

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 401 (which corresponds to Litir 705). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

Beside the A9 at Drumochter, there is a big mountain. Its name is An Torc. In English The Boar of Badenoch. Some people think it's like a boar's back.

South of An Torc, there is another mountain, The Sow of Atholl. It also bears an old Gaelic name – Meall an Dobharchain. I reckon that means the hill of the boundary. The boundary between Atholl and Badenoch runs between Meall an Dobharchain and An Torc.

Why is the wild boar in place names in Scotland? Well, they once lived here. Also, some mountains have a shape reminiscent of a boar's shape. But there is also another reason. Oral tradition. There are stories in a few places about a wild boar. The most famous one is Diarmad and Gràinne.

Loch an Tuirc and Càrn Loch an Tuirc are in Easter Ross, south of Ben Wyvis. Beside them there is Beinn a' Ghuilbein. Where a ben carries the descriptor *guilbein* or *gulgain* or the like, Diarmad and Gràinne is often connected to it. In that story, Diarmad kills a wild

Ri taobh rathad mòr an A9 aig Druim Uachdair, tha beinn mhòr ann. 'S e An Torc an t-ainm a tha oirre. Ann am Beurla, *The Boar of Badenoch*. Tha feadhainn a' smaoinichadh gu bheil i coltach ri druim tuirc.

Gu deas air an Torc, tha beinn eile, *The Sow of Atholl*. Tha seann ainm Gàidhlig oirre cuideachd – *Meall an Dobharchain*. Tha mi a' dèanamh dheth gu bheil sin a' ciallachadh *meall na crìche* no *the hill of the boundary*. Tha a' chrìoch eadar Atholl is Bàideanach eadar Meall an Dobharchain agus an Torc.

Carson a tha an torc ann an ainmean-àite ann an Alba? Uill, bha iad uaireigin beò an seo. Cuideachd, tha cumadh air cuid de bheanntan a tha coltach ri cumadh tuirc. Ach tha adhbhar eile ann cuideachd. Beul-aithris. Tha stòiridhean ann an grunn àiteachan mu dheidhinn torc-nimhe. 'S e am fear as ainmeile dhiubh *Diarmad agus Gràinne*.

Tha *Loch an Tuirc* agus *Càrn Loch an Tuirc* ann an Ros an Ear, deas air Beinn Uais. Rin taobh tha Beinn a' Ghuilbein. Far a bheil *guilbein* no *gulgain* no a leithid air beinn, gu tric tha *Diarmad agus Gràinne* co-cheangailte ris. Anns an sgeulachd sin, tha Diarmad a' marbhadh torc-nimhe. Ach tha an

boar. But the wild boar also causes Diarmad's death.

Càrn an Tuirc is between Glenshee and the Braes of Mar. Nearby is Ben Gulabin. That is the most famous place in Scotland for the story of Diarmad and Gràinne. It's on Ben Gulabin that the wild boar and Diarmad were killed.

Near Loch Laggan, south of Creag Meagaidh, there is a hill called Tòrr a' Ghuilbinn. Close to it there is Lochan an Tuirc. I imagine that the people of that place were telling the story as well.

Is that it for animals that were once in Scotland and became extinct? Well, not entirely. Next week, in the final Litir on this subject, we'll look at two other creatures. You'll be familiar enough with the first one. But the other? I'd say that will surprise you. Till next week, cheerio.

torc-nimhe ag adhbharachadh bàs Dhiarmaid cuideachd.

Tha Càrn an Tuirc eadar Gleann Sìth agus Bràigh Mhàrr. Faisg air làimh tha Beinn Ghulbain. 'S e sin an t-àite as ainmeile ann an Alba airson stòiridh Dhiarmaid agus Gràinne. 'S ann air Beinn Ghulbain a chaidh an torc, agus Diarmad, a mharbhadh.

Faisg air Loch an Lagain, deas air Creag Mèagaidh, tha cnoc ann air a bheil Tòrr a' Ghuilbinn. Faisg air, tha Lochan an Tuirc. Tha mi an dùil gun robh muinntir an àite sin ag innse an stòiridh cuideachd.

An e sin e do bheathaichean a bha uaireigin ann an Alba agus a chaidh à bith? Uill, chan e buileach. An-ath-sheachdain, anns an Litir mu dheireadh air a' chuspair seo, bheir sinn sùil air dà chreutair eile. Bidh sibh eòlach gu leòr air an dàrna fear dhiubh. Ach am fear eile? Chanainn gun cuir sin iongnadh oirbh. Chun na h-ath-sheachdain, beannachd leibh.