

# **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 605 (which corresponds to Litir 909). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was telling you about Dòmhnall Phàil, Donald Campbell, the Kingussie Bard. He wrote the famous song Guma Slàn do na Fearaibh. Donald was born in Dalnaspidal in 1798. Pàl – or Paul – was his father's name.*

*Donald was working as a shepherd. He was living in Glen Gynack, near Kingussie, for more than forty years. Donald was famous for singing songs. But it appears that not many of his creations were written down. Another song he wrote, which we still have, is Duanag a' Chìobair 'the shepherd's ditty'. It marks how he left his home to live in Badenoch. His sweetheart was in Rannoch. Here are three verses of it.*

*Sadness inflicts my mind, since I came to this land, and that I won't see my young brown-haired maiden, and that I won't see my young brown-haired maiden.*

*And though the people of the country would gather, at the Kingussie fair, there would not be a woman I'd want to kiss, there would not be a woman I'd want to kiss.*

*That's not what tortured me,*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Dhòmhnall Phàil, Dòmhnall Caimbeul, Bàrd Cheann a' Ghiùthsaidh. Sgrìobh e an t-òran ainmeil *Guma Slàn do na Fearaibh*. Rugadh Dòmhnall ann an Dail na Spideil ann an seachd ceud deug naochad 's a h-ochd (1798). B' e Pàl – no Paul – ainm athar.

Bha Dòmhnall ag obair mar chìobair. Bha e a' fuireach ann an Gleann Gòineig, faisg air Ceann a' Ghiùthsaidh, airson còrr is ceathrad bliadhna. Bha Dòmhnall ainmeil airson òrain a ghabhail. Ach tha e coltach nach deach mòran de na chruthaich e a sgrìobhadh. 'S e òran eile a rinn e, a tha againn fhathast, *Duanag a' Chìobair*. Tha e a' comharrachadh mar a dh'fhàg e an dachaigh aige airson fuireach ann am Bàideanach. Bha a leannan ann an Raineach. Seo agaibh trì rannan dheth:

Gu bheil mulad air m' inntinn, On thàinig mi 'n tìr seo, 'S nach fhaic mi mo nìghneag dhonn òg, 'S nach fhaic mi mo nìghneag dhonn òg...

'S ged a chruinn'cheadh an dùthaich, Gu fèill Chinn a' Ghiùthsaidh, Cha bhiodh tè ann don dùraiginn pòg, Cha bhiodh tè ann don dùraiginn pòg.

Chan e siud 'rinn mo chiùrradh, On

*since I came to this country, but that I can't come over in pursuit of you, but that I can't come over in pursuit of you.*

*I'll leave you with fragments from another song by Dòmhnall Phàil. There was a servant at a farm where he worked. Her name was Peggy Stewart. Many a lad was keen on Peggy. They wanted to marry her, as Donald says in the song.*

*Fair-haired Peggy, since you are nice, fair-haired Peggy since you are neat, fair-haired Peggy since you are beautiful, you will become a wife this year.*

*On the Sabbath evening we were together, they put the champions in order for me, eight of them were wanting you, and I reckon that's a good number.*

*Donald says that seventeen men were wanting to marry Peggy. But he doesn't tell whom she eventually married!*

thàinig mi 'n dùthaich, Ach nach fhaod mi dhol null air do thòir, Ach nach fhaod mi dhol null air do thòir.

Fàgaidh mi sibh le criomagan às òran eile aig Dòmhnall Phàil. Bha searbhant air an tac far an robh e ag obair. 'S e Peigi Stiùbhart an t-ainm a bha oirre. 'S iomadh fear òg a bha measail air Peigi. Bha iad ag amas air a pòsadh, mar a tha Dòmhnall ag ràdh anns an òran:

A Pheigi Bhàn, on tha thu laghach, 'Pheigi Bhàn, on tha thu grinn, 'Pheigi Bhàn on tha thu brèagha, Bidh tu 'm-bliadhna ann ad mhnaoi.

Am feasgar Sàbaid bha sinn còmhla, Chuir iad 'n òrdugh dhòmhs' na suinn, Gun robh ochdnar dhiubh gad iarraidh, 'S ar leam fhìn gur brèagh' an t-sùim.

Tha Dòmhnall ag ràdh gun robh seachd duine deug ag iarraidh Peigi a phòsadh. Ach chan eil e ag innse dhuinn cò phòs i aig a' cheann thall!