

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 269 (which corresponds to Litir 573). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

The Rev Alexander Pope was a minister in Reay in Caithness. That was in the eighteenth century. He was a strong man. He had a stick. He was using the stick to "encourage" people to go to church.

There was a man in the area. He was a farmer. Himself and a woman were living together. They had two children. But they weren't married. This man appeared in front of the Church Session. Mr Pope said to him that he was a sinner. The minister asked him to admit his sins. He asked him to go under the authority of the Church.

"Before I do anything of the sort," the man said, "you may pull the last tooth from my mouth."

"We'll see," said the minister. When the Sabbath came, three strong elders went to the farmer's house. They tied the farmer with ropes. They took him to the church. They tied the man to a bench in the church. And he heard the sermon there. Mr Pope was a hard minister.

He was against strong drink. One day, the woman who ran the pub came. There were six strangers

Bha An t-Urr Alexander Pope na mhinistear ann am Meaghrath ann an Gallaibh. Bha sin anns an ochdamh linn deug. 'S e duine làidir a bha ann. Bha bata aige. Bha e a' cleachdadh a' bhata airson daoine a "bhrosnachadh" a dhol don eaglais.

Bha fear anns an sgìre. 'S e tuathanach a bha ann. Bha e fhèin is boireannach a' fuireach còmhla. Bha dithis chloinne aca. Ach cha robh iad pòsta. Nochd am fear seo mu choinneamh Seisean na h-Eaglaise. Thuir Mgr Pope ris gun robh e na pheacach. Dh'iarr am ministear air a pheacaidhean aideachadh. Dh'iarr e air dhol fo ùghdarras na h-Eaglaise.

"Mus dèan mi càil dhen t-seòrsa," thuir an duine, "faodaidh sibh m' fhiacaìl mu dheireadh a spìonadh às mo bheul."

"Chì sinn," thuir am ministear. Nuair a thàinig an t-Sàbaid, chaidh trì èildearan làidir gu taigh an tuathanaich. Cheangail iad an tuathanach le ròpan. Thug iad don eaglais e. Cheangail iad an duine ri being anns an eaglais. Agus chuala e an searmon an sin. 'S e ministear cruaidh a bha ann am Mgr Pope.

Bha e an aghaidh deoch làidir. Latha a bha seo, thàinig am boireannach

in the pub. They had drunk too much. They were fighting. The woman was afraid.

The minister placed a ladder against the pub wall. He filled pails with water. He went up on the roof. He took the pails with him. He took thatch away. And he poured the water on the drunkards.

The drunkards came out. They were ready to fight. But the minister was waiting for them. He had his cudgel. Not one of them was willing to fight him.

Alexander Pope was a famous minister. And he collected Gaelic oral tradition in Caithness. We'll look at that next week.

a bha a' ruith an taigh-sheinnse. Bha siannar choigreach anns an taigh-sheinnse. Bha iad air cus òl. Bha iad a' sabaid. Bha an t-eagal air a' bhoireannach.

Chuir am ministear àradh ri balla an taigh-sheinnse. Lìon e cuinneagan le uisge. Chaidh e suas air a' mhullach. Thug e na cuinneagan leis. Thug e tughadh air falbh. Agus dhòirt e an t-uisge air na drongairean.

Thàinig na drongairean a-mach. Bha iad deiseil airson sabaid. Ach bha am ministear a' feitheamh riutha. Bha am bata aige. Cha robh duine aca deònach sabaid leis.

Bha Alexander Pope na ministear ainmeil. Agus chruinnich e beul-aithris Ghàidhlig ann an Gallaibh. Bheir sinn sùil air sin an ath sheachdain.