

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 405 (which corresponds to Litir 709). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

What is a gille-ruadh? You'll be thinking, perhaps, of a boy with red hair. But I'm thinking of a fish. There are reports that the gille-ruadh was in Loch Morar. It is also in Ireland, particularly in Lough Melvin. It's called gillaroo in English.

It's a trout. It's water-snails that it eats. That food gives it a russet colour. At the end of the summer, however, they come to the surface of the loch. They are looking for flies. Then fishermen catch them on the [artificial] fly.

Is it a separate species of fish from the trout? Some people say that it is *Salmo trutta* – the normal trout. Some others say that it is a separate species. They gave it a scientific name – *Salmo stomachius*. It has a large strong stomach.

In Inchnadamph, in Assynt, there is a small loch. On the map, it's called Loch Mhaolach-coire. That name doesn't make sense to me. Apparently, it's not correct. The correct name is Loch Maol a' Choire. The local people also know it as The Gillaroo Loch.

Keep this to yourself, but it

Dè th' ann an gille-ruadh? Bidh sibh a' smaoinichadh, 's dòcha, air balach le falt ruadh. Ach tha mise a' smaoinichadh air iasg. Tha aithrisean ann gun robh an gille-ruadh ann an Loch Mhòrair. Tha e ann an Èirinn cuideachd, gu sònraichte ann an Loch Meilbhe. 'S e gillaroo a chanas iad ris ann am Beurla.

'S e breac a tha ann. 'S e seilcheagan-uisge a bhios e ag ithe. Tha am biadh sin ga dhèanamh ruadh. Aig deireadh an t-samhraidh, ge-tà, thig iad gu uachdar an locha. Tha iad a' lorg chuileagan. An uair sin bidh iasgairean gan glacadh air a' mhaghar.

An e gnè èisg eadar-dhealaichte bhon bhreac a tha ann? Tha cuid ag ràdh gur e *Salmo trutta* a tha ann – am breac àbhaisteach. Tha cuid eile ag ràdh gur e gnè fa leth a tha ann. Chuir iad ainm saidheansail air – *Salmo stomachius*. Tha stamag mhòr làidir aige.

Ann an Innis nan Damh, ann an Asainte, tha loch beag ann. Air a' mhapa, 's e an t-ainm a tha air *Loch Mhaolach-coire*. Chan eil an t-ainm sin a' dèanamh ciall dhomh. A rèir choltais, chan eil e ceart. 'S e *Loch Maol a' Choire* an t-ainm ceart. Tha muinntir an àite cuideachd ga aithneachadh mar *The Gillaroo Loch*.

Cumaibh seo agaibh fhèin, ach tha

appears that the fishing there is excellent. The reason for that is that there is limestone there. That makes the loch fertile. And there are small creatures there in plenty. There are lots of shrimps.

The trout in Loch Maol a' Choire eat the shrimps. They grow big and russet. But is it Salmo stomachius? Or just Salmo trutta, the normal trout? An old book about Assynt says it is not a gille-ruadh. It says – 'the loch is supposed (but wrongly) to contain the true gillaroo trout'. It's just the food that makes it different.

Whether that is right or wrong, perhaps some of you learned a new word today – gillaroo. And another English word that came from Gaelic.

e coltach gu bheil an t-iasgach uabhasach math ann. 'S e as coireach ri sin gu bheil clach-aoil ann. Tha sin a' dèanamh an loch torrach. Agus tha meanbh-chreutairean ann, ann am pailteas. Tha cloitheagan gu leòr ann.

Bidh na bric ann an Loch Maol a' Choire ag ithe nan cloitheagan. Bidh iad a' fàs mòr agus ruadh. Ach an e *Salmo stomachius* a tha ann? No dìreach *Salmo trutta*, am breac àbhaisteach? Tha seann leabhar mu Asainte ag ràdh nach e gille-ruadh a tha ann. Tha e ag ràdh – *'the loch is supposed (but wrongly) to contain the true gillaroo trout'*. 'S e dìreach am biadh a tha ga dhèanamh eadar-dhealaichte.

Co-dhiù tha sin ceart no ceàrr, 's dòcha gun do dh'ionnsaich feadhainn agaibh facal ùr an-diugh – *gillaroo*. Agus facal Beurla eile a thàinig bhon Ghàidhlig.