

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 464 (which corresponds to Litir 768). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

On the Isle of Skye, between Dunvegan and Edinbane, there is a bridge called The Fairy Bridge. Some people thought that horses would see the fairies dancing beside the bridge. In the book Skye: The Island and its Legends, Otta Swire tells us about her grandfather, John Robertson of Orbost. John reported that horses were scared of the bridge.

John himself didn't believe in fairies. He reckoned that it was the person that was with the horse that affected the horse. If the person believed in the fairies, the horse would be scared.

John bought a new horse from Ireland. It came on a boat to Dunvegan. Thus, it had not been near the Fairy Bridge.

At the same time, John had a friend staying with him. He belonged to the south of the country. The man had never been on Skye before. He didn't know the island or its heritage.

He wanted to ride the new horse. John had an opportunity to test the horse. He gave instructions to his friend about the route – that would take him across the bridge

Ann an Eilean Sgitheanach, eadar Dùn Bheagain agus an t-Aodann Bàn, tha drochaid air a bheil *The Fairy Bridge*. Bha feadhainn dhen bheachd gum faiceadh eich na sìthichean a' dannsadh ri taobh na drochaid. Anns an leabhar *Skye: The Island and its Legends*, tha Otta Swire ag innse dhuinn mu a seanair, Iain MacDhonnchaidh à Orabost. Dh'aithris Iain gun robh eich a' gabhail eagal ron drochaid.

Cha robh Iain fhèin a' creidsinn ann an sìthichean. Bha e dhen bheachd gur e an duine a bha còmhla ris an each a bha a' toirt buaidh air an each. Nam biodh an duine a' creidsinn anns na sìthichean, bhiodh eagal air an each.

Cheannaich Iain each ùr à Èirinn. Thàinig e air bàta a Dhùn Bheagain. Mar sin, cha robh e air a bhith faisg air drochaid nan sìthichean.

Aig an aon àm, bha caraaid a' fuireach aig Iain. Bhuineadh e do cheann a deas na dùthcha. Cha robh an duine air a bhith anns an Eilean Sgitheanach roimhe. Cha robh e eòlach air an eilean no air dualchas an eilein.

Bha e ag iarraidh falbh a-mach air an each ùr. Bha cothrom aig Iain deuchainn a chur air an each. Thug e stiùireadh do a charaid mun t-slighe – a bheireadh e tarsainn na drochaid air an

on the way out and again on the way back.

His friend left. When he returned, John questioned him about the horse. It was good, the other said. But it had one problem. When it came to one bridge, he said, it shied with fright. No other bridge upset it, though. And which bridge was it? You'll know.

In English the place is called Fairybridge. But it has a different name in Gaelic – Beul-àtha nan Trì Allt ‘the ford of the three burns’. It’s famous for being a meeting place. At the time of the Disruption of the Church in 1843, the Rev Roderick MacLeod of Snizort was holding services there for thousands of people. I’ll tell you more about the place next week.

rathad a-mach agus air an rathad air ais.

Dh’fhalbh a charaid. Nuair a thill e, chuir Iain ceistean air mun each. Bha e math, thuir am fear eile. Ach bha aon trioblaid aige. Nuair a thàinig e gu aon drochaid, thuir e, dh’èirich e air a chasan deiridh le eagal. Cha do chuir drochaid sam bith eile dragh air, ge-tà. Agus dè an drochaid a bha ann? Bidh fios agaibh.

Ann am Beurla, canar *Fairybridge* ris an àite. Ach tha ainm eadar-dhealaichte air ann an Gàidhlig – Beul-àtha nan Trì Allt. Tha e ainmeil airson a bhith na àite-coinneachaidh. Aig àm Briseadh na h-Eaglaise ann an ochd ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a trì (1843) bha an t-Urramach Ruairidh MacLeòid à Sniothasort a’ cumail sheirbheisean ann airson mìltean de dhaoine. Innsidh mi tuilleadh dhuibh mun àite sin an-ath-sheachdain.