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 368 *(which corresponds to* Litir *672). Ruairidh can be contacted at* roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was in Strathconon in Ross-shire recently. The name Conon *is interesting. Part of the River Conon flows through Strathbran. And part of it is in Strathconon.*	Bha mi ann an Srath Chonainn ann an Siorrachd Rois o chionn ghoirid. Tha an t-ainm *Conainn* inntinneach. Tha pàirt de dh'Abhainn Chonainn ann an Srath Bhràinn. Agus tha pàirt dhith ann an Srath Chonainn.
At the bottom end of the strath the river flows into the Cromarty Firth. There are bridges across the river there. When the first bridge was built, people called the place "Conon Bridge". There is a town there today.	Aig bonn an t-sratha tha an abhainn a' sruthadh a-steach do Linne Chromb-aigh. Tha drochaidean tarsainn na h-aibhne an sin. Nuair a chaidh a' chiad drochaid a thogail, chuir daoine "Conon Bridge" air an àite mar ainm. Tha baile an sin an-diugh.
But its name in Gaelic is not "Drochaid Chonainn". *We call it* Drochaid Sguideil. Drochaid Sguideil.	Ach chan e "Drochaid Chonainn" an t-ainm air ann an Gàidhlig. Canaidh sinn *Drochaid Sguideil* ris. Drochaid Sguideil.
Nobody knows what Sguideil means. People are thinking it's an old Norse name. They are thinking that the old Norse name for Strathconon was skut-dalr. *Or something like that.*	Chan eil fios aig duine dè tha Sguideil a' ciallachadh. Tha daoine a' smaoineachadh gur e seann ainm Lochlannach a tha ann. Tha iad a' smaoineachadh gur e *skut-dalr* an t-ainm a bha aig na seann Lochlannaich air Srath Chonainn. No rudeigin coltach ri sin.
Dalr means "dale" or "valley". Perhaps skut *(if it's correct) comes from a word that meant a type of boat or ship. The Norse were using the forests of Ross. They were building boats with the wood. There was no wood like that in Orkney!*	Tha *dalr* a' ciallachadh "dail" no "gleann". 'S dòcha gu bheil *skut* (ma tha e ceart) a' tighinn bho fhacal a bha a' ciallachadh nàdar de bhàta no long. Bha na Lochlannaich a' cleachdadh coilltean Rois. Bha iad a' togail bhàtaichean leis an fhiodh. Cha robh fiodh mar sin ann an Arcaibh!

I was looking at a map that General George Wade made. That was in 1730. There was no bridge across the River Conon. But there was a ferry. Its name in English was Ferry Sguigal. *S-G-U-I-G-A-L. Sguigal, rather than Sguideil.*

The word order is interesting. In English, it would be Sguigal Ferry*, I'd say. Because it's* Ferry Sguigal*, I think it came from the Gaelic* Aiseag Sguigal *or something similar. But Sguigal? I'd still say that a Norse origin is most likely..*

Some in the twentieth century were not familiar with the name's origin. They started to call it Drochaid Sgudail. *They were saying that people were gutting fish there. They were saying that the "rubbish" was the fish guts. Luckily, Conon Bridge is not a "rubbishy" place!*

Bha mi a' coimhead air mapa a rinn an Seanalair Seòras Wade. Bha sin ann an seachd ceud deug is trithead (1730). Cha robh drochaid thar Abhainn Chonainn. Ach bha aiseag ann. 'S e an t-ainm a bha air, ann am Beurla, *Ferry Sguigal*. S-G-U-I-G-A-L. Sguigal, seach Sguideil.

Tha òrdugh nam faclan inntinneach. Ann am Beurla 's e *Sguigal Ferry* a bhiodh ann, chanainn. Leis gur e *Ferry Sguigal* a tha ann, tha mi a' smaoineachadh gun tàinig e bhon Ghàidhlig *Aiseag Sguigal* no rudeigin coltach. Ach Sguigal? Chanainn fhathast gur e tùs Lochlannach as coltaiche.

Cha robh cuid anns an fhicheadamh linn eòlach air tùs an ainm. Thòisich iad air *Drochaid Sgudail* a ghabhail air. Bha iad ag ràdh gun robh daoine a' cutadh èisg ann. Bha iad ag ràdh gum b' e an "sgudal" am mionach èisg. Gu fortanach, chan e àite "sgudalach" a tha ann an Drochaid Sguideil!