

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 1,105 (which corresponds to Litir 1,409). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

<i>I was telling you about the Reverend Alexander Stewart or Nether Lochaber. In the Inverness Courier, in January 1872, he wrote a column about a Gaelic superstition.</i> <i>He gave an account of the 'Young Prince', Charles Edward Stuart. After the Battle of Culloden, the Prince was in hiding along with Lochiel, the clan chief of the Camerons. They were living in a cave between Loch Arkaig and Loch Lochy.</i> <i>One man knew where they were – a certain MacKenzie. He was supplying them with food. The Prince and Loch Eil were expecting MacKenzie to keep the matter secret.</i> <i>But, one morning, MacKenzie appeared with his young son. Lochiel was angry. But MacKenzie explained that the lad was suffering from a disease they called 'the king's disease'. In English, that's scrofula or king's evil. People in several European countries were believing that a king could cure that disease by laying his hands on the patient.</i> <i>MacKenzie asked the Prince to lay his hands on his son. The Prince</i>	Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Urramach Alasdair Stiùbhart no <i>Nether Lochaber</i>. Ann an Courier Inbhir Nis, anns an Fhaoilleach ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a dhà (1872), sgrìobh e colbh mu shaobh-chràbhadh Gàidhealach. Bha cunntas aige dhen Phrionnsa Òg, Teàrlach Eideard Stiùbhart. An dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair, bha am Prionnsa am falach còmhla ri Loch Iall, Ceann-cinnidh nan Camshronach. Bha iad a' fuireach ann an uaimh eadar Loch Airceig agus Loch Lòchaidh. Bha fios aig aon duine far an robh iad – fear MacCoinnich. Bha esan a' toirt biadh dhaibh. Bha dùil aig a' Phrionnsa agus Loch Iall gun robh MacCoinnich a' cumail a' ghnothaich dìomhair. Ach, madainn a bha seo, nochd MacCoinnich le a mhac òg. Bha Loch Iall feargach. Ach mhinich MacCoinnich gun robh an gille a' fulang le galar ris an canadh iad 'tinneas an rìgh'. Ann am Beurla, 's e sin <i>scrofula</i> no <i>king's evil</i>. Bha daoine ann an grunn dùthchannan Eòrpach a' creidsinn gun robh comas aig rìgh an galar sin a leigheadh le bhith a' cur a làmhan air an euslainteach. Dh'iarr MacCoinnich air a' Phrionnsa a làmhan a chur air a mhac.
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<i>did that. According to the account, the lad's condition improved.</i> <i>Another time, Nether Lochaber met a girl he knew. He knew that her brother had been ill.</i> <i>'How is he?' he asked.</i> <i>'Oh, better since he got the spoon,' replied the girl.</i> <i>'The spoon?' said the minister, 'what spoon?'</i> <i>The lass was too young to explain the matter. It's when Nether Lochaber went home that he found out about the spoon.</i> <i>Her brother's uvula had become swollen. People were believing – to cure it – that the person who was ill would have to take medicine on a spoon. But the spoon would have to be made from a cow's horn.</i> <i>The horn would have to have fallen from the cow in an accident. And the cow would have to be still alive. The girl's brother got 'the spoon' and he grew better.</i>	Rinn am Prionnsa sin. A rèir a' chunntais, thàinig feabhas air a' ghille. Turas eile, thachair Nether Lochaber ri caileag air an robh e eòlach. Bha fios aige gun robh a bràthair air a bhith tinn. 'Ciamar a tha e?' dh'fhaighnich e. 'O, nas fheàrr on a fhuair e an spàin,' fhreagair a' chaileag. 'An spàin?' thuirt am ministear, 'dè an spàin?' Bha a' chaileag ro òg airson an gnothach a mhìneachadh. 'S ann nuair a chaidh Nether Lochaber dhachaigh a fhuair e a-mach mun spàin. Bha cìoch-shlugain a bràthar air a dhol a dh'at. Bha daoine a' creidsinn – airson leigheas a dhèanamh air – gu feumadh an duine a bha tinn stuth-leighidh a ghabhail air spàin. Ach dh'fheumadh an spàin a bhith air a dèanamh de dh'adharc bà. Dh'fheumadh an adharc a bhith air tuiteam far na bà ann an tubaist. Agus dh'fheumadh a' bhò a bhith fhathast beò. Fhuair bràthair na caileige 'an spàin' agus dh'fhàs e na b' fheàrr.
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