

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 381 (which corresponds to Litir 685). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you how Coinneach Odhar [The Brahan Seer] got the second sight. He had a stone. There was a hole in the stone. When he was looking through the hole, Coinneach was getting a vision. But what happened to the stone? Well, here's what happened, according to oral tradition.

There was a great gathering of gentry in Brahan Castle. Coinneach was rude about the children of the gentry. Lady Seaforth was not pleased. She ordered that Coinneach be brought to her.

When Coinneach was there, he brought out a stone. He looked through the hole.

"I see," he said, "that the Seaforths will come to an end in sadness. I see the clan chief, the last one. He will be deaf and dumb. He will have four sons. All of the sons will die before he dies.

Coinneach continued. "As an indicator that these things are coming into being, there will be four great lairds – MacKenzie of Gairloch, Chisholm, Grant and MacLeod of Raasay. One of them will be buck-toothed. One will be hare-lipped. One will be half-witted. And one will be a

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mar a fhuair Coinneach Odhar an dà-shealladh. Bha clach aige. Bha toll anns a' chloich. Nuair a bha e a' coimhead tron toll, bha Coinneach a' faicinn sealladh. Ach dè thachair don chloich? Uill, seo na thachair, a rèir beul-aithris.

Bha cruinneachadh mòr de dh'uaislean ann an Caisteal Bhrath-ainn. Bha Coinneach mì-mhodhail mu chlann nan uaislean. Cha robh a' Bhean-ualasal Sìophort toilichte. Dh'iarr i gum biodh Coinneach air a thoirt thuice.

Nuair a bha Coinneach ann, thug e a-mach a' chlach. Thug e sùil tron toll.

"Tha mi a' faicinn," thuirt e, "gun tig na Sìophortaich gu ceann le bròn. Tha mi a' faicinn ceann-cinnidh, am fear mu dheireadh. Bidh e bodhar is balbh. Bidh ceathrar mhac aige. Bidh na mic gu lèir a' faighinn bàs mus fhaigh e fhèin bàs."

Lean Coinneach air. "Mar chomharra gu bheil na rudan seo a' tighinn gu bith, bidh ceathrar uachdaran mòra ann – MacCoinnich Gheàrrloch, an Siosalach, an Granddach agus MacLeòid Ratharsair. Bidh fear dhiubh sgòr-fhiaclach. Bidh fear beàrn-mhiolach. Bidh fear leth-chiallach. Agus bidh fear

stammerer. When a Seaforth sees these people, he will know that all of his sons will die before he himself dies.”

The Seaforths were furious. Coinneach was killed by fire in a barrel of tar at Chanonry Point. But what happened to his stone?

People say that he threw the stone into a small hole. The hole was made by the foot of a cow. Coinneach said that a child would be born. The children would have two navels. That person would find the stone inside a pike [fish]. That person would have the second sight, just as Coinneach did.

Some people rummaged around in the cow's footprint. But water was oozing from the ground. They didn't find the stone. And the water did not stop. After a while, there was a puddle there. After a while more, there was a loch.

That was Loch Ussie. The stone is still in Loch Ussie. I can't say if it's inside a pike or not!

mabach. Nuair a chì Sìophortach na daoine sin, bidh fios aige gum faigh na mic gu lèir aige bàs mus fhaigh e fhèin bàs.”

Bha na Sìophortaich fiadhaich. Chaidh Coinneach a chur gu bàs le teine ann an baraille tearra aig Gob na Cananaich. Ach dè thachair don chloich aige?

Tha daoine ag ràdh gun do thilg e a' chlach a-steach do tholl beag. Bha an toll air a dhèanamh le cas bà. Thuirt Coinneach gum biodh leanabh air a bhreith. Bhiodh dà imleig aig an leanabh. Bhiodh an neach sin a' lorg na cloiche am broinn geadais. Bhiodh an dà-shealladh aig an neach sin, dìreach mar a bha aig Coinneach.

Rùraich feadhainn anns an lorg-coise bà. Ach bha uisge a' drùchdadh às an talamh. Cha do lorg iad a' chlach. Agus cha do sguir an t-uisge. An ceann greis, bha glumag ann. An ceann greis eile, bha loch ann.

B' e sin Loch Ùsaidh. Tha a' chlach fhathast ann an Loch Ùsaidh. Chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh a bheil i am broinn geadais no nach eil!