

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 454 (which corresponds to Litir 758). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

St Columba was amazingly able to open doors that were locked. He was in Ireland one time. He went to visit monks in a monastery in the middle of the country. When he went there, the key to the chapel was missing. The monks were very unhappy about it.

Columba went to the chapel door. He said, 'The Lord, without a key, can open the door of his own house to his servants.' With that, the door opened by itself.

That story appears in Vita Columbae, the story of Columba. In the following chapter, there is a poor beggar from Lochaber. He went to Columba, requesting alms. Columba gave him all the alms he had. Then he said, 'Poor man, get a stake from the wood that is nearby and give it to me.' The poor man went to the wood and he got a stake. He gave it to Columba.

Columba sharpened one end of the stake. He blessed the stake. 'Keep this stake safe,' he said. 'If you do that, I believe it will do no harm to men or cattle, but it will only harm wild animals and fish.

Bha Calum Cille air leth comasach ann a bhith a' fosgladh dhorsan a bha glaiste. Bha e ann an Èirinn turas. Chaidh e a chèilidh air manaich ann am manachainn ann am meadhan na dùthcha. Nuair a chaidh e ann, bha iuchair a' chaibeil air chall. Bha na manaich gu math mì-thoilichte mu dheidhinn.

Chaidh Calum Cille gu doras a' chaibeil. Thuir e, 'Is urrainn don Tighearna, às aonais iuchair, doras a thaigh fhèin fhosgladh do a shearbhantan.' Le sin, dh'fhosgail an doras leis fhèin.

Tha an stòiridh sin a' nochdadh ann an *Vita Columbae*, eachdraidh Chalum Chille. Anns a' chaibideil a leanas air sin, tha dèirceach bochd à Loch Abar. Chaidh e a Chalum Cille, ag iarraidh dèirc. Thug Calum Cille dha na bha aige de dhèirc. An uair sin thuir e, 'A dhuine bhochd, faigh slat bhon choille a tha faisg oirnn agus thoir i dhomh.' Chaidh an duine bochd don choille agus fhuair e slat. Thug e do Chalum Cille i.

Rinn Calum Cille aon cheann dhen t-slait biorach. Bheannaich e an t-slat. 'Glèidh an t-slat seo le cùram,' thuir e. 'Ma nì thu sin, tha mi a' creidsinn nach dèan i cron air daoine no crodh, ach gun dèan i cron a-mhàin air

As long as you keep this stake, you will never want for venison in your house.'

The beggar went home in a good mood. He went out to the wood. He put the sharpened stake sticking out of the ground in the wood. The sharp end was sticking up. He left it there all night. Next morning, he returned. A large stag had fallen on the stake. The stag was dead. His family had enough meat that day.

Matters continued like that for a long time. Each day there was a stag or hind [red deer] or roe deer dead on the sharp end of the stake. When his family had had enough meat, the poor man was selling the rest to his neighbours.

Unfortunately, however, matters didn't continue like that forever. I'll tell you what happened to the beggar from Lochaber next week.

fiadh-bheatha agus èisg. Cho fad 's a ghleidheas tu an t-slat seo, cha bhi gainnead de shitheann anns an taigh agad.'

Dh'fhalbh an dèirceach dhachaigh ann an deagh shunnd. Chaidh e a-mach don choille. Chuir e an t-slat bhiorach mar stob anns a' choille. Bha an ceann biorach a' stobadh an-àirde. Dh'fhàg e mar sin i fad na h-oidhche. An ath mhadainn, thill e. Bha damh mòr air tuiteam air an stob. Bha an damh marbh. Bha feòil gu leòr aig a theaghlach an latha sin.

Lean gnothaichean mar sin fad ùine mhòr. Gach latha bha damh no eilid no earba marbh air ceann biorach an stuib. Nuair a bha a theaghlach sàsaichte le feòil, bha am fear bochd a' reic a' chòrr do a choimhearsnaich.

Gu mì-fhortanach, ge-tà, cha do lean cùisean mar sin gu sìorraidh. Innsidh mi dhuibh dè thachair don dèirceach Abrach an-ath-sheachdain.