

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 641 (which corresponds to Litir 945). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

What is the most beautiful graveyard in Scotland? That's a difficult question, isn't it? A graveyard has many attributes – its location, the views – and the people who are buried there.

Greyfriars' Kirkyard in Edinburgh is very nice. It's a peaceful sanctuary in the middle of a city. And the poet par excellence, Duncan Ban MacIntyre, is buried there.

I was at the funeral of a female friend last year in the Mackay Country (N. Sutherland). The graveyard is on the shores of the Kyle of Tongue. The ocean is on one side of it and a view of Ben Loyal at the other end.

And I'll mention the Clachan Cemetery in Applecross, where many of my own ancestors are buried. It's at the base of the hills, near a river and shore, with beautiful views from it of Raasay and the Cuillin.

That's three graveyards that come to mind immediately. You'll have your own choice, for sure.

Recently I was in a cemetery that was new to me. It was very

Dè an cladh as brèagha ann an Alba? 'S e ceist dhoirbh a tha sin, nach e? 'S iomadh buadh a th' aig cladh – an t-àite sa bheil e, na seallaidhean – agus na daoine a th' air an tiodhlacadh ann.

Tha Cladh nam Manach Liath ann an Dùn Èideann gu math snog. Tha e na thèarmann sìtheil ann an meadhan baile mòr. Agus tha an sàr-bhàrd, Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir, air a thiodhlacadh ann.

Bha mi aig tiodhlacadh aig bana-charaid an-uiridh ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Tha an cladh air cladach Caolas Thunga. Tha an cuan air aon taobh dheth agus sealladh de Bheinn Laghail aig a' cheann eile.

Agus ainmichidh mi Cladh a' Chlachain air Comraich Ma-ruibhe, far a bheil mòran de na sinnsirean agam fhìn air an tiodhlacadh. Aig bun nam beann a tha e, faisg air abhainn is cladach, agus seallaidhean àlainn às de Ratharsair agus an Cuiltheann.

Sin trì cladhan a tha a' tighinn gu m' aire sa mhionaid. Bidh ur roghainn fhèin agaibh fhèin, 's cinnteach.

O chionn ghoirid, bha mi aig cladh a bha ùr dhomh. Abair gun robh e àlainn.

beautiful. Cladh Cille Choirill is in the Braes of Lochaber. It's in Glen Spean north of the A86 that runs between Laggan and Spean Bridge. And why is the cemetery so impressive? Well, there are two reasons.

Firstly, it is surrounded by high beautiful mountains. But there is another reason. Two famous bards are buried there, at least according to oral tradition. One of them is Dòmhnall mac Fhionnla' nan Dàn – a hunter and poet that belonged to the sixteenth century. He wrote the famous poem – Òran na Comhachaig [the song of the owl].

The other is the MacDonald poet – Iain Lom, the Keppoch bard. He wrote songs that were praising the MacDonald chiefs, and dispraising the Campbell chiefs.

Although it is not certain where these two poets are buried in the cemetery, there are memorial stones to them. I'll have more about this graveyard next week.

Tha Cladh Cille Choirill ann am Bràigh Loch Abar. Tha e ann an Gleann Spiothain gu tuath air rathad an A86, a tha a' dol eadar An Lagan agus Drochaid an Aonachain. Agus carson a tha an cladh cho drùidhteach? Uill, tha dà adhbhar ann.

Anns a' chiad dol a-mach, tha e air a chuirteachadh le beanntan àrda brèagha. Ach tha adhbhar eile ann. Tha dithis bhàrd gu math ainmeil air an tiodhlacadh ann, co-dhiù a rèir beul-aithris. 'S e fear dhiubh Dòmhnall mac Fhionnla' nan Dàn – sealgair is bàrd a bhuineadh don t-siathamh linn deug. Sgrìobh e an dàn ainmeil – Òran na Comhachaig.

'S e am fear eile bàrd nan Dòmhnallach – Iain Lom, bàrd na Ceapaich. Sgrìobh esan òrain a bha a' dèanamh luaidh air cinn-chinnidh nan Dòmhnallach, agus dìmeas air cinn-chinnidh nan Caimbeulach.

Ged nach eilear cinnteach cà' bheil an dithis bhàrd seo air an tiodhlacadh sa chladh, tha clachan-cuimhne ann dhaibh. Bidh tuilleadh agam mun chladh seo an-ath-sheachdain.