

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 152 (which corresponds to Litir 456). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh mun Chaillich. 'S e A' Chailleach seann earrann dhen Earrach. Roimhe sin, bha An Gearran. Roimhe sin bha An Fheadag. Roimhe sin bha Am Faoilleach. Bha na h-ainmean a' buntainn ris mar a bha a' ghaoth aig na h-amannan sin.

Bha earrann eile dhen Earrach ann eadar an Fheadag agus an Gearran. B' e sin A' Ghobag – no dogfish. Tha seo ann am Faclair Dwelly: A' Ghobag: *Period of the year, lasting according to some, three days, according to others a week, coming in, apparently, between the Fheadag and the Gearran and so ending on 14th March.* Tha Dwelly a' toirt dhuinn seanfhacal: **Feadagan is Gobagan e, tuilleadh gu Fèill Pàdraig** – whistling and biting winds on to St Patrick's Day.

Às dèidh a' Ghearrain thàinig A' Chailleach. Bha a' ghaoth sin a' dèanamh cron air feur a bha a' feuchainn ri fàs.

An do mhothaich sibh gur e ainmean bheathaichean a tha air na gaothan? Agus a-nise Na h-Othaisgean – beathaichean eile. Na h-Othaisgean – the ewes. Bha sin a' tighinn às dèidh na Caillich. Mhair Na h-Othaisgean trì latha. Tha mi a' tuigsinn gum b' e sin trì latha matha. Bha deagh aimsir ann. Bha iad freagarrach airson breith nan uan. Tha an t-ainm a' dèanamh ciall a-nise, nach eil?

Bha earrannan beaga eile ann. An toiseach Neòil Dhubha na Càisge (the dark clouds of Easter). Bha sin anns an treas seachdain dhen Mhàrt. An uair sin Glasadh na Cuthaig (the cuckoo's greening or preparation time). Bha An Sguabag ann cuideachd – the little blast. Ann am Faclair Dwelly tha: An Sguabag: *Gusty wind. Trì latha Sguabaig, three days, the 7th, 8th and 9th of April.* Agus tha Sneachd na Cuthaig ann cuideachd – the cuckoo snow. Ann am Beurla tha daoine ag ràdh the lambing snow ris. 'S e sin sneachd a nì cron air uain ùra.

Às dèidh a h-uile càil a tha sin, bidh Latha Buidhe Bealltainn againn. Cuiridh sin crìoch air an Earrach! Ach mìos roimhe sin, tha Latha na Gogaireachd. Chan eil sin fad às a-nise! Thoiribh an aire!

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Faclan is abairtean: 'S e A' Chailleach seann earrann dhen Earrach: *the Cailleach* (“old woman”) is an old part of the Spring; roimhe sin, bha An Gearran: *before that there was the Gearran* (“gelding”); roimhe sin bha An

Fheadag: before that there was the Fheadag (“plover”); roimhe sin bha Am Faoilleach: before that there was the Faoilleach (“wolf time”); a’ buntainn ris mar a bha a’ ghaoth aig na h-amannan sin: concerned with how the wind was at those times; a’ dèanamh cron air feur a bha a’ feuchainn ri fàs: damaging grass that was trying to grow; an do mhothaich sibh?: did you notice?; gur e ainmean bheathaichean a tha air na gaothan: that it is names of animals that is on the winds; às dèidh na Caillich: after the Cailleach; mhair Na h-Othaisgean trì latha: the Othaisgean (“ewes”) lasted three days; tha mi a’ tuigsinn gum b’ e sin trì latha matha: I understand that was three good days; bha deagh aimsir ann: there was good weather; freagarrach airson breith nan uan: suitable for the birth of lambs; a’ dèanamh ciall a-nise, nach eil?: makes sense now, doesn’t it?; an treas seachdain dhen Mhàrt: the third week of March; sneachd a nì cron air uain ùra: snow that damages (does damage on) new lambs; às dèidh a h-uile càil a tha sin: after all that; Latha Buidhe Bealltainn: the yellow day of Beltane (1st May, the start of the old Celtic summer); cuiridh sin crìoch air an Earrach: that brings (will bring) an end to Spring; mìos roimhe sin, tha Latha na Gogaireachd: a month before that, there is April Fools’ Day; chan eil sin fad às a-nise: that’s not far distant now; thoiribh an aire: be careful (plural).