

# **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 634 (which corresponds to Litir 938). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I was telling you about Mary of Callert. She lost her husband, Patrick, son of Duncan of Inverawe. He was a Campbell. He was wounded at the Battle of Inverlochy. He got home but he died there. He was buried behind the house. Mary wrote about it in a song.*

*Mary had a broken heart. But, in time, the prior of Ardchattan asked her to marry him. Mary wasn't fond of the man. She didn't want to marry him. But, eventually, she agreed.*

*On the evening of the wedding, Mary sang a song to the women who were helping her. It was a poignant song. Mary was missing Patrick. She didn't want to marry another man.*

*I'll give you two verses of the song. Here is the first one: treasure of men of the dell, you took me out of the plague house, where my father and mother were, my beloved sister and my five brothers.*

*And a second verse: o, it is me that is bereft, going to lie with another man, and my own man behind the house, the hunter of the brown stags and the hinds.*

*Mary was still very sad about the*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Mhàiri Challaird. Chaill i an duine aice, Pàdraig Mac Dhonnchaidh Inbhir Atha. 'S e Caimbeulach a bha ann. Chaidh a leòn aig Blàr Inbhir Lòchaidh. Fhuair e dhachaigh ach chaochail e an sin. Chaidh a thiodhlacadh air cùl an taighe. Sgrìobh Màiri mu dheidhinn ann an òran.

Bha cridhe briste aig Màiri. Ach an ceann greis, dh'iarr àrd-mhanach Àird Chatain oirre a phòsadh. Cha robh Màiri toigheach air an duine. Cha robh i ag iarraidh a phòsadh. Ach, mu dheireadh, dh'aontaich i.

Air feasgar na bainnse, ghabh Màiri òran do na boireannaich a bha a' toirt taic dhi. 'S e òran tiamhaidh a bha ann. Bha Màiri ag ionndrainn Phàdraig. Cha robh i ag iarraidh fear eile a phòsadh.

Bheir mi dhuibh dà rann dhen òran. Seo a' chiad fhear: *Fheudail a dh'fhearaibh na dàlach, Thug thu mach à taigh na plàigh mi, Far an robh m' athair 's mo mhàthair, Mo phiuthar ghaoil 's mo chòignear bhràithrean.*

Agus dàrna rann: *Rìgh, gur mis' a th' air mo sgaradh, Bhith dol le fear eile 'laighe, Is m' fhear fhèin air cùl an taighe, Sealgair nan damh donn 's nan aighean.*

Bha Màiri fhathast muladach mu

*death of her husband. Listen again to the final verse. O, it is me that is bereft, going to lie with another man, and my own man behind the house, the hunter of the brown stags and the hinds.*

*Mary died that very night – before her new marriage was consummated.*

*Before we leave Callert – do you remember Angus, the illegitimate son of the laird of Lundavra? He murdered his two half-brothers. But he was not punished. The people were saying, as there had not been justice, that they would all be punished. And they were. That was the plague – the black fever (typhus).*

*And, although Angus was a Cameron, he didn't take the name of that clan. People referred to his descendants as Clann Aonghais. Innes in English. People with that name still live in Lochaber.*

bhàs an duine aice. Èistibh a-rithist ris an rann mu dheireadh: Rìgh, gur mis' a th' air mo sgaradh, Bhith dol le fear eile 'laighe, Is m' fhear fhèin air cùl an taighe, Sealgair nan damh donn 's nan aighean.

Chaochail Màiri air an oidhche sin fhèin – mus deach am pòsadh ùr aice a choileanadh.

Mus fhàg sinn Callaird – a bheil cuimhne agaibh air Aonghas, am mac dìolain aig uachdaran Lunn Dà Bhrà? Mhuirt e a dhithis leth-bhràithrean. Ach cha deach a pheanasachadh. Bha na daoine ag ràdh, leis nach robh ceartas ann, gun tigeadh peanas orra uile. Agus thàinig. B' e sin a' phlàigh – am fiabhras dubh.

Agus, ged as e Camshronach a bha ann an Aonghas, cha do ghabh e ainm a' chinnidh sin air. 'S e Clann Aonghais a chanadh daoine ri a shliochd. Innes ann am Beurla. Tha daoine leis an ainm sin fhathast a' fuireach ann an Loch Abar.