

**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 434 (which corresponds to Litir 738). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I was telling you last week about a trip I took to the old village of Leitir Fura on the Isle of Skye. Leitir means 'a slope' which is often above water. But what does Fura mean?*

*According to oral tradition, there were once two oak trees growing in the village – Fura Mhòr and Fura Bheag. Those were their names. Fura Mhòr was so big that up to fifty cows would gather under the shade of its foliage.*

*One day, children were playing with fire. They lit a ground fire. That was near Fura Mhòr. The tree was burned to the ground. The people were displeased. Two families were expelled from the village.*

*In St Columba's time, the Isle of Skye was full of woods. The saint was on the island for a while, but he went back to Iona. He left priests, however, on Pabay, an island near Broadford.*

*According to tradition, one of the Pabay priests went to Skye. He reached a clearing in the forest. He only had the clothes that were on him and his staff. The staff was precious to him. It was made for him*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh mu thuras a ghabh mi gu seann bhaile Leitir Fura anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Tha *Leitir* a' ciallachadh 'leathad' a tha gu math tric os cionn uisge. Ach dè tha *Fura* a' ciallachadh?

A rèir beul-aithris, bha uaireigin dà chraobh dharaich a' fàs anns a' bhaile – Fura Mhòr agus Fura Bheag. 'S e sin na h-ainmean a bha orra. Bha Fura Mhòr cho mòr 's gum biodh suas ri caogad mart a' dol còmhla fo sgàil a duillich.

Latha a bha seo, bha clann a' cluich le teine. Chuir iad falaisgear thuige. Bha sin faisg air Fura Mhòr. Bha a' chraobh air a losgadh gu làr. Bha na daoine mì-thoilichte. Chaidh dà theaghlach a chur a-mach às a' bhaile.

Ri linn Chaluim Chille, bha an t-Eilean Sgitheanach làn choilltean. Bha an naomh anns an eilean airson greis, ach chaidh e air ais a dh'Eilean Ì. Dh'fhàg e sagartan, ge-tà, ann am Pabaigh, eilean faisg air an Ath Leathann.

A rèir beul-aithris, chaidh fear de na sagartan Pabach don Eilean Sgitheanach. Ràinig e innis anns a' choille. Cha robh aige ach an t-aodach a bha air agus a bhachall. Bha am bachall prìseil dha. Chaidh a dhèanamh dha le

*by another priest on the mainland. It was made of ash wood.*

*The priest was very tired. He rested. He put the staff by his side. While he was resting, he heard noises in the wood. He was hearing voices, but they were small and they didn't belong to humankind.*

*He looked up. Who was in front of him but a great host of little people. They were between three and four feet in height. Except for that, they were like ordinary people.*

*The priest started, and he made the sign of the cross. But that didn't frighten the people. One of them – a wee old man with a grey beard – came forward. He went on his knees. 'I want you,' he implored, 'to bless my people.' These were the fairies. We'll see what happened in the next Litir.*

sagart eile air tìr-mòr. Bha e air a dhèanamh de dh'fhiodh uinnsinn.

Bha an sagart gu math sgèth. Ghabh e fois. Chuir e am bachall ri a thaobh. Fhad 's a bha e a' gabhail fois, dh'fhairich e fuaimean anns a' choille. Bha e a' cluinntinn ghuthan, ach bha iad beag agus cha bhuineadh iad do mhac-an-duine.

Choimhead e suas. Cò bha air a bheulaibh ach sluagh mòr de dhaoine beaga. Bha iad eadar trì is ceithir troighean a dh'àirde. Ach a-mhàin sin, bha iad coltach ri daoine àbhaisteach.

Chlisg an sagart agus rinn e comharra na croise. Ach cha do chuir sin eagal air an t-sluagh. Thàinig fear dhiubh – bodach beag le feusag liath – air adhart. Chaidh e air a ghlùinean. 'Tha mi ag iarraidh,' ghuidh e, 'gum beannaich sibh na daoine agam.' B' iad seo na sìthichean. Chì sinn dè thachair anns an ath Litir.