

**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 396 (which corresponds to Litir 700). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk).

*To the old Gaels, the hazelnut was the nut of knowledge. I have a story from the Isle of Skye about that.*

*There was at one time a strong, powerful woman living on the island. Her name was Sgàthach. She was living in Dunscaith Castle in Sleat. She had a fighting school.*

*The school became internationally famous. The Ulster hero, Cuchullin, heard about it. He was renowned in Ireland. He was brave and strong.*

*Cuchullin went to Skye in three bounds. He was expecting Sgàthach to give him a warm welcome. But she didn't. He wasn't famous in Scotland like he was in Ireland.*

*Cuchullin was angry. He was fighting with the other students in the school. He defeated them. Then Sgàthach noticed him. She gave him permission to fight her daughter. After two days and a night, Cuchullin defeated her daughter.*

*Sgàthach herself came. She and Cuchullin fought for two days and a night. But neither of them was victorious.*

Do na seann Ghàidheil b' e an cnò-calltainn cnò an eòlais. Tha stòiridh agam às an Eilean Sgitheanach mu dheidhinn sin.

Bha uaireigin boireannach làidir, cumhachdach a' fuireach anns an eilean. 'S e Sgàthach an t-ainm a bha oirre. Bha i a' fuireach ann an Càisteal Dhùn Sgàthaich ann an Slèite. Bha sgoil sabaid aice.

Dh'fhàs an sgoil ainmeil thall thairis. Chuala an gaisgeach Ultach, Cù Chulainn, mu a deidhinn. Bha esan iomraiteach ann an Èirinn. Bha e treun is làidir.

Chaidh Cù Chulainn, ann an trì cas-cheumannan, don Eilean Sgitheanach. Bha e an dùil gum biodh Sgàthach a' cur fàilte mhòr air. Ach cha do chuir. Cha robh e ainmeil ann an Alba mar a bha e ann an Èirinn.

Bha Cù Chulainn feargach. Bha e a' sabaid leis na h-oileanaich eile san sgoil. Rinn e a' chùis orra. Mhothaich Sgàthach an uair sin e. Thug i cead dha sabaid le a nighinn. An dèidh dà latha is oidhche, thug Cù Chulainn buaidh air a nighinn.

Thàinig Sgàthach fhèin. Rinn i fhèin is Cù Chulainn sabaid airson dà latha is oidhche. Ach cha robh duine seach duine aca buadhach.

*Sgàthach's daughter obtained deer milk. She made cheese with it. But neither her mother nor Cuchullin ate any of the cheese. The daughter sent out heroes to kill a deer. She roasted the meat. But neither Sgàthach nor Cuchullin ate any of it.*

*Then she sent out the heroes to hazel trees on the side of a mountain near Sligachan – Broc Bheinn. They brought back hazel nuts. The daughter roasted another deer. She stuffed the deer with roasted hazelnuts. Sgàthach and Cuchullin ate that.*

*Sgàthach hoped, with the knowledge from the nuts, that she would defeat Cuchullin. Cuchullin hoped, with the knowledge from the nuts, that he would defeat Sgàthach. But when the two of them ate the nuts, they gained the knowledge of peace. They pledged they would no longer fight each other. Perhaps we should all eat more hazelnuts!*

Fhuair nighean Sgàthach bainne fèidh. Rinn i càise leis. Ach cha do dh'ith a màthair no Cù Chulainn dad dhen chàise. Chuir an nighean gaisgich a-mach airson fiadh a mharbhadh. Ròst i an fheòil. Ach cha do dh'ith Sgàthach no Cù Chulainn dad dhith.

An uair sin chuir i na gaisgich a-mach gu ruige craobhan-calltainn air cliathaich beinn faisg air Sligeachan – Broc Bheinn. Thug iad cnothan-calltainn air ais. Ròst an nighean fiadh eile. Lìon i brù an fhèidh le cnothan-calltainn ròsta. Dh'ith Sgàthach agus Cù Chulainn sin.

Bha Sgàthach an dòchas, le eòlas nan cnothan, gum biodh i a' toirt buaidh air Cù Chulainn. Bha Cù Chulainn an dòchas, le eòlas nan cnothan, gum biodh e a' toirt buaidh air Sgàthach. Ach nuair a dh'ith an dithis na cnothan, fhuair iad eòlas na sìthe. Gheall iad nach robh iad a' dol a shabaid le chèile tuilleadh. 'S dòcha gum bu chòir dhuinn uile a bhith ag ithe barrachd chnothan-calltainn!