

## **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 244 (which corresponds to Litir 548). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*There are two villages in Caithness called Ballachly – the township of the cemetery. There is a Ballachly near Dunbeath. There is another Ballachly between Dunbeath and Watten. It's from that wee settlement that the story comes this week. Here is the story – “The Witch of Ballachly”.*

*There was once a woman. Her nickname was The Raven. The people had a bad opinion of the woman. They said she was a witch.*

*She lived in a wee bothy near Ballachly. Things weren't going too well. Some of the farmers did not have much milk or cheese. They were thinking that the witch was responsible.*

*One day, on the day of Beltane, a woman came to visit the witch. She was wanting to get advice. She found The Raven beside a burn. She was raking the grass with a heather rope. There was heather tied to the rope. The Raven was involved in witchcraft.*

*People were seeing a hare amongst the cattle. Dogs couldn't catch the hare. A man set a snare.*

Tha dà bhaile ann an Gallaibh air a bheil Baile a' Chlaidh – the township of the cemetery. Tha Baile a' Chlaidh faisg air Dùn Bheithe. Tha Baile a' Chlaidh eile eadar Dùn Bheithe agus Bhatan. 'S ann bhon bhaile bheag sin a tha an stòiridh a' tighinn an t-seachdain seo. Seo an stòiridh – “Bana-bhuidseach Bhaile a' Chlaidh”.

Bha boireannach ann uaireigin. 'S e Am Fitheach am far-ainm a bha oirre. Bha droch bheachd aig daoine air a' bhoireannach. Bha iad ag ràdh gur e bana-bhuidseach a bha innte.

Bha i a' fuireach ann am bothag faisg air Baile a' Chlaidh. Cha robh cùisean a' dol gu math. Cha robh mòran bainne no càise aig cuid de na tuathanaich. Bha iad a' smaoineachadh gur e a' bhana-bhuidseach a rinn sin.

Latha a bha seo, air Latha na Bealltainne, thàinig boireannach a chèilidh air a' bhana-bhuidsich. Bha i ag iarraidh comhairle fhaighinn. Lorg i am Fitheach ri taobh allt. Bha i a' ràcadh an fheòir le sìoman. Bha fraoch ceangailte ris an t-sìoman. Bha am Fitheach ri buidseachd.

Bha daoine a' faicinn geàrr am meag a' chruidh. Cha b' urrainn do choin a' gheàrr a ghlacadh. Chuir fear

*He used a peg of rowan wood. You'll know that the rowan tree works against witchcraft.*

*A hare was caught in the snare. But when the man reached it, there was not a hare there. There was a woman. From that day onwards, the man had bad luck. He was drowned in the Thurso River.*

*The story has a strange ending. There were two large standing stones. The Raven went to the first stone. She ran around it seven times sunwise. Then she ran around it seven times anti-sunwise.*

*Two days after that, she was walking south. She stopped at a high point. And the high point is called Rock of the Raven. Then she continued. She left Caithness and nobody knows what happened to her.*

ribe sìos. Chleachd e cnagan de dh'fhiodh caorainn. Bidh fios agaibh gu bheil a' chraobh-chaorainn ag obair an aghaidh buidseachd.

Bha geàrr air a glacadh anns an ribe. Nuair a ràinig an duine i, ge-tà, cha robh geàrr ann. Bha boireannach ann. Am Fitheach. Bhon latha sin a-mach, bha droch fhortan aig an duine. Chaidh a bhàthadh ann an Uisge Theòrsa.

Tha crìoch neònach air an stòiridh. Bha dà thursa mhòr ann. Chaidh am Fitheach don chiad tursa. Ruith i timcheall air seachd uairean deiseil. An uair sin ruith i timcheall air seachd uairean tuathail.

Dà latha às dèidh sin, bha i a' coiseachd don cheann a deas. Stad i air àirde. Agus 's e an t-ainm air an àirde *Creag an Fhithich*. An uair sin, lean i oirre. Chaidh i a-mach à Gallaibh agus chan eil fhios dè thachair dhi.