

## **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 1,116 (which corresponds to Litir 1,420). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).*

*I was telling you about Dalnawillan in Caithness. Gaelic was spoken in that area for a long time. Thus, there are Gaelic songs and stories connected to the place. Among them is a song that was famous, in translated form, as 'Miss Calder's Lament'.*

*There is a story connected to the song. Its name is 'A' Bhanarach agus an Sealgair' – The Dairymaid and the Hunter.*

*At the end of the sixteenth century, Donald Mackay was the chief of the Mackays in Strathnaver. He had a son called 'big fair-haired John'. John and [some] clansmen fell out with each other. John and his family left Strathnaver. They went to live in Dalnawillan.*

*John was a fine hunter. Hed was also religious. Every Sabbath, he would climb to the summit of the hill nearest to Dalnawillan, wearing a red cloak. His neighbours would see him. They would understand that it was a Sunday.*

*One day, John was hunting on the hill. He found a baby boy asleep in the heather. John knew the Bible*

*Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Dhail a' Mhuilinn ann an Gallaibh. Bha Gàidhlig air a bruidhinn anns an sgìre sin fad ùine mhòr. Mar sin, tha òrain agus sgeulachdan Gàidhlig co-cheangailte ris an àite. Nam measg tha òran a bha ainmeil, ann an dreach eadar-theangaichte, mar 'Miss Calder's Lament'.*

*Tha sgeulachd co-cheangailte ris an òran. 'S e an t-ainm a tha oirre 'A' Bhanarach agus an Sealgair' – The Dairymaid and the Hunter.*

*Aig deireadh an t-siathamh linn deug, bha Dòmhnall MacAoidh na cheann-cinnidh aig Clann 'ic Aoidh ann an Srath Nabhair. Bha mac aige air an robh Iain Bàn Mòr mar ainm. Chaidh Iain agus luchd-cinnidh a-mach air a chèile. Dh'fhàg Iain agus a theaghlach Srath Nabhair. Chaidh iad a dh'fhuireach ann an Dail a' Mhuilinn.*

*Bha Iain na dheagh shealgair Bha e cuideachd cràbhach. Gach Sàbaid, bhiodh e a' sreap gu mullach na beinne as fhaisge air Dail a' Mhuilinn le cleòca dearg air. Chitheadh a nàbaidhean e. Thuigeadh iad gur e Latha na Sàbaid a bha ann.*

*Latha a bha seo, bha Iain a' sealg sa mhonadh. Lorg e leanabh-gille na chadal anns an fhraoch. Bha Iain mion-*

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| <p><i>well. He remembered the words in Matthew Chapter 18, verses 3 to 5. 'And [Jesus] said. " ... if you are not like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven ... And whoever accepts one child of this type in my name, he accepts me."'</i></p> <p><i>John picked up the child. He took it home. He already had children but that did not matter. He accepted the lad as a foster-son.</i></p> <p><i>When he was young, the lad proved he was brave and strong. People called him An Gille Garbh. Perhaps we'd say 'The Hefty Lad' in English.</i></p> <p><i>The Gille Garbh was extremely capable as a hunter. When he was a teenager, he was, one day, hunting on the hill. He went to a shieling bothy. There were girls there. Among them was one who is remembered today as 'Miss Calder'. I'll tell you what happened in the next Litir.</i></p> | <p>eòlach air a' Bhìoball. Chuimhnich e na briathran ann an Leabhar Mhata, Caibideil 18, rannan 3 gu 5: 'Agus thuirt [Ìosa], "... mura bi sibh mar leanaban, nach tèid sibh a-steach a rìoghachd nèimh... Agus ge b' e a ghabhas aon leanabh de a leithid seo nam ainm-sa, gabhaidh e mise.'"</p> <p>Thog Iain an leanabh. Thug e dhachaigh e. Bha clann aige mu thràth ach cha robh sin gu diofar. Ghabh e ris a' ghille mar dhalta.</p> <p>Nuair a bha e òg, dhearbhadh an gille gun robh e treun agus làidir. Bha daoine a' gabhail 'An Gille Garbh' air. Math dh'fhaodte gun canamaid 'The Hefty Lad' ann am Beurla.</p> <p>Bha an Gille Garbh fìor chomasach mar shealgair. Nuair a bha e na dheugaire, bha e, latha a bha seo, a' sealg sa mhonadh. Chaidh e gu bothan-àirigh. Bha clann-nighean ann. Nam measg bha tè a tha air a cuimhneachadh an-diugh mar 'Miss Calder'. Innsidh mi dhuibh dè thachair anns an ath Litir.</p> |
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