

# **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 643 (which corresponds to Litir 947). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was telling you about Iain Lom, the Keppoch bard. He is buried in Cladh Cille Choirill in the Braes of Lochaber. When he was young, he went to Inverness with this father. He was amongst people in an inn.*

*One of them gave a poor opinion of John. John knew two proverbs - 'a hasty judgement is harmful' ['a hasty judgement is harmful'] and 'don't judge hastily a ragged boy or a shaggy colt' ['don't judge hastily a ragged boy or a shaggy colt'].*

*John said to the man who gave a poor opinion of him, 'a hasty harmful judgement – a judgement on a shaggy colt or a freckly-shinned lad' ['a hasty harmful judgement – a judgement on a shaggy colt or a freckly-shinned lad']. 'A hasty harmful judgement – a judgement on a shaggy colt or a freckly-shinned lad'. John was good with words even when he was young.*

*Iain Lom was famous for what he wrote about the Battle of Inverlochy in 1645. He was with Montrose in the service of the King. They defeated an army that was*

*Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Iain Lom, bàrd na Ceapaich. Tha e air a thiodhlacadh ann an Cladh Cille Choirill ann am Bràigh Loch Abar. Nuair a bha e òg, chaidh e a dh'Inbhir Nis cuide ri athair. Bha e am measg dhaoine ann an taigh-seinnse.*

*Thug fear dhiubh droch bheachd air Iain. Bha Iain eòlach air dà sheanfhaical – bidh breith luath lochdach 'a hasty judgement is harmful' agus na toir breith chabhagach air mac luideagach no air loth pheallagach 'don't judge hastily a ragged boy or a shaggy colt'.*

*Thuir Iain ris an duine a thug droch bheachd air, 'Breith luath lochdach, breith air loth pheallagach no air giullan breac-luirgneach'. Tha sin a' ciallachadh 'a hasty harmful judgement – a judgement on a shaggy colt or a freckly-shinned lad'. Breith luath lochdach, breith air loth pheallagach no air giullan breac-luirgneach.' Bha Iain math le briathran eadhon nuair a bha e òg.*

*Tha Iain Lom ainmeil airson na sgrìobh e mu Bhlàr Inbhir Lòchaidh ann an sia ceud deug, ceathrad 's a còig (1645). Bha e còmhla ri Montròs ann an seirbheis an Rìgh. Rinn iad a' chùis air*

*under the command of the Earl of Argyll. John refused to lift a sword. If he fell, who would praise the MacDonalds for defeating the Campbells, he said. He wrote a famous poem called 'Latha Inbhir Lòchaidh'.*

*There is an extraordinary story about John. The Earl of Argyll hated him. The Earl put a large bounty on his head. Who appeared at Inveraray Castle, seeking the reward, but Iain Lom himself! Instead of killing him, the Earl invited John to stay in the castle for a week!*

*The two men were together in the castle. They were looking at dead, preserved blackcocks on the wall. The Earl said, 'Have you ever seen, John, such an amount of blackcocks in the same place?'*

*'Yes,' said John.*

*'Where?'*

*'At Inverlochy,' said the bard.*

*'John, John,' said the Earl, 'you'll never stop chewing the Campbells.'*

*'What I most regret,' said John, 'is that I can't swallow them!'*

armailt a bha fo smachd Iarla Earra-Ghàidheal. Dhiùlt Iain claidheamh a thogail. Nan tuiteadh e, cò bhiodh a' moladh nan Dòmhnallach airson a' chùis a dhèanamh air na Caimbeulaich, thuirt e. Sgrìobh e dàn ainmeil air a bheil 'Latha Inbhir Lòchaidh'.

Tha stòiridh iongantach mu Iain. Bha an dubh-ghràin aig Iarla Earra-Ghàidheal air. Chuir an t-Iarla airgead mòr air a cheann. Cò nochd aig Caisteal Inbhir Aora, a' sireadh na duaise, ach Iain Lom fhèin! An àite a mharbhadh, thug an t-Iarla cuireadh do dh'Iain fuireach sa chaisteal airson seachdain!

Bha an dithis còmhla sa chaisteal. Bha iad a' toirt sùil air coilich-dhubha mharbh, ghlèidhte air a' bhalla. Thuirt an t-Iarla, 'Am faca tu riamh, Iain, uiread sin de choilich-dhubha anns an aon àite?'

'Chunnaic,' fhreagair Iain.

'Càite?'

'An Inbhir Lòchaidh,' thuirt am bàrd.

'Iain, Iain,' ars an t-Iarla, 'cha sguir thu gu bràth de chagnadh nan Caimbeulach.'

'S e as duilich leam,' ars Iain, 'nach urra mi 'n slugadh!'