

# **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 561 (which corresponds to Litir 865). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*Last week I was talking about place-names in which there is the word leabaidh or leaba 'bed'. For example, there is a leaba dìonaidh 'sheltering bed' in a few places. That's where some people who were in danger were hiding. I found one in Glen Lyon in Perthshire. It's near Invervar.*

*There was a man at one time living in Invervar called 'light red-haired John'. He belonged to the MacGregor clan. The MacGregors had to hide. Campbell of Lawers came in pursuit of John. But John was hiding in his 'sheltering bed'.*

*John's wife agreed to betray her husband. She asked the Campbells to come during the night. They would keep an eye on the hillside. At dawn, she would be coming out of the sheltering bed. She would be walking back and forth. The men would see her.*

*But light red-haired John saw her also. He was suspicious. He looked out. He saw the band coming in pursuit of him. He verbally abused his wife. He fled across the hill. Nothing was ever heard from him*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh bha mi a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn ainmean-àite anns a bheil am facal 'leabaidh' no 'leaba'. Mar eisimpleir, tha 'leaba dìonaidh' ann an grunn àiteachan. Sin far am biodh feadhainn a bha ann an èiginn a' dol am falach. Lorg mi tè ann an Gleann Lìomhann ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. Tha i faisg air Inbhir Bharra.

Bha fear ann uaireigin a' fuireach ann an Inbhir Bharra air an robh Iain Buidhe Ruadh mar ainm. Bhuineadh e do Chloinn 'ic Ghriogair. Bha aig na Griogaraich ri dhol am falach. Thàinig Caimbeulach Labhair air thòir Iain. Ach bha Iain am falach anns an 'Leaba Dhìonaidh' aige.

Dh'aontaich bean Iain an duine aice a bhrathadh. Dh'iarr i air na Caimbeulaich thighinn air an oidhche. Chumadh iad sùil air aghaidh na beinne. Aig àm na camhanaich, bhiodh i a' thighinn a-mach às an leabaidh dhìonaidh. Bhiodh i a' coiseachd air ais 's air adhart. Bhiodh na daoine ga faicinn.

Ach chunnaic Iain Buidhe Ruadh i cuideachd. Bha e amharasach. Thug e sùil a-mach. Chunnaic e a' bhuidheann a' thighinn air a thòir. Thug e droch-bheul do a bhean. Theich e thar a' mhonaidh. Cha chualas guth air bho sin a-mach.

again.

*On Skye there are several 'beds'. There is Leaba na Làrach – 'the mare's bed or resting place', Leabaidh a' Mhèirlich 'the thief's bed' and Leabaidh na Glais-Ghoilein.*

*The 'grey greedy gut' appears in oral tradition. It was a big harmless beast – perhaps a cow/steer. But it moved from place to place, looking for grazing. Its 'bed' is next to the township of Torrin on the shore of Loch Slapin in Strath.*

*Nearer Elgol, west of Loch Slapin, there is Leabaidh na Bà Uidhre 'the bed of the dun cow'. I reckon that is connected – as is Leabaidh na Glais-Ghoilein – to the Fingalian heritage.*

*I was contemplating this subject because I came across 'the bed of the white cow'. That was in Gairloch. It is presumed that the place was connected to Fingalian legend. However, the story is now lost. We'll return to Gairloch next week.*

Ann an Eilean Sgitheanach, tha grunn 'leabannan' ann. Tha Leaba na Làrach ann – 'the mare's bed or resting place', Leabaidh a' Mhèirlich 'the thief's bed' agus Leabaidh na Glais-Ghoilein.

Tha an Glas-Ghoilean a' nochdadh ann am beul-aithris. 'S e beathach mòr gun chron a bha ann – 's dòcha mart. Bha e a' gluasad bho àite gu àite, a' sireadh ionaltraidh. Tha a 'leabaidh' ri taobh baile nan Torran air cladach Loch Shlaopainn anns an t-Srath.

Nas fhaisg' air Ealaghol, siar air Loch Shlaopainn, tha Leabaidh na Bà Uidhre 'the bed of the dun cow'. Saoilidh mi gu bheil sin co-cheangailte – mar a tha Leabaidh na Glais-Ghoilein – ri dualchas na Fèinne.

Bha mi a' meòrachadh air a' chuspair seo oir thàinig mi tarsainn air Leabaidh na Bà Bàine. Bha sin ann an Geàrrloch. Tha dùil gun robh an t-àite co-cheangailte ri sgeulachdan na Fèinne. Ge-tà, tha an sgeulachd air chall a-nise. Tillidh sinn gu Geàrrloch an ath-sheachdain.