

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 1,120 (which corresponds to Litir 1,424). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

<p><i>The other day, I was listening to a Gaelic song on the internet. It was sung by a young woman, Iris MacLeod. Here is the first verse: let's go, my darling, as I expect to go over[seas]; so we see each face, each eye that we like; with navigational knowledge a seaman will make his course; with his eyes on the shores of Lewis.</i></p> <p><i>I like the rhyme in the song – the comhardadh-meadhain or 'internal rhyme'. Listen to it again and I'll put emphasis where there is each rhyme.</i></p> <p><i>O, thugainn, a rùin, 's mo dhùil dhol thairis,</i></p> <p><i>'S gum faic sinn gach gnùis, gach sùil as math leinn,</i></p> <p><i>Le eòlas cairt-iùil nì 'chùrsa maraich'</i></p> <p><i>'S a shùil ri cladaichean Leòdhais.</i></p> <p><i>Rhyming of that type appeared often in classical poetry. In addition, there is a terminal rhyme at the end of lines 1 and 3 – thairis and maraich'. A bard, who writes poetry like that, must be very skilful.</i></p>	<p>An latha eile, bha mi ag èisteachd ri òran Gàidhlig air an eadar-lìon. Bha e air a ghabhail le boireannach òg, Iris NicLeòid. Seo a' chiad rann:</p> <p><i>O, thugainn, a rùin, 's mo dhùil dhol thairis,</i></p> <p><i>'S gum faic sinn gach gnùis, gach sùil as math leinn,</i></p> <p><i>Le eòlas cairt-iùil nì 'chùrsa maraich'</i></p> <p><i>'S a shùil ri cladaichean Leòdhais.</i></p> <p>Is toigh leam an comhardadh anns an òran – an comhardadh-meadhain no 'internal rhyme'. Èistibh ris a-rithist, agus cuiridh mi beum far a bheil gach comhardadh.</p> <p><i>O, thugainn, a rùin, 's mo dhùil dhol thairis,</i></p> <p><i>'S gum faic sinn gach gnùis, gach sùil as math leinn,</i></p> <p><i>Le eòlas cairt-iùil nì 'chùrsa maraich'</i></p> <p><i>'S a shùil ri cladaichean Leòdhais.</i></p> <p>Bha comhardadh mar sin a' nochdadh gu tric ann am bàrdachd chlasaigeach. A bharrachd air sin, tha comhardadh-deiridh ann aig deireadh loidhnichean a h-aon agus a trì – <i>thairis</i> agus <i>maraich'</i>. Feumaidh bàrd, a sgrìobhas bàrdachd mar seo, a bhith gu math sgileil.</p>
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<p><i>You'll appreciate that the song is from the Isle of Lewis. Its name is Thugainn a Rùin 'let's go, my darling'. It's Murdo Morrison – Murchadh a' Bhocs – that wrote it. He was born in Upper Shader in 1884.</i></p> <p><i>Murdo lived for a time in Stornoway and Glasgow before he took the emigrants' trail to America. He went to live in Niagara Falls in New York state. He lived over there for the rest of his life.</i></p> <p><i>Here is the third verse of Thugainn a Rùin. There is the same pattern of rhyming, as you'd expect. sweet will be the sound as our ears listen, hearing the ocean which sounds joyful at distance, the sighing of the waves will stir our spirits, as it strikes the coast of Lewis. The song is very nice. But, as soon as I heard it, I thought – mmm, this tune is connected to another song. A famous song. Written by a poet from the Isle of Skye. We'll look at that song in the next Litir.</i></p>	<p>Tuigidh sibh gur ann à Eilean Leòdhais a tha an t-òran. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air 'Thugainn a Rùin'. 'S e Murchadh MacIlleMhoire – Murchadh a' Bhocs – a sgrìobh e. Rugadh e ann an Siadar Uarach ann an ochd ceud deug, ochdad 's a ceithir (1884).</p> <p>Bha Murchadh a' fuireach greis ann an Steòrnabhagh agus ann an Glaschu mus do ghabh e rathad nan eilthireach a dh'Ameireagaidh. Chaidh e a dh'fhuireach ann an Niagara Falls ann an stàit New York. Dh'fhuirich e thall an sin airson a' chòrr de a bheatha.</p> <p>Seo agaibh an treas rann de 'Thugainn a Rùin'. Tha an aon phàtran de chomhardadh ann, mar a bhiodh dùil.</p> <p><i>Gur binn bhios an fhuaim 's ar cluas ri claisneachd,</i> <i>Ri cluinntinn a' chuain, fad' bhuainn le caithream,</i> <i>Bidh osnaich nan stuagh a' gluasad ar n-aighe,</i> <i>A' bualadh cladaichean Leòdhais.</i></p> <p>Tha an t-òran gu math laghach. Ach, cho luath 's a chuala mi e, shaoil mi – mmm, tha am fonn seo co-cheangailte ri òran eile. Òran ainmeil. Air a sgrìobhadh le bàrd às an Eilean Sgitheanach. Bheir sinn sùil air an òran sin anns an ath Litir.</p>
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