

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 922 (which corresponds to Litir 1,226). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

In the last two Litrichean, I was telling you about two songs connected to the Jacobite rebellion. The more famous one is Mo Rùn Geal Òg. It's said that it was written by Christina Fergusson. She was married to William Chisholm. William lost his life at the Battle of Culloden.

The Chisholms belonged to Strathglass. And next to a bridge over the River Glass, there is a memorial to the song. It's a stone. It's simple enough – narrow, a bit rough and about two metres in height.

This is carved on the stone: W.C. & C.F 1746 Mo rùn geal òg. W.C. stands for William Chisholm. C.F. stands for Christina Fergusson. A local man, Alasdair Fraser, wrote an account of the stone near the end of the 19th century. Alasdair was approaching eighty years of age. He obtained the information from his father, James Fraser.

On the day William left to fight at Culloden, he bade farewell to his wife at the place where the stone is today. But where did the stone come from? Well, Alasdair's grandfather

Annas an dà Litir mu dheireadh, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu dhà òran co-cheangailte ri ar-a-mach nan Seumasach. 'S e am fear as ainmeile dhiubh *Mo Rùn Geal Òg*. Thathar ag ràdh gun robh e air a sgrìobhadh le Cairistiona NicFhearghais. Bha i pòsta aig Uilleam Siosalach. Chaill Uilleam a bheatha aig Blàr Chùil Lodair.

Bhuineadh na Siosalaich do Shrath Ghlais. Agus ri taobh drochaid thairis air Abhainn Ghlais tha carragh-cuimhne ann don òran. 'S e clach a tha innte. Tha i sìmplidh gu leòr – caol, rud beag garbh agus mu dhà mheatair a dh'àirde.

Tha seo snaighte air a' chloich: W.C. & C.F 1746 *Mo rùn geal òg*. Tha W.C. a' seasamh airson William Chisholm. Tha C.F. a' seasamh airson Christina Fergusson. Sgrìobh fear às an sgìre, Alasdair Friseal, cunntas mu dheidhinn na cloiche faisg air deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug. Bha Alasdair a' dlùthachadh ri ceithir fichead bliadhna a dh'aois. Fhuair e am fiosrachadh mu a deidhinn bho athair, Seumas Friseal.

Air an latha a dh'fhalbh Uilleam airson sabaid aig Cùil Lodair, leig e soraidh le a bhean aig an àite far a bheil a' chlach an-diugh. Ach cò às a thàinig a' chlach fhèin? Uill, bha seanair Alasdair –

– also called Alasdair – was a farmer in Strathglass. But he rented land in Glen Affric.

His house in Strathglass needed a new door lintel. Alasdair saw a stone that would be suitable in Glen Affric. He asked the stonemason to use the stone to make a new door lintel.

However, it was too thick and too heavy. So the stonemason broke off a large slice. He used the remainder for the lintel.

Fraser asked the stonemason to carve [into] the slice as a memorial to the song Mo Rùn Geal Òg. He erected the stone where it remains. Alasdair was a bard himself. He must have been keen on the song.

Wasn't it a good thought that he had? The song is worthy of being retained in people's memory.

air an robh Alasdair cuideachd – na thuathanach ann an Srath Ghlais. Ach bha fearann aige air mhàl ann an Gleann Afraig.

Bha an taigh aige ann an Srath Ghlais feumach air àrd-doras ùr. Chunnaic Alasdair clach a bhiodh freagarrach ann an Gleann Afraig. Dh'iarr e air clachair a' chlach a chleachdadh airson àrd-doras ùr a dhèanamh.

Ge-tà, bha i ro thiugh agus ro throm. Mar sin, bhris an clachair sliseag mhòr dhith. Chleachd e an còrr airson an àrd-dorais.

Dh'iarr am Frisealach air a' chlachair an t-sliseag mhòr a shnaigheadh mar chuimhneachan air an òran Mo Rùn Geal Òg. Chuir e a' chlach an-àirde far a bheil i fhathast. Bha Alasdair na bhàrd e fhèin. Feumaidh gun robh e measail air an òran.

Nach math an smuain sin a bha aige. Tha an t-òran airidh air a bhith air a ghleidheadh ann an cuimhne dhaoine.