

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 1,032 (which corresponds to Litir 1,336). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about the word gille and how it came into English as 'ghillie'. The word came to my attention when I was watching an Australian television program.

It was a drama, situated in high country in Victoria. There was a strange man in it. He was living in the forest. He was keeping hidden. Only rarely would people see him. The locals were calling him 'the ghillie-man' or 'Ghillie Jack'.

To begin with, I wasn't sure what was being meant by 'ghillie-man', or was it from Gaelic that it came. Then the man himself appeared. He was covered with clothing that looked like brushwood. He had a 'ghillie-suit' on!

A ghillie-suit is camouflage clothing which a person puts on in order to remain hidden. It's netting in which there are pieces of cloth and leaves.

It was first used by Highland soldiers. During the Second Boer War, the Lovat Scouts used clothing of that nature. During the First World War, a group of snipers was created in the Lovat Scouts. That was the first group of the sort in the British Army. The members of the Lovat Scouts were gamekeepers and stalkers on

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun fhacal gille agus mar a thàinig e a-steach don Bheurla mar 'ghillie'. Thàinig am facal gu m' aire nuair a bha mi a' coimhead prògram telebhisein Astràilianach.

'S e dràma a bha ann, stèidhichte air talamh àrd ann am Bhictoria. Bha duine neònach ann. Bha e a' fuireach anns a' choille. Bha e a' cumail am falach. 'S ann ainneamh a chitheadh daoine e. Bha muinntir na sgìre a' gabhail 'the ghillie-man' no 'Ghillie Jack' air.

An toiseach, cha robh mi cinnteach dè bhathar a' ciallachadh le ghillie-man, no an ann bhon Ghàidhlig a thàinig e. An uair sin, nochd an duine fhèin. Bha e còmhdaichte le aodach a bha coltach ri crìonach na coille. Bha 'ghillie-suit' air!

'S e ghillie-suit aodach breug-riochda (no camouflage) a chuireas neach air fhèin airson cumail am falach. 'S e lìon a tha ann anns a bheil pìosan clò agus duilleagan.

Chaidh a chleachdadh an toiseach le saighdearan Gàidhealach. Ann an Dàrna Cogadh nam Boers chleachd na Lovat Scouts èideadh mar sin. Anns a' Chogadh Mhòr, chaidh buidheann de shnaidhpearan a dhèanamh anns na Lovat Scouts. B' e sin a' chiad bhuidheann dhen t-seòrsa ann an Arm Bhreatainn. Bha na buill de na Lovat Scouts nan geamairean is nan stalcairean air

<p><i>Highland estates. They were used to putting a bullet in a deer from distance.</i></p> <p><i>Perhaps that is the reason that it was 'ghillie-suit' that people called that clothing. Most of them spoke Gaelic. And the word 'ghillie' was known in English in connection with hunting in the Highlands.</i></p> <p><i>But there is another thought. In Gaelic oral tradition, there is a character called the 'Gille Dubh'. I told you the story of the Gille Dubh of Loch Druing in the Gairloch area in Litir Bheag 334.</i></p> <p><i>The Gille Dubh would hide in the woods. He would put moss and leaves among his clothing so that nobody would see him. Indeed, he possessed the first ghillie-suit!</i></p>	<p>oighreachdan Gàidhealach. Bha iad cleachdte ri bhith a' cur peilear ann am fiadh bho astar.</p> <p>'S dòcha gur e sin as coireach gur e 'èideadh-gille' a bha daoine a' gabhail air an aodach sin. Bha Gàidhlig aig a' chuid a bu mhotha dhiubh. Agus bha am facal <i>ghillie</i> aithnichte ann am Beurla ann an co-cheangal ri sealg air a' Ghàidhealtachd.</p> <p>Ach tha smuain eile ann. Ann am beul-aithris nan Gàidheal tha caractar air a bheil 'An Gille Dubh'. Dh'inns mi an sgeul mu Ghille Dubh Loch Druing ann an sgìre Gheàrrloch ann an Litir Bheag trì cheud, trithead 's a ceithir (334).</p> <p>Bhiodh an Gille Dubh a' dol am falach sa choille. Chuireadh e còinneach agus duilleagan am measg a chuid aodaich gus nach fhaiceadh duine e. Gun teagamh, 's ann aigesan a bha a' chiad <i>ghillie-suit</i>!</p>
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