

## **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 929 (which corresponds to Litir 1,233). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).*

*The Rev. James Robertson wrote about place-names around Callander in the Old Statistical Account. For his village – Callander in English – he gave two explanations. In the first place, cala means 'harbour'. Thus Cala-sraid means the street that was going between the castle and the harbour where was a ferry on the river.*

*But there is also Callander. It's not particularly like Calasraid, is it? Mr Robertson says that that perhaps came from Calltainn-doir, meaning a small wood in which there were hazel trees. The scholar Peter McNiven looked at the matter. He didn't reach a conclusion on the origin of the name.*

*There is a mountain called Ben Venue 'wee mountain' in the Trossachs. It's higher than any other mountain around Loch Katrine. Why, then, is it called 'wee mountain'? Well, James Robertson tells us. It is in a line between two higher mountains – Ben Lomond and Ben Ledi. It's halfway between them. It's a 'wee mountain' in comparison to them.*

Sgrìobh an t-Urramach Seumas MacDhonnchaidh mu dheidhinn ainmean-àite timcheall Chalasraid anns an t-Seann Chunntas Staitistigeach. Airson a' bhaile aige fhèin – Callander ann am Beurla – thug e dà mhìneachadh seachad. Anns a' chiad àite tha *cala* a' ciallachadh 'port'. Mar sin, 's e *Cala-sraid* an t-sràid a tha a' dol eadar an caisteal agus an cala far an robh bàt'-aiseig air an abhainn.

Ach tha *Callander* ann cuideachd. Chan eil e cho coltach ri *Calasraid*, a bheil? Tha Mgr MacDhonnchaidh ag ràdh gur dòcha gun tàinig sin bho *Calltainn-doir* a' ciallachadh coille bheag anns an robh craobhan-calltainn. Thug an sgoilear Pàdraig MacNaoimhin sùil air a' ghnothach. Cha do ràinig e co-dhùnadh air tùs an ainm.

Tha beinn air a bheil *Beinn Mheanbh* anns na Tròisichean. Tha i nas àirde na beinn sam bith eile timcheall Loch Ceiteirein. Carson, ma-thà, as e Beinn Mheanbh a tha oirre? Uill, tha Seumas MacDhonnchaidh ag innse dhuinn. Tha i ann an loidhne eadar dà bheinn nas àirde – Beinn Laomainn agus Ben Lididh. Tha i letheach-slighe eatarra. 'S e 'beinn mheanbh' a tha innte an coimeas riutha.

*People aren't sure about the meaning of Ledi in Ben Ledi. But the minister 'knew'. It's short for Beinn-le-Dia 'the hill of God'. Well, perhaps ...*

*Mr Robertson makes a comparison between the words coire and gleann. They both stand for 'valley'. A coire is closed at one end [of it]. Gleann, on the other hand, is open at both ends. Mr Robertson maintains that very few languages make a distinction, with one word, between the two types of 'valley'.*

*The minister also explains the name of a lochan up on the ridge of Ben Ledi – Lochan nan Corp. A group from Glen Finglas was going over the mountain to a funeral on the shore of Loch Lubnaig. The lochan up high was frozen. The people fell through the ice and they were drowned.*

*Well, there [for you] are some of the opinions of the Rev. James Robertson. My blessing on him, particularly for defending the Gaelic language in his account.*

Chan eil daoine cinnteach mu dheidhinn ciall *Lididh* ann am Beinn Lididh. Ach bha 'fios' aig a' mhinistear. Tha e goirid airson *Beinn-le-Dia* 'the hill of God'. Uill, math dh'fhaodte ...

Tha Mgr MacDhonnchaidh a' dèanamh coimeas eadar na faclan *coire* agus *gleann*. Tha iad le chèile a' seasamh airson 'valley'. Tha *coire* dùinte aig aon cheann dheth. Tha *gleann*, air an làimh eile, fosgailte aig an dà cheann. Tha Mgr MacDhonnchaidh a' cumail a-mach gu bheil glè bheag de chànanan a' dèanamh sgaradh, le aon fhacal, eadar an dà sheòrsa de 'valley'.

Tha am ministear cuideachd a' mìneachadh ainm lochain shuas air druim Beinn Lididh – *Lochan nan Corp*. Bha buidheann à Gleann Fhionnghlais a' falbh thar na beinne gu tiodhlacadh air cladach Loch Lùdnaig. Bha an lochan shuas reòite. Thuit na daoine tron deigh agus bha iad air am bàthadh.

Uill, sin agaibh cuid de na beachdan aig an Urramach Seumas MacDhonnchaidh. Mo bheannachd air, gu h-àraidh airson a bhith a' dìon na Gàidhlig anns a' chunntas aige.