan. "Mi fhìn, mi fhìn!" thuirt am fear òg. "Is math sin," arsa Sligeachan, "nam biodh duine eile air a dhèanamh, bhithinn ga pheanasachadh."

Cha do chuir an t-ùruisg òg dragh air a' bhoireannach tuilleadh. Agus cha d' fhuair Sligeachan a-mach riamh cò thilg uisge teth air a mhac.