

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 803 (which corresponds to Litir 1,107). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was walking slowly through a birchwood. The ground was rough and steep. Far below me was Loch Ness. The bell heather and cross-leaved heath were in bloom. I was happy.

I was by myself and very quiet. On the ground, where there was mud, there were deer hoofprints. They were smaller than red deer hoofprints. And there were droppings that were rather like sheep droppings.

I saw a hind. She was between brown and grey. There was a strip where her spine was. She didn't see me. I went towards her slowly. The wind was favourable to me.

I was close to her when she started. She hadn't seen me, but she received a warning from another deer. The sound was strange, something like a terrier's bark. The warning sound was telling me that this was the Japanese deer. In English, people call it sika deer. They make many different sounds, such as a whistle, scream, clacking and groaning.

The sika deer is a bit smaller than the red deer. The books tell us

Bha mi a' coiseachd gu mall tro choille bheithe. Bha an talamh garbh agus cas. Fada fodham, bha Loch Nis. Bha fraoch a' bhadaid agus am fraoch Frangach fo bhlàth. Bha mi air mo dhòigh.

Bha mi leam fhìn agus gu math sàmhach. Air an talamh, far an robh poll, bha lorgan-coise aig fiadh. Bha iad na bu lugha na lorgan-coise an fhèidh ruaidh. Agus bha buachar ann car coltach ri buachar caorach.

Chunnaic mi eilid. Bha i eadar donn is glas. Bha stiall far an robh a cnàmh-droma. Chan fhac' i mi. Chaidh mi ga h-ionnsaigh gu slaodach. Bha a' ghaoth fàbharach dhomh.

Bha mi faisg oirre nuair a chlisg i. Cha robh i air m' fhaicinn, ach fhuair i rabhadh bho fhiadh eile. Bha am fuaim neònach, rudeigin mar chomhartaich aig abhag. Bha am fuaim-rabhaidh ag innse dhomh gum b' e seo am fiadh Iapanach. Ann am Beurla canaidh daoine *sika deer* riutha. Bidh iad a' dèanamh tòrr dhiofar fhuaimnean, eadar fead, sgreuch, glagadaich is gnòst.

Tha am fiadh Iapanach beagan nas lugha na 'm fiadh ruadh. Tha na

that it is not a social deer except in winter. But I myself saw two of them next to one another. They were browsing and grazing together.

The sika deer is numerous in some places on the Highland mainland and in the Borders. They are also in England and Ireland. They were introduced deliberately by a landowner in the 19th century.

That's a pity, because they interbreed with the red deer. In some areas, that is changing the red deer – a native species. The sika deer also damage trees. On the other hand, some estates kill them. They sell their meat.

I don't reckon we'll ever get rid of the sika deer. In time, we'll get used to the unusual sounds they make.

leabhraichean ag innse dhuinn nach e beathach sòisealta a tha ann ach a-mhàin sa gheamhradh. Ach chunnaic mi fhìn na dhà dhiubh làimh ri chèile. Bha iad a' spioladh 's ag ionaltradh còmhla.

Tha am fiadh Iapanach pailt ann an cuid de dh'àiteachan air tìr-mòr na Gàidhealtachd agus anns na Crìochan. Tha iad cuideachd ann an Sasainn agus Èirinn. Bha iad air an toirt a-steach a dh'aona-ghnothach le uachdaran anns an naoidheamh linn deug.

Is bochd sin, oir bidh iad a' dèanamh tar-ghineachadh leis an fhiadh ruadh. Ann an cuid de sgìrean, tha sin a' toirt atharrachadh air an fhiadh ruadh – gnè a tha dùthchasach. Bidh na fèidh Iapanach cuideachd a' dèanamh sgrios air craobhan. Air an làimh eile, bidh cuid de dh'oighreachdan gam marbhadh. Bidh iad a' reic an cuid feòla.

Cha chreid mi gum faigh sinn cuidhteas na fèidh Iapanach a-chaoidh. Tro thìde, bidh sinn fàs cleachdte ris na fuaimnean àraidh a tha iad a' dèanamh.