

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 888 (which corresponds to Litir 1,192). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I told you about MacGregor's Leap in Litir Bheag 321. It's on the River Lyon, near Fortingall in Perthshire. The last time I was in Perthshire, I went there. I don't know how far the leap would be from rock to rock. But, certainly, I wouldn't try it myself!

It made me think about how often the word 'leum' appears on maps of the Highlands. For example, on the east coast of Jura, there is a point called Leum Beathaig. In English, that is 'Sophia's Leap'. In Wester Ross, south of Ullapool, there is Leum Ruairidh or 'Rorie's Leap'. It's on a river near a waterfall.

In Benbecula, south of Balivanich, there is a loch called Loch Leum Croisdaig on the maps. The name means nothing to me. I think that it is perhaps a mistake. On the Ordnance Survey's first six-inch map, the loch was called Loch Leum Criosdaig. Perhaps it should be Crìosdaig with a long 'i'.

Here's what is written in the Name Book: 'Meaning

Dh'inns mi dhuibh mu Leum MhicGriogair, MacGregor's Leap, ann an Litir Bheag 321. Tha e air Abhainn Lìomhann, faisg air Fartairchill ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. An turas mu dheireadh a bha mi ann an Siorrachd Pheairt, chaidh mi ann. Chan eil fhios a'm dè cho fada 's a bhiodh an leum bho chreag gu creag. Ach, gu dearbh fhèin, cha bhithinn fhin ga fheuchainn!

Thug e orm beachdachadh air cho tric 's a bhios am facal 'leum' a' nochdadh air mapaichean na Gàidhealtachd. Mar eisimpleir, air cladach sear Dhiùra, tha rubha air a bheil *Leum Beathaig*. Ann am Beurla, 's e sin '*Sophia's Leap*'. Ann an Ros an Iar, deas air Ullapul, tha *Leum Ruairidh* no '*Rorie's leap*'. Tha e air abhainn faisg air eas.

Ann am Beinn a' Bhaoghla, deas air Baile a' Mhanaich, tha loch ann air a bheil *Loch Leum Croisdaig* air na mapaichean. Chan eil an t-ainm a' ciallachadh dad dhomh. Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gur dòcha gu bheil e mearachdach. Air a' chiad mhapa sia-òirlich aig an t-Suirbhidh Òrdanais, 's e *Loch Leum Criosdaig* a bh' air an loch. 'S dòcha gur e *Crìosdaig*, le 'i' fada a bu chòir a bhith ann.

Seo na tha sgrìobhte ann an Leabhar nan Ainmean: '*Meaning Christopher's*

Christopher's Leap Loch ... applied to a small loch ... to the north-west of Loch Eilean Iain. A marshy channel connects the two lochs'. On the old map, the loch bears the name Leum Criosdaig or Crìosdaig.

In Glen Pean in Lochaber there is Lochan Leum an t-Sagairt 'the lochan of the leap of the priest'. Perhaps the name goes back to the time when the Catholic religion was under threat, and priests working in secret.

Sometimes, it's an animal rather than a person that is named in the place-name. In Coigach, north of Ullapool, there is Leum an Fhèidh 'the leap of the deer'. It's next to the sea. In Kintyre, there is Abhainn Leum nam Meann 'the river of the jump of the kid goats'. Isn't that a lovely name?!

Leap Loch ... applied to a small loch ... to the north-west of Loch Eilean Iain. A marshy channel connects the two lochs'. Air an t-seann mhapa, 's e Leum Criosdaig no Crìosdaig a tha air an amar eadar an dà loch.

Ann an Gleann Peathain ann an Loch Abar, tha Lochan Leum an t-Sagairt. 'S dòcha gu bheil an t-ainm a' dol air ais don linn nuair a bha an Creideamh Caitligeach ann an cunnart, agus na sagartan ag obair ann an dìomhaireachd.

Uaireannan, 's e ainmhidh, seach duine a tha air ainmeachadh anns an ainm-àite. Anns a' Chòigich, tuath air Ullapul, tha Leum an Fhèidh 'the leap of the deer'. Tha e ri taobh na mara. Ann an Ceann Tìre, tha Abhainn Leum nam Meann 'the river of the jump of the kid goats'. Nach snog an t-ainm sin?!