

## **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 999 (which corresponds to Litir 1,303). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).

*This week we are going to Eileanan nan Stac or The Stack Islands. They are south of Eriskay in the Outer Isles.*

*On the most southerly island there is an old stronghold. It is registered by archaeologists. And there is much oral tradition connected to it.*

*On the maps it is called Caisteal an Reubadair. That means 'the castle of the plunderer'. However, the people of Eriskay call it Caisteal a' Bhreabadair – 'the castle of the weaver'. Both are correct. A weaver built the castle. But the weaver was also a plunderer or pirate.*

*Here is a version of the story about the castle from Barra. It was told by the late John MacPherson, or 'The Cuddy'.*

*A particular weaver was expelled from Barra. He went to live in the Stack Islands. He took a cas-chrom and ploughing implements with him. He went over to Eriskay to get a white mare. That is the Cuddy's Gaelic for a horse of the type that still lives in Eriskay. White mare.*

*The pony and the weaver took stones from the shore to the top of the*

An t-seachdain seo, tha sinn a' dol gu Eileanan nan Stac no 'The Stack Islands'. Tha iad deas air Èirisgeigh anns na h-Eileanan A-muigh.

Air an eilean as fhaide deas tha seann daingneach. Tha e clàraichte le àrc-eòlaichean. Agus tha tòrr beul-aithris co-cheangailte ris.

Air na mapaichean, 's e Caisteal an Reubadair a tha air mar ainm. Tha sin a' ciallachadh 'the castle of the plunderer'. Ge-tà, tha muinntir Èirisgeigh a' gabhail Caisteal a' Bhreabadair air – 'the castle of the weaver'. Tha an dà chuid ceart. Thog breabadair an caisteal. Ach bha am breabadair cuideachd na reubadair no spùinneadair.

Seo dreach dhen sgeul mun chaisteal à Barraigh. Chaidh aithris le Iain Mac a' Phearsain nach maireann, no 'An Codaidh'.

Chaidh breabadair a bha seo a chur a-mach à Barraigh. Chaidh e a dh'fhuireach ann an Eileanan nan Stac. Thug e cas-chrom agus innealan treabhaidh leis. Chaidh e a-null a dh'Èirisgeigh airson làir bhàn fhaighinn. 'S e sin a' Ghàidhlig a bha aig a' Chodaidh air each dhen t-seòrsa a tha fhathast a' fuireach ann an Èirisgeigh. Làir bhàn.

Thug an làir bhàn agus am breabadair clachan far a' chladaich gu

*Stack. The ground was steep. The work was hard.*

*The weaver was surviving on what he could grow on the island. He was also catching fish and seabirds. But the weaver was also a plunderer. He was going among the islands in his boat. He was involved in stealing.*

*When the castle was done, the weaver chose to take a wife for himself. It was July. The weaver knew that the people of South Uist were at the shieling. There would be young woman among them.*

*Early in the morning, the weaver left his home in his boat. He made for Loch Eynort. That's on the east side of South Uist. He reached the shieling and he found himself among a group of beautiful young women. But how was he going to force a young woman to leave with him? We'll see in the next Litir.*

mullach an Staca. Bha an talamh cas. Bha an obair cruaidh.

Bha am breabadair a' tighinn beò air na dh'fhàsadh e anns an eilean. Bha e cuideachd a' glacadh èisg agus eòin-mhara. Ach bha am breabadair cuideachd na reubadair. Bha e a' falbh am measg nan eilean anns an eathar aige. Bha e ri mèirle.

Nuair a bha an caisteal dèante, roghnaich am breabadair bean a ghabhail dha fhèin. 'S e an t-Iuchar a bha ann. Bha fios aig a' bhreabadair gum biodh muinntir Uibhist a Deas aig an àirigh. Bhiodh boireannaich òga nam measg.

Tràth sa mhadainn, dh'fhàg am breabadair a dhachaigh anns an eathar aige. Rinn e air Loch Aineort. Tha sin air taobh sear Uibhist a Deas. Ràinig e an àirigh agus fhuair e e fhèin am measg buidheann de bhoireannaich òga bhrèagha. Ach ciamar a bha e a' dol a thoirt air boireannach òg a bhith a' falbh leis? Chì sinn anns an ath Litir.