

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 654 (which corresponds to Litir 958). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I made mention last week of the new book by John Murray – ‘Literature of the Gaelic Landscape’. John was at one time Director of Landscape Architecture at the University of Edinburgh. He wrote another informative book – ‘Reading the Gaelic Landscape’. The two books are published by Whittles in Dunbeath in Caithness.

The literature connected to landscape is a big subject. But the author writes about the most important elements – the Fingalian heritage, Òran na Comhachaig by Dòmhnall mac Fhionnla’ nan Dàn, Duncan Ban MacIntyre’s songs and the poetry of Sorley Maclean.

He highlights the places that are named in the literature. There are pictures of many of them, and maps, and he has a scheme for some of the poems which he himself calls ‘songlines’. They’re a little like the songlines of Australian Aborigines.

I’ve seen [saw] a Scottish songline one time before. It’s in the museum in Dunbeath. It’s part of a display about the book Highland

Rinn mi iomradh an t-seachdain sa chaidh air leabhar ùr le Iain Moireach – ‘Literature of the Gaelic Landscape’. Bha Iain uaireigin na Stiùiriche de dh’Ailtireachd Tìre ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. Sgrìobh e leabhar fiosrachail eile – ‘Reading the Gaelic Landscape’. Tha an dà leabhar air am foillseachadh le Whittles ann an Dùn Beithe ann an Gallaibh.

’S e cuspair mòr a tha ann an litreachas co-cheangailte ri aghaidh na tìre. Ach tha an t-ùghdar a’ sgrìobhadh mu na h-earrannan as cudromaiche – dualchas na Fèinne, Òran na Comhachaig aig Dòmhnall mac Fhionnla’ nan Dàn, òrain aig Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir agus a’ bhàrdachd aig Somhairle MacGill-Eain.

Tha e a’ taisbeanadh nan àiteachan a tha air an ainmeachadh anns an litreachas. Tha dealbhan ann de mhòran dhiubh, agus mapaichean, agus tha sgeama aige airson cuid de na dàin ris an can e fhèin ‘songlines’. Tha iad car coltach ris na loidhnichean-òrain aig tùsanaich Astràilia.

Chunnaic mi loidhne-òrain Albannach aon turas roimhe seo. Tha i anns an taigh-tasgaidh ann an Dùn Beithe. Tha i mar phàirt de thaisbeanadh

River by Neil Gunn. Gunn belonged to Dunbeath. There is an illustration of the river on the floor, with each place in the story on it. From the water source to the sea.

Neil Gunn is the other author that is under consideration in 'Literature of the Gaelic Landscape'. He wrote in English. But John Murray reckons that Gunn saw the Highlands through Gaelic eyes, particularly with respect to place.

When we are familiar with Highland River, John Murray maintains, we'll never again see the river's source – Loch Bràigh na h-Aibhne – in the same way. That's true. The same is true of his own book. He brings together literature, heritage, language and knowledge of the land in a way I've not seen in any other book. He has a positive message about the relationship between the Gaels and their land. Many a person who reads 'Literature of the Gaelic Landscape' will see the Highlands through new eyes.

mun leabhar *Highland River* le Niall Gunnach. Bhuineadh an Gunnach do Dhùn Bheithe. Tha dealbh dhen abhainn air an ùrlar, le gach àite oirre a tha anns an stòiridh. Bhon mhàthair-uisge chun na mara.

'S e Niall Gunnach an t-ùghdar eile a tha fon phrosbaig ann an '*Literature of the Gaelic Landscape*'. Sgrìobh e ann am Beurla. Ach tha Iain Moireach a' dèanamh dheth gun robh an Gunnach a' toirt sùil a' Ghàidheil air a' Ghàidhealtachd, gu h-àraidh a thaobh àite.

Nuair a tha sinn eòlach air *Highland River*, tha Iain Moireach a' cumail a-mach, chan fhaic sinn tuilleadh màthair-uisge na h-aibhne – Loch Bràigh na h-Aibhne – anns an aon dòigh. Tha sin fìor. Tha a leithid fìor mun leabhar aige fhèin. Tha e a' toirt litreachas, dualchas, cànan is eòlas-tìre còmhla ann an dòigh nach fhaca mi ann an leabhar sam bith eile. Tha teachdaireachd mhath aige mun chàirdeas eadar na Gàidheil agus an dùthaich. 'S iomadh duine a leughas '*Literature of the Gaelic Landscape*' a chì a' Ghàidhealtachd le sùilean ùra.