

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 1,072 (which corresponds to Litir 1,376). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

<i>I was telling you about Drochaid an Obh – the Gissen Briggs – a sandbank at the mouth of the Dornoch Firth. There is a story of how it was built. It goes like this:</i> <i>A clan chief of the Clan Mackay was living near Tongue in the Mackay country of North Sutherland. His sweetheart was living on the far side of the Kyle of Tongue. He asked the fairies to build a bridge.</i> <i>‘We don’t build bridges,’ said the fairies. ‘You must speak to the witch.’</i> <i>The clan chief went to speak to the witch. ‘I can’t help you,’ she said. ‘Seek advice from the wise woman at Tarbat in Easter Ross.’</i> <i>The clan chief sent one of his clansmen, one Angus – to Tarbat. He located the wise woman. He said to her that his clan chief was wanting a bridge across the Kyle of Tongue. She gave him a box. ‘Take this to your master,’ she said.</i> <i>Angus had not gone far when he stopped. Something was moving in the box. He opened it and</i>	Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Dhrochaid an Obh – na Gissen Briggs – oitir-ghainmhich aig beul Linne Dhòrnaich. Tha sgeulachd ann mu mar a chaidh a togail. Tha i a’ dol mar seo: Bha ceann-cinnidh aig Clann 'ic Aoidh a' fuireach faisg air Tunga ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Bha a leannan a' fuireach air taobh thall Caolas Thunga. Dh'iarr e air na sìthichean drochaid a thogail. ‘Cha bhi sinne a’ togail dhrochaidean,’ thuirt na sìthichean. ‘Feumaidh sibh bruidhinn ris a’ bhana-bhuidsich.’ Chaidh an ceann-cinnidh a bhruidhinn ris a’ bhana-bhuidsich. ‘Chan urrainn dhòmhsa taic a thoirt dhut,’ thuirt i. ‘Cuir fios air a’ bhoireannach ghlic air an Tairbeart ann am Machair Rois.’ Chuir an ceann-cinnidh fear dhen luchd-cinnidh aige – fear Aonghas – gu ruige an Tairbeart. Lorg e a’ bhean ghlic. Thuirt e rithe gun robh a cheann-cinnidh ag iarraidh drochaid thar Caolas Thunga. Thug ise bogsa dha. ‘Thoir seo don mhaighstir agad,’ thuirt i. Cha robh Aonghas air a dhol fada nuair a stad e. Bha rudeigin a’ gluasad sa bhogsa. Dh'fhosgail e e agus leum na
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<i>hundreds of fairies jumped out. They were shouting, 'Give us work!'</i> <i>Angus looked around him. Tain Hill was covered with heather. 'Pull out all the heather on yonder hill,' he said.</i> <i>Angus started on his way home. His master wouldn't know about the fairies! He hadn't gone far, however, when the fairies returned. Tain Hill was now bare of heather. 'Give us work!' said the fairies.</i> <i>'Alright,' said Angus, 'build a bridge across the Dornoch Firth. Make bricks and ropes of the sand. Tie them together. Keep going until a person is able to walk across the firth.'</i> <i>Angus left. The fairies were making progress. But the tide would come in and their work would be destroyed.</i> <i>Sometimes the people of Tain hear a sound from the Gizzen Briggs. Perhaps it is the noise of the waves. But some folk say it is the sound of the fairies complaining because they are failing to finish the building of the bridge!</i>	ceudan de shìthichean a-mach. Bha iad ag èigheachd, 'Thoir dhuinn obair!' Thug Aonghas sùil timcheall air. Bha Cnoc Bhaile Dhubhthaich còmhdaichte le fraoch. 'Spìonaibh am fraoch gu lèir air a' chnoc ud,' thuirt e. Thòisich Aonghas air a shlighe dhachaigh. Cha bhiodh fios aig a mhaighstir mu na sìthichean! Cha robh e air a dhol fada, ge-tà, nuair a thill na sìthichean. Bha Cnoc Bhaile Dhubhthaich a-nise lom de fhraoch. 'Thoir dhuinn obair!' thuirt na sìthichean. 'Ceart,' thuirt Aonghas, 'togaibh drochaid thar Linne Dhòrnaich. Dèanaibh clachan agus ròpan dhen ghainmhich. Ceanglaibh ri chèile iad. Cumaibh oirbh gus am bi comas aig duine coiseachd thar na linne.' Dh'fhalbh Aonghas. Bha na sìthichean a' dèanamh adhartas. Ach thigeadh an làn agus bhiodh an obair aca air a sgrios. Uaireannan bidh muinntir Bhaile Dhubhthaich a' cluinntinn fuaim bho Dhrochaid an Obh. Math dh'fhaodte gur e fuaim nan tonn a tha ann. Ach tha cuid ag ràdh gur e sin fuaim nan sìthichean a' gearan oir tha e a' fàilneachadh orra crìoch a chur air togail na drochaid!
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