

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 899 (which corresponds to Litir 1,203). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

In the last Litir I was looking at bùrn and uisge, two words for 'water' in Gaelic. This week, I am going to look at phrases and proverbs connected to water. Here is one for you: Bha rudeigin de dh'uisge far na bhàthadh an gamhainn. It's equivalent to the proverb in Scots – there's aye some water whaur the stirkie drowns. The drowning of the stirk proves that there is deep water in that place.

Sometimes uisge stands for 'rain' as in the phrase: Tha currac air a' bheinn, siud an t-uisg' a' tighinn 'the mountain has a cap on it, there's the rain coming.' Tha currac air a' bheinn, siud an t-uisg' a' tighinn. The cap is mist or cloud.

Here's another one: Cadal a' mhuilleir 's an t-uisg' a' dol seachad. The miller asleep and the water running past. Cadal a' mhuilleir 's an t-uisg' a' dol seachad. That concerns a watermill beside a burn that is running all the time.

There is another saying [that is] a little like that: Cha b' e 'm muileann nach meileadh ach an t-uisge nach ruitheadh. It wasn't the mill that wouldn't grind but the water that

Ann's an Litir mu dheireadh bha mi a' toirt sùil air bùrn agus uisge, dà fhacal airson water ann an Gàidhlig. An t-seachdain seo, tha mi a' dol a thoirt sùil air abairtean is seanfhaclan co-cheangailte ri uisge. Seo fear dhuibh: Bha rudeigin de dh'uisge far na bhàthadh an gamhainn. Tha e co-ionann ris an t-seanfhaclan ann an Albais – there's aye some water whaur the stirkie drowns. Tha bàthadh a' ghamhna a' dearbhadh gu bheil uisge domhainn anns an àite sin.

Uaireannan, tha uisge a' seasamh airson 'rain' mar anns an abairt: Tha currac air a' bheinn, siud an t-uisg' a' tighinn 'the mountain has a cap on it, there's the rain coming.' Tha currac air a' bheinn, siud an t-uisg' a' tighinn. 'S e ceò no sgòth a th' anns a' churrac.

Seo fear eile: Cadal a' mhuilleir 's an t-uisg' a' dol seachad. The miller asleep and the water running past. Cadal a' mhuilleir 's an t-uisg' a' dol seachad. Tha sin a' buntainn ri muileann-uisge ri taobh allt a bhios a' sruthadh fad na h-ùine.

Tha abairt eile car coltach ri sin: Cha b' e 'm muileann nach meileadh ach an t-uisge nach ruitheadh. It wasn't the mill that wouldn't grind but the water that wouldn't run. Bha sinne

<i>wouldn't run. We were able to complete the matter but the electricity was off, for example. It couldn't be helped.</i> Cha b' e 'm muileann nach meileadh ach an t-uisge nach ruitheadh. <i>And what are your opinions of this proverb? Cha do rinn uisge glan riamh leann math. Clean water never made good ale. I suspect that those who make ale would not agree with it! But it concerns people, doesn't it? Even if you are not pure, you could be good at something.</i> Cha do rinn uisge glan riamh leann math. <i>With the final proverb, we are returning to the word bùrn. Is duilich bùrn glan a thoirt à tobar salach. That's true, isn't it? It's difficult to draw clean water from a dirty well. Is duilich bùrn glan a thoirt à tobar salach.</i>	comasach air an gnothach a choileanadh, ach bha an dealan dheth, mar eisimpleir. Cha robh cothrom air. Cha b' e 'm muileann nach meileadh ach an t-uisge nach ruitheadh. Agus dè ur beachdan air an t-seanfhalac seo? <i>Cha do rinn uisge glan riamh leann math. Clean water never made good ale.</i> Tha amharas agam nach biodh an fheadhainn a tha a' dèanamh leann ag aontachadh ris! Ach tha e a-mach air daoine, nach eil? Eadhon ged nach eil thu fìor-ghlan, dh'fhaodadh tu a bhith math air rudeigin. Cha do rinn uisge glan riamh leann math. Leis an t-seanfhalac mu dheireadh, tha sinn a' tilleadh don fhacal <i>bùrn</i>. <i>Is duilich bùrn glan a thoirt à tobar salach.</i> Tha sin fìor, nach eil? <i>It's difficult to draw clean water from a dirty well.</i> Is duilich bùrn glan a thoirt à tobar salach.
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