

# **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 688 (which corresponds to Litir 992). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk).

Blessed Trinity, You are in America and Australia ... in the Highlands and in Inverness and on the tall steeples ... You give slate-roofed houses to the gentry but You gave me only a black, sooty bothy that will not keep out a drop of water, with every drop falling into Farquhar's porridge.

*I don't often start the Litir with a prayer! But it's not a normal prayer. Here's a bit more of it: Bless ... the white cow, the milk and the sheep. Bless ... the horses, the carts, the ploughs and the harrows, the oats, the barley, the potato, the fire ...*

*This is the prayer of Fearchar a' Ghunna (Farquhar of the gun). Fearchar belonged to Strathconon near Dingwall. He was born in 1784. He was a wanderer [a person of no fixed abode]. We'll look at his life next week. But I want to give you more of the prayer.*

Bless the trees, the grass and peat, the gorse, the heather, the bracken and the juniper. Bless likewise, oh Trinity, the guns, the (gun)powder and lead, the rooks,

*A Thrianaid Bheannaichte, tha Thu ann an Ameireagaidh agus Astràilia ... anns a' Ghàidhealtachd agus ann an Inbhir Nis 's air na stiopallan àrda ... Tha Thu a' toirt taigh sglèata do na h-uaislean, ach thug Thu dhomh a-mhàin bothan dubh sùitheach nach cum a-mach boinn' uisge, agus a h-uile deur a' tuiteam ann am brochan Fhearchair.*

Chan ann tric a bhios mi a' tòiseachadh na Litreach le ùrnaigh! Ach chan e ùrnaigh àbhaisteach a tha innte. Seo beagan a bharrachd dhith: *Beannaich ... a' bhò bhàn, am bainne agus na caoraich. Beannaich ... na h-eich, na cairtean, na crainn agus na cliathan, an coirc, an t-eòrna, am buntàta, an teine ...*

'S e seo an ùrnaigh aig Fearchar a' Ghunna. Bhuineadh Fearchar do Shrath Chonain faisg air Inbhir Pheofharain. Rugadh e ann an seachd ceud deug, ochdad 's a ceithir (1784). 'S e falbhanach a bha ann. Bheir sinn sùil air a bheatha an-ath-sheachdain. Ach tha mi airson tuilleadh dhen ùrnaigh a thoirt dhuibh.

*Beannaich na craobhan, am feur agus mòine, an conasg, am fraoch, an raineach agus an t-aiteann. Beannaich mar an ceudna, a Thrianaid, na*

the magpies, grouse, hares and rabbits. Bless likewise the red deer, the roe deer, the ducks wild and tame, the geese, the seagulls, the dogs and the cats, the mice, rats and moles. Bless the fish in the sea, loch, river and stream, but particularly bless the good, large herring that we have with potatoes.

*What a list! This prayer is called Ùrnaigh na Creubhaig [the poor little person's prayer]. Usually, the word creubhag represents a small woman, rather than a man. Anyway, to finish the Litir, here is the end of the prayer:*

And bless, oh Blessed Trinity, the tobacco pipes, steel and flints, bones, feathers, rags, keys and iron. Bless likewise wood, hemp, cotton and tea and sugar, although poor Fearchar's share of them is but small. Bless all things, oh Blessed Trinity, because You, Yourself created them all. Amen.

*gunnachan, am fùdar agus luaidhe, na ròcaisean, na pioghaidean, cearcan-fraoich, maighich agus coineanan. Beannaich mar an ceudna na fèidh, na h-earban, na lachan fiadhaich agus callaidh, na geòidh, na faoileannan, na coin agus na cait, na luchan, radannan agus famhan. Beannaich an t-iasg anns a' mhuir, loch, abhainn agus sruth, ach beannaich gu h-àraidh an sgadan mòr math a tha sinn a' faighinn leis a' bhuntàta.*

Abair liosta! 'S e ainm na h-ùrnaigh seo Ùrnaigh na Creubhaig. 'S e ainm car annasach a tha ann. Mar as trice, bidh am facal creubhag a' riochdachadh boireannach beag, seach fear beag. Co-dhiù, airson crìoch a chur air an Litir, seo agaibh deireadh na h-ùrnaigh:

*Agus beannaich, a Thrianaid Bheannaichte, na pìoban tombaca, cruaidh agus clachan spor, cnàmhan, itean, luideagan, iuchraichean agus iarann. Beannaich mar an ceudna am fiodh, cainb, cotain agus tì 's siùcar, ged nach eil cuibhreann Fhearchair bho chd dhiubh ach beag. Beannaich a h-uile nì, a Thrianaid Bheannaichte, oir chruthaich Thusa, Thu Fhèin iad uile. Amen.*