

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 174 (which corresponds to Litir 478). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Glen Nevis is near Fort William. Indeed, it's near Ben Nevis. Uamh Shomhairle (lit. Sorley or Somerled's Cave) is in the glen. The cave has an interesting history.

MacShomhairle is the name of the clan that was living in the glen. MacSorlie in English. There is a hill in the glen called Dùn Dìge (fort or hill of the ditch or moat). The MacSorlies had a big house there.

The MacSorlies and Clan Chattan were enemies. The chief of the MacSorlies wanted there to be peace with Clan Chattan. He held a feast. He invited Clan Chattan..

Things went well. The time for departure came. The chief of the MacSorlies asked his piper to play a tune. But the piper was not pleased. He played a war tune. The Clan Chattan folk were not pleased with that. They were angry.

They left. The MacSorlies all went to bed. But the Clan Chattan folk didn't go far. They stopped at a small hill in the glen. They decided to go back. They were

Tha Gleann Nibheis faisg air a' Ghearasdan. Gu dearbh, tha e faisg air Beinn Nibheis. Tha Uamh Shomhairle anns a' ghleann. Tha eachdraidh inntinneach aig an uaimh.

'S e MacShomhairle ainm a' chinnidh a bha a' fuireach anns a' ghleann. MacSorlie ann am Beurla. Tha cnoc anns a' ghleann air a bheil Dùn Dìge. Bha taigh mòr aig Clann Shomhairle an sin.

Bha Clann Shomhairle agus na Catanaich a-mach air a chèile. Bha ceann-cinnidh Chlann Shomhairle ag iarraidh sìth a bhith ann leis na Catanaich. Bha cuirm aige. Chuir e cuireadh do na Catanaich.

Chaidh an gnothach gu math. Thàinig an uair airson falbh. Dh'iarr ceann-cinnidh Chlann Shomhairle air a phìobaire port a sheinn. Ach cha robh am pìobaire toilichte. Chluich e port catha. Cha robh na Catanaich toilichte le sin. Bha iad feargach.

Dh'fhalbh iad. Chaidh Clann Shomhairle air fad gu leabaidh. Ach cha deach na Catanaich fada. Stad iad air cnoc beag anns a' ghleann. Cho-dhùin iad dhol air ais. Bha iad a'

going to kill the MacSorlies. That small hill has a special name - Cnocan na Mì-chomhairle – the hill of the evil counsel.

The Clan Chattan men returned to Dùn Dìge. Everybody in the house was asleep. The Clan Chattan men set the house alight. They killed everybody who ran out. Well, nearly everybody.

Two people got out with their lives. One of them was a servant to the clan chief. The other was the young son of the chief. He was a baby. Some people say that the servant's name was Somhairle. He got out of a window at the back of the house. He went to the cave. The Clan Chattan men didn't know about the cave.

When he was safe, the servant left the cave. He took the baby with him. He had a silver spoon. He took [had taken] the spoon with him from the house. He went to the house of the clan chief's sister. She recognised the spoon. She accepted the baby as her brother's son.

The boy was raised there. When he was seventeen, he was made clan chief. And that's the story about Uamh Shomhairle in Glen Nevis.

dol a mharbhadh Clann Shomhairle. Tha ainm sònraichte air a' chnoc bheag sin – Cnocan na Mì-chomhairle – *the hill of the evil counsel.*

Thill na Catanaich a Dhùn Dìge. Bha a h-uile duine anns an taigh na chadal. Chuir na Catanaich an taigh na theine. Mharbh iad a h-uile duine a ruith a-mach. Uill, cha mhòr a h-uile duine.

Fhuair dithis a-mach lem beatha. B'e fear dhiubh searbhant don cheann-chinnidh. B' e am fear eile mac òg a' chinn-chinnidh. Bha esan na leanabh. Tha cuid ag ràdh gur e Somhairle an t-ainm a bha air an t-searbhant. Chaidh e a-mach air uinneig air cùlaibh an taighe. Chaidh e don uaimh. Cha robh fios aig na Catanaich mun uaimh.

Nuair a bha e sàbhailte, dh'fhàg an searbhant an uamh. Thug e an leanabh leis. Bha spàin airgid aige. Thug e an spàin leis bhon taigh. Chaidh e gu taigh piuthar a' chinn-chinnidh. Dh'aithnich ise an spàin. Ghabh i ris an leanabh mar mhac a bràthar.

Thogadh an gille an sin. Nuair a bha e seachd-deug, bha e air a dhèanamh na cheann-cinnidh. Agus sin an stòiridh mu Uamh Shomhairle ann an Gleann Nibheis.