

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 118 (which corresponds to Litir 422). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Bha Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair gu math ainmeil. Tha e ainmeil fhathast. 'S e bàrd a bh' ann. Bha e beò anns an ochdamh linn deug.

Bha bràthair aige – Aonghas. Aonghas Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair. Bha esan rud beag ainmeil cuideachd. Ach chan eil e cho ainmeil an-diugh ri Alasdair. Bha e ainmeil oir bha e uabhasach làidir, ged a bha e gu math beag.

Latha a bha seo, bha Aonghas air bruach Abhainn Lòchaidh. Bha tòrr uisge anns an abhainn. Bha Aonghas aig ath, a' dèanamh deiseil airson a dhol a-null. Bha e a' toirt a bhrògan is stocainnean dheth. Nochd fear eile – Colla Bàn, fear Dòmhnallach à Bàrrasdal ann an Cnòideart. 'S e fear mòr àrd a bh' ann.

Thuir Colla ri Aonghas, “Fhir big, thig còmhla riumsa. Cùm air mo chùlaibh. Brisidh mise neart an t-sruth. Nì sin an gnothach nas fhasa dhut.”

Nuair a bha iad ann am meadhan na h-aibhne, bha an sruth làidir. Bh e ro làidir do Cholla. Bha an t-eagal air. Bha e ann an cunnart a dhol fodha. Ach chaidh Aonghas air thoiseach air. Tharraing Aonghas Colla don taobh thall.

Thuir Aonghas ri Colla, “Thug thu ‘fear beag’ orm air taobh thall na h-aibhne. Cò am ‘fear beag’ a-nise? Gabh mo chomhairle. Na toir ‘beag’ air duine gus am bi e dearbhte agad [gu bheil e ‘beag’]. Tomhais gnè duine air barrachd na dìreach a choltas.” 'S e deagh chomhairle a th' ann, nach e, eadhon an-diugh?

Tha feadhainn fhathast a' cuimhneachadh Aonghas Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair. Ach tha cuimhne fada nas fheàrr aig daoine air a bhràthair, Alasdair. 'S e sin cumhachd na bàrdachd.

Bha Alasdair na dheagh charaid do ar cànan. Ann am *Moladh an Ùghdair don t-Seann Chànain Ghàidhlig*, sgrìobh e:

'S i labhair Goill is Gàidheil,
Neo-chlèirich is clèir,
Gach fear agus bean
A ghluaisidh teanga am beul.
'S i a labhair Adhamh
Ann a Phàrras fhèin
'S bu shiùbhlach a' Ghàidhlig

O bheul àlainn Eubh.

Bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air bàrdachd Alasdair an ath-sheachdain.

* * * * *

Faclan is abairtean: ainmeil: *famous*; 's e bàrd a bh' ann: *he was a poet*; bha e beò anns an ochdamh linn deug: *he was alive in the eighteenth century*; bha e uabhasach làidir, ged a bha e gu math beag: *he was very strong although he was quite small*; bruach Abhainn Lòchaidh: *the bank of the Lochy River*; a' dèanamh deiseil airson a dhol a-null: *preparing to cross to the other side*; a' toirt a bhrògan is stocainnean dheth: *taking his shoes and socks off*; fear Dòmhnallach à Bàrrasdal ann an Cnòideart: *a MacDonald from Barrisdale in Knoydart*; fhir big, thig còmhla riumsa: *wee man, come along with me*; cùm air mo chùlaibh: *keep behind me*; brisidh mise neart an t-sruth: *I'll break the strength of the current*; nì sin an gnothach nas fhasa dhut: *that will make it easier for you*; meadhan na h-aibhne: *the middle of the river*; ann an cunnart a dhol fodha: *in danger of going under*; thug thu 'fear beag' orm air taobh thall na h-aibhne: *you called me 'wee man' at the other side of the river*; gabh mo chomhairle: *take my advice*; na toir 'beag' air duine gus am bi e dearbhte agad [gu bheil e 'beag']: *don't call somebody 'small' until it is proved to you [that he is 'small']*; tomhais gnè duine air barrachd na dìreach a choltas: *assess a man's qualities by more than just his appearance*; 's e deagh chomhairle a th' ann, nach e, eadhon an-diugh?: *it's good advice, isn't it, even today?*; tha cuimhne fada nas fheàrr aig daoine air a bhràthair: *people have a much better memory of his brother*; cumhachd na bàrdachd: *the power of [the] poetry*; bha Alasdair na dheagh charaid do ar cànan: *Alasdair was a good friend to our language*; Moladh an Ùghdair don t-Seann Chànain Ghàidhlig: *the author's paeon to the old Gaelic language*; 's i labhair Goill is Gàidheil: *it is her [Gàidhlig is feminine] that Lowlanders and Highlanders spoke*; neo-chlèirich agus clèir: *laity and clergy*; gach fear agus bean: *each man and woman*; a ghluaiseadh teanga am beul: *who would move their tongues in their mouth*; 's i a labhair Adhamh ann a Phàrras fhèin: *it is her that Adam spoke in his Paradise*; bu shiùbhlach a' Ghàidhlig o bheul àlainn Eubh: *fluent was the Gaelic from Eve's beautiful mouth*;

ends