

# **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 860 (which corresponds to Litir 1,164). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I want to tell you about Fearchar Lighiche. Lighiche means a doctor or healer. Fearchar was at one time famous, particularly in the Mackay Country [North Sutherland]. But there is a question – does he belong to oral tradition or was he a real person?*

*Fearchar was a shepherd [but perhaps a cowherd in those days]. He was living in Glengolly in the Mackay Country. There is a famous poem – Glengolly of the trees – written by the famous bard, Rob Donn. I wrote about the poem in Litir Bheag 231.*

*Anyway, Fearchar went to a sale in the Lowlands. He had a hazel stick in his hand. A gentleman came to him. He asked where Fearchar had got the stick.*

*'In Glengolly, in the Mackay Country,' replied Fearchar.*

*'Would you recognise the tree it came from?' the stranger asked.*

*'Yes,' agreed Fearchar.*

*'Well,' continued the gentleman, 'I'll give you a big reward if you return to the tree.*

Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu Fhearchar Lighiche. Tha *lighiche* a' ciallachadh 'dotair' no 'neach-slànachaidh'. Bha Fearchar uaireigin ainmeil, gu h-àraidh ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Ach tha ceist ann – am buin e do bheul-aithris no an e fìor dhuine a bha ann?

Bha Fearchar na chìobair. Bha e a' fuireach ann an Gleanna Gollaidh ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Tha dàn ainmeil ann – *Gleanna Gollaidh nan Craobh* – air a sgrìobhadh leis a' bhàrd ainmeil, Rob Donn. Sgrìobh mi mun dàn ann an Litir Bheag 231.

Co-dhiù, chaidh Fearchar gu fèill-reic air a' Ghalltachd. Bha bata calltainn na làimh. Thàinig duin-usal thuige. Dh'fhaighnich e càite an d' fhuair Fearchar am bata.

'Ann an Gleanna Gollaidh, ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh,' fhreagair Fearchar.

'Am biodh tu ag aithneachadh na craoibh' às an tàinig e?' dh'fhaighnich an srainnsear.

'Bhitheadh,' dh'aontaich Fearchar.

'Uill,' lean an duin-usal, 'bheir mi duais mhòr dhut ma thilleas tu don chraoibh. Tha toll nathrach fòidhpe. Thig

*There is a snake burrow under it. Six snakes will come out of it. Wait until they return. The last one to return will be a white snake. Take hold of it, bring it to me, and you'll get the reward.*

*When Fearchar returned home, he went to the tree. He saw the hole and the snakes coming out. When they returned, Fearchar took hold of the white snake and took it with him. He met the man who was promising him the reward.*

*That man was pleased. He put a pot full of water on a fire and he put the snake in it. He had to be away for a short while. He asked Fearchar to keep an eye on the pot. But Fearchar was not allowed to touch the stuff inside it.*

*The water began to boil. It was appearing as if the top of the pot would jump off. Fearchar tried to stop it. But boiling water went over one of his fingers. Fearchar shoved the finger into his mouth.*

*He underwent a great change. An understanding came to him of how he would heal every illness in the world. But was the gentleman pleased! No – as we'll see next week.*

sia nathraichean a-mach às. Fan gus an till iad. 'S i an tè mu dheireadh a thilleas – nathair gheal. Gabh greim oirre, thoir thugam i, agus bidh an duais agad.'

Nuair a thill Fearchar dhachaigh, chaidh e chun na craoibhe. Chunnaic e an toll agus na nathraichean a' tighinn a-mach. Nuair a thill iad, ghabh Fearchar greim air an nathair ghil agus thug e leis i. Choinnich e ris an fhear a bha a' gealltainn duais dha.

Bha am fear sin toilichte. Chuir e poit làn uisge air teine agus chuir e an nathair ann. Bha aige ri falbh speileag. Dh'iarr e air Fearchar sùil a chumail air a' phoit. Ach chan fhaodadh Fearchar buntainn ris an stuth na broinn.

Thòisich an t-uisge air goil. Bha e a' coimhead coltach gun robh ceann na poite gu bhith a' leum dhith. Dh'fheuch Fearchar ri stad a chur air. Ach chaidh uisge goileach thairis air corrag aige. Stob Fearchar a' chorrag na bheul.

Thàinig atharrachadh mòr air. Thàinig tuigse thuige mar a dhèanadh e leigheas air gach tinneas anns an t-saoghal. Ach an robh an duin-usal toilichte? Cha robh – mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain.