

An Litir Bheag

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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 1,109 (which corresponds to Litir 1,413). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

<i>What is the Gaelic for 'sea serpent'? This is in Dwelly's dictionary – cràigean, cuartag mhòr a' chuain, mial-mhòr a' chuain, nathair-mhara and cirean-cròin. In the Faclair Beag, there is mial-mhòr, meaning 'giant creature (especially a whale or monster)'. That's what I'll use in this Litir.</i> <i>In 1872, the Inverness Courier published an account from a man who was reliable, according to the paper. He was in his yacht. He and five other people were going to Loch Hourn in Knoydart.</i> <i>They were sailing in the Sound of Sleat. A calm befell them and they had to row the boat. The rowers were looking behind the craft. They saw a series of dark shapes. They were thinking that they were a school of porpoises. But then they understood that it was a single creature. It was between fifty and eighty feet in length.</i> <i>There were three sets of binoculars on board. Thus, the people got a good view of the sea-serpent. It was long and slender. It had a small head, but eyes were not</i>	<i>Dè a' Ghàidhlig a tha air 'sea serpent'? Tha seo ann am faclair Dwelly – cràigean, cuartag mhòr a' chuain, mial-mhòr a' chuain, nathair-mhara agus cirean-cròin. Anns an Fhaclair Bheag tha mial-mhòr a' ciallachadh 'giant creature (especially a whale or monster)'. 'S e sin a chleachdas mi anns an Litir seo.</i> <i>Ann an ochd ceud deug, seachdad's a dhà (1872), dh'fhoillsich Courier Inbhir Nis cunntas bho fhear a bha earbsach, a rèir a' phàipeir. Bha e anns a' bhàta-sheòlaidh aige. Bha e fhèin agus còignear eile a' dol gu ruige Loch Shubhairne ann an Cnòideart.</i> <i>Bha iad a' seòladh ann an Linne Shlèite. Thàinig fèath agus b' fheudar dhaibh am bàta iomradh. Bha luchd nan ràmh a' coimhead air cùlaibh an t-soithich. Chunnaic iad sreath de chumaidhean dorcha. Bha iad a' smaoinichadh gur e sgaoth pheileagan a bha ann. Ach an uair sin, thuig iad gur e aon chreutair a bha ann. Bha e eadar leth-cheud agus ochdad troigh ann am fad.</i> <i>Bha trì prosbaigean air bòrd. Mar sin, fhuair na daoine deagh shealladh air a' mhial-mhòir. Bha i fada agus caol. Bha ceann beag aice, ach chan fhacas sùilean air. Bha croitean air a druim.</i>
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<i>observed on it. There were humps on its back. And there were no scales on it, as there would be on a fish. It wasn't like any animal the people knew.</i> <i>They spent the night in Loch Hourn. When they returned home next day, they reached the mouth of the loch. And who was waiting for them but the sea-serpent! This time, the boat was under sail. The sea-serpent crossed the route they were on. It was about a hundred and fifty yards ahead of them. It was moving quickly and making a whizzing noise.</i> <i>It continued towards Kyle Rhea, rising and falling. But dusk had come, and it disappeared from sight. Nobody knew what it was.</i> <i>There is one thing of particular interest about the account. There was no mention of the Loch Ness monster. More than fifty years would elapse before there would be reports about Nessie in the newspapers.</i>	Agus cha robh lannan oirre, mar a bhiodh air iasg. Cha robh i coltach ri ainmhidh sam bith air an robh na daoine eòlach. Chuir iad seachad an oidhche ann an Loch Shubhairne. Nuair a thill iad dhachaigh air an làrna-mhàireach, ràinig iad beul an locha. Agus cò bha a' feitheamh riutha ach a' mhial-mhòr! An turas seo, bha am bàta fo sheòl. Chaidh a' mhial-mhòr tarsainn na slighe-mara air an robh iad. Bha i mu cheud gu leth slat air thoiseach orra. Bha i a' gluasad gu luath, agus a' dèanamh fuaim mar srann. Lean i oirre a dh'ionnsaigh Chaol Reatha, ag èirigh agus a' cromadh. Ach bha ciaradh an fheasgair ann agus dh'fhalbh i à sealladh. Cha robh fios aig duine dè bha innte. Tha aon rud air leth inntinneach mun chunntas. Cha robh iomradh air uilebheist Loch Nis. Bha còrr is caogad bliadhna gu bhith ann mus biodh aithrisean mu Niseag anns na pàipearan-naidheachd.
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