

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 241 (which corresponds to Litir 545). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Last week we were in Helmsdale. That's in [East] Sutherland. We're staying in that area today. I want to tell you about something that happened in the Strath of Kildonan. I'm not sure when it happened. It comes from oral tradition.

The crofters weren't using coal in their fires. They were using peat. They were cutting the peat. They were keeping the "peats" – the dry pieces of peat – in stacks. The stacks were near their houses.

But one crofter was a thief. He was stealing the peats from the other crofters. He was cunning, however. He wasn't stealing from the stacks near the houses. He was stealing peats only from the stacks that were not near the houses. And nobody saw him.

Some of the crofters were thinking that it was a supernatural thing. They were thinking that it was the fairies that were thieving. Because of that, they didn't do anything about it.

But one crofter was different from the others. He wasn't believing

An t-seachdain sa chaidh bha sinn ann am Bun Ildh. Tha sin ann an Cataibh. Tha sinn a' fuireach anns an sgìre sin an-diugh. Tha mi ag iarraidh innse dhuibh mu rudeigin a thachair ann an Srath Chill Donain. Chan eil mi cinnteach cuin a thachair e. Tha e a' tighinn bho bheul-aithris.

Cha robh na croitearan a' cleachdadh gual anns na teintean aca. Bha iad a' cleachdadh mòine. Bha iad a' buain na mònach. Bha iad a' cumail nam fàdan – na pìosan mònach tioram – ann an cruachan. Bha na cruachan faisg air na taighean aca.

Ach bha aon chroitear na mhèirleach. Bha e a' goid nam fàdan bho na croitearan eile. Bha e seòlta, ge-tà. Cha robh e a' goid bho na cruachan faisg air na taighean. Bha e a' goid fhàdan dìreach bho na cruachan nach robh faisg air na taighean. Agus chan fhaca duine e.

Bha cuid de na croitearan a' smaoineachadh gur e rud os-nàdarrach a bha ann. Bha iad a' smaoineachadh gur iad na sìthichean a bha ri mèirle. Air sàillibh sin, cha do rinn iad dad mu dheidhinn.

Ach bha aon chroitear eadar-

that it was a supernatural thing. He was of the opinion that it was somebody from the place itself that was thieving. He put a plan into action. He was wanting to find out who it was.

He went to the stack furthest from his house. He took out several peats. He took the middle out of the peats. He put gunpowder in the holes. He put the peats back in the stack. Within a few days, he noticed that some of the peats were missing. The thief had been there.

That night, the thief was sitting by the fire. He threw a peat or two into the fire. There was a big explosion. The thief was lucky that he wasn't killed. He was thinking that it was "The Judgement of the Lord"! And he never stole another peat for the rest of his life!

dhealaichte bho chàch. Cha robh esan a' creidsinn gur e rud os-nàdarrach a bha ann. Bha esan dhen bheachd gur e cuideigin às an àite fhèin a bha ri mèirle. Chuir e plana an gnìomh. Bha e ag iarraidh faighinn a-mach cò bha ann.

Chaidh e don chruaich a b' fhaide air falbh bhon taigh aige. Thug e a-mach grunn fhàdan. Thug e am meadhan a-mach às na fàdan. Chuir e fùdar-gunna anns na tuill. Chuir e na fàdan air ais anns a' chruaich. Taobh a-staigh beagan làithean, mhothaich e gun robh cuid de na fàdan a dhìth. Bha am mèirleach air a bhith ann.

Air an oidhche sin, bha am mèirleach na shuidhe aig an teine. Thilg e fàd no dhà don teine. Bha spreadhadh mòr ann. Bha am mèirleach fortanach nach robh e air a mharbhadh. Bha e a' smaoinichadh gur e "Breitheanas an Tighearna" a bha ann! Agus cha do ghoid e aon fhàd eile airson a chòrr de a bheatha!