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 1,121 *(which corresponds to* Litir 1,425). *Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.*

I was telling you about the Lewis song 'Thugainn a Rùin'. There is another song to the same tune. That is 'Doire na Smeòraich'.	Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun òran Leòdhasach 'Thugainn a Rùin'. Tha òran eile ann air an aon fhonn. 'S e sin 'Doire na Smeòraich'.
I went back to the website where I [had] heard 'Thugainn a Rùin'. This was there: 'Thugainn a Rùin to the tune of 'Doire na Smeòraich'. 'Doire na Smeòraich' is older than 'Thugainn a Rùin'.	Chaidh mi air ais don làraich-lìn, far an cuala mi 'Thugainn a Rùin'. Bha seo ann: 'Thugainn a Rùin air fonn "Doire na Smeòraich"'. Tha 'Doire na Smeòraich' nas sine na 'Thugainn a Rùin'.
In addition to the tune, there is a link between the two songs. Here is the first line of the original song – 'Oh, tiugainn, my darling, over the pass'. Tiugainn and thugainn mean the same thing – 'come, let us go.'	A bharrachd air an fhonn, tha ceangal eadar an dà òran. Seo a' chiad loidhne dhen òran tùsail – 'Ò, tiugainn a rùin, a-null am bealach'. Tha *tiugainn* agus *thugainn* a' ciallachadh an aon rud – *come, let us go.*
Do you understand the title – 'Doire na Smeòraich'? 'The copse of the thrush'. Here's how the first verse goes:	A bheil sibh a' tuigsinn an tiotail – 'Doire na Smeòraich'? *The copse of the thrush*. Seo mar a tha a' chiad rann a' dol:
Oh, come with me, darling, over the pass, *Where the plants are so fresh under the honeyed dew,* *Can you hear the music around the treetops,* *With the joyful energy of the copse of the thrush?*	*Ò, tiugainn a rùin, a-null am bealach,* *'S na lusan cho ùr fo dhriùchd na meala,* *Nach cluinn thu na ciùil tha 'n dlùths a' bharraich,* *Le sùrd an Doire na Smeòraich?*
It's the Skye bard, Neil MacLeod, who wrote the song. He belonged to Glendale in the north-west of the island. When you are	'S e am bàrd Sgitheanach, Niall MacLeòid, a sgrìobh an dàn. Bhuineadh esan do Ghleann Dail ann an ceann an iar-thuath an eilein. Nuair a bhios tu a'

driving to Glendale, you go over a pass. Thus, is Doire na Smeòraich in Glendale? *I looked at the maps. I didn't find a wood or copse with* 'smeòrach*' in the name in Glendale. I looked at the song again to get more information. Here is the second verse.* *Didn't we often take a trip, my lovely maid,* *Collecting the dainty flowers under the canopy,* *Frolicking by ourselves without weariness or sadness,* *Ascending Doire na Smeòraich.* *Aha – ascending* Doire na Smeòraich*. The copse was up high. I then looked throughout the Highlands. And I found just one area where the thrush is in place-names.* *That is Lochalsh, near Auchtertyre. There is high ground there called* Sròn na Smeòraich*. Close by there is* Loch na Smeòraich*. But there is no* Doire na Smeòraich*. I reckon that place was imaginary. We'll take a further look at the song in the next Litir.*	dràibheadh a Ghleann Dail, bidh thu a' dol tarsainn bealach. Mar sin, a bheil Doire na Smeòraich ann an Gleann Dail? Thug mi sùil air na mapaichean. Cha do lorg mi coille no doire le 'smeòrach' anns an ainm ann an Gleann Dail. Thug mi sùil air an òran a-rithist airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh fhaighinn. Seo an dàrna rann: *Nach tric thug sinn sgrìob, mo rìghinn lurach,* *A thional nan dìthean mìn fon duilleach,* *'S a' mireag leinn fhìn gun sgìos, gun mhulad,* *A' dìreadh Doire na Smeòraich.* Aha – a' dìreadh Doire na Smeòraich. Bha an doire shuas àrd. Thug mi sùil an uair sin air feadh na Gàidhealtachd. Agus lorg mi dìreach aon sgìre far a bheil an smeòrach ann an ainmean-àite. 'S e sin Loch Aillse, faisg air Uachdar Thìre. Tha talamh àrd ann air a bheil *Sròn na Smeòraich*. Faisg air làimh tha *Loch na Smeòraich*. Ach chan eil *Doire na Smeòraich* ann. Saoilidh mi gun robh an t-àite sin mac-meanmnach. Bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air an òran anns an ath Litir.